

## **JOU 4311: ADVANCED MAGAZINE WRITING**

Wednesday periods 4-6, Weimer 1070

### **PROFESSOR**

Ted Spiker @ProfSpiker  
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### **OFFICE HOURS**

Wednesday 2:30-4:30 p.m.  
Best to make appointment  
Skype: ProfSpiker (by appointment)  
g-chat: ProfSpiker (by appointment)

### **REQUIRED READING**

*Writing Tools*, Roy Peter Clark (Little, Brown)  
Other readings as determined by class

### **OBJECTIVE**

This course aims to prepare students for magazine-style reporting, writing, and revising articles suitable for publication in various print/digital outlets. You will assume the role of a professional magazine writer, and we will conduct this class in a writer's-group format. In this capstone course, you are expected to produce senior-level, high-quality work with depth and critical thinking. In exchange, you will receive feedback that will improve and strengthen your writing in new and creative ways.

### **GOALS**

- >>To use a variety of advanced research and interviewing techniques
- >>To develop advanced writing, rewriting and storytelling skills
- >>To develop good marketing techniques to get stories accepted and published

### **COURSE TOPICS**

Idea Generation	Marketing/Audience
Interviewing	Reporting/Research
Diversity of Sources	Revision
Ethical Issues	Writing Short, Writing Tight
Story Structure	Story Genre
Style/Voice	Literary Devices

### **GRADING**

You will be graded on a 1,000-point scale:

A: 925–1000	C: 725–774
A-: 900–924	C-: 700–724
B+: 875–899	D+: 675–699
B: 825–874	D: 625–674
B-: 800–824	D-: 600–624
C+: 775–799	E: 0-599

## ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

### *Main Story (600 points)*

- 50 points: Idea memo
- 100 points: Story excerpt
- 200 points: First draft
- 200 points: Revision
- 50 points: Query/pitch

### *Other (400 points)*

- 75 points: Warm-Up Writing Assignment
- 100 points: Short feature
- 75 points: Reading Quizzes
- 50 points: Reading Presentation
- 100 points: Attendance/Participation

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Main story**

You will write one narrative, long-form magazine-style piece, using advanced storytelling techniques. In order for this to work, you must find a story worthy of depth and nuance, and you must *report* it. Word count: About 2,500. Find a story that you want to spend time with and that you will be able to have a reasonable amount of access to. Details of each of the following elements will be discussed in class:

#### ***Idea memo:***

No more than one page single-spaced.

Due **Wednesday 1/27 by email and hard copy in class.**

50 points: Judged on overall quality

#### ***Story excerpt:***

About 500 words of any part of your story.

Due Wednesday **2/10 by email and hard copy in class.**

100 points: 50 points on quality of reporting, 50 points on quality of writing

#### ***First draft:***

Due Wednesday **2/24 by email and hard copy in class.**

200 points: Point breakdown to be handed out in class

#### ***Query/pitch*** (no more than a half of a page single-spaced):

Due Wednesday **2/24 by email and hard copy in class.**

50 points: Judged on overall quality

#### ***Revision:***

Due Wednesday **3/30 by email and hard copy in class.**

200 points: Point breakdown to be handed out in class

## **Other**

### **Warm-Up Writing Assignment**

No more than 1,000 words.

Due **1/11 at noon** by email.

75 points: Details given in first class, judged on overall quality

### **Short Feature**

About 500 words.

Due **Wednesday 4/13 by email and hard copy in class.**

100 points: 50 on quality reporting, 50 on quality of writing.

Story can be of any magazine-style genre, except news, essays and reviews. Some reporting required (minimum of two live sources). You can do mini-profiles, how-to's, trends, etc... Ideas must be approved.

### **Reading Presentation**

You will choose a magazine-style piece, distribute to class, do a short presentation about it, and lead the class discussion. Dates will be determined the second week of class.

50 points

### **Reading Quizzes**

We'll have short quizzes of 5 points each to make sure you do the reading. They'll be straightforward if you have done the reading. Please have Writing Tools read by 1/27.

### **Attendance/Participation**

You are allowed one unexcused absence ("excused" includes religious holidays and documented medical excuses). After that, your grade will be deducted by an automatic 50 points for each absence. Lateness to class can also result in a point deduction at instructor's discretion. No makeup quizzes will be given (unless the absence is excused).

## **STORY SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

>>Turn in one hard copy, and e-mail one copy (unless otherwise noted)

>>TRIPLE-space all stories

>>Include source info (name, phone, e-mail) at bottom of every story

>>Include a headline and subhed for each story

(not for grade; to help you think and focus what story is about)

>>Submit first draft with my comments along with final draft of main story

*Failure to follow guidelines will result in a point penalty at instructor's discretion*

## **DEDUCTIONS**

Failure to meet deadlines for writing assignments will result in a 20-point deduction for every 24-hour period that it is late. Fact errors will result in a deduction at instructor's discretion, depending on the error and assignment.

## **CLASSROOM NEEDS**

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to instructor.

## **HONOR CODE**

Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources or fabricating material, as well as other forms of cheating. Violations will result in a failing grade, and you will be dismissed from the journalism program and reported to the Honor Court. See the Department of Journalism web site for specific outline of honor code violations.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

This is a workshop-style class in which we will all contribute ideas and critiques of other writers' work and ideas. Please use professional courtesy. Turn cell phones off. No texting (or checking your phone) in class. If you need to check your phone, please leave the room to do so. **Be prepared to bring laptops to class.** You will be notified at least 48 hours in advance if we are going to do in-class work.

## **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Professor Ted Spiker is the chair of the UF department of journalism and has overseen the department's magazine courses since he arrived at UF in 2001. A graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a former articles editor at *Men's Health*, Spiker has had work published in *TIME.com*, *Esquire.com*, *Outside*, *O the Oprah Magazine*, *Fortune*, *Men's Health*, *Women's Health*, *Runner's World*, *Reader's Digest*, *Best Life*, and many others. He is also the author of *DOWN SIZE* and the co-author of a dozen books, including the national bestselling *YOU: The Owner's Manual* series. Twitter: @ProfSpiker. Web site: [www.tedspiker.com](http://www.tedspiker.com).