

ENTERTAINMENT WRITING — JOU 4930 — FALL 2016

INSTRUCTOR: Miss Andrea Billups

Thursdays — 5-7 period Rm: 3219 **Weimer** Hall

Contact: 517-775-9951 AndreaBillups@hotmail.com

Office hours: By appointment (TBD) — you can email, text or call me anytime you need me. Don't be shy. If you call after midnight, however, you will provide fresh baked goods for the entire class. Texting after midnight is fine. There will be no baked goods penalty.

GOALS: This course should prepare a student to report and write about celebrity and entertainment news and to produce professional-quality content for specialized publications and websites. Students will learn about the entertainment business in music, film, television, creative arts and politics, and how this industry gets covered by journalists across platforms. Students will produce original stories and content for their own entertainment reporting websites.

READING MATERIALS: Weekly online readings provided by the instructor as needed and three non-fiction books as assigned. (Please order, download or retrieve from library, whatever you can afford — we'll work thru each during the semester).

- * "Detroit Rock City" -- Steve Miller
- * "There Goes Gravity" — Lisa Robinson
- * "I Left it On the Mountain" — Kevin Sessums

SCHEDULE — Subject to change (please attend class to stay up to date — assignments and speakers may shift due to availability, breaking news, etc.)

Aug. 25 — Introduction to class — discussion of class goals — review of syllabus. Website set-up assigned including intro video.

*Begin reading Detroit Rock City. Weekly celeb reports assigned.

Sept. 8 — In-class writing assignment. Music publications — reports assigned; content discussion, packaging, aggregating, covering live events. (midterm discussion)

* Midterm assigned: Live Event coverage — 800 words.

Sept. 15 —Reviews, Profiles — first weekly story assigned: "What's in Your Bag?" — Guest speaker: Broadcast journalist Mark McEwen.

Sept. 22 — Music publication/coverage presentations due — 3 minutes — in-class.

Sept. 29 — **Begin reading There Goes Gravity — first story due. Guest speaker: author and journalist Steve Miller.

Oct. 6 — Television and Film - lecture, in-class writing assignment, Guest Speaker: Michelle Tauber — Head writer — PEOPLE magazine

Oct. 13 — Agents, publicists and managers — Guest speaker: Martin Hurwitz — the business of entertainment — second weekly story assigned: "My toughest moment on-stage, in the spotlight ... "

Final project assigned.

Oct. 20 — Lecture: Covering sensitive stories and topics related to celebrity news. How to work with publicists and reps: Guest speaker: Vanessa Menkes — entertainment and music publicist. — Second story/package due.

Oct. 27 — Entertainment law/public records and media ethics; Guest speaker: attorney/legal expert

Nov. 3 — Begin reading I Left it On the Mountain — Sourcing and branding in the entertainment media world. 3rd weekly story assigned: "My fave holiday tradition..."

Nov. 10 — Tabloid media — Lecture: Discerning credible information vs following some else's reporting. Ethics and social media.

Nov. 17 — Localizing and packaging entertainment coverage. How to generate ideas, plan in advance and present something unique. 3rd story due.

Nov. 24 — Thanksgiving — no classes

Dec. 1 — Last class — Review and round-up, 3rd book discussion. There will be cupcakes and holiday cheer. :-)

Dec. 10 — Final project due. You may turn in this project via email. No class. You're welcome. :-)

Attendance policy: Please attend class. We only have it once each week and there will be assignments made you'll need to know about, some of them in-class work. If you are sick and cannot make it, it is your responsibility to let me know and also to discern what you missed. Late assignments may only be turned in with permission and approval from the instructor **PRIOR TO YOUR ABSENCE**. Do not attempt to turn in late work if you did not discuss your absence with me prior to your missed class. I will not accept it. Have respect for your time and mine. Please communicate with me honestly. I will deviate from this syllabus throughout the semester so do not miss class and expect to know what has been covered.

How Your Grade is Determined:

10 percent — Weekly celebrity briefs; attendance; class participation.

15 percent — Website creation, curation, maintenance and execution.

25 percent — 3 story assignments — and 1 book story (from books you have read during the semester).

25 percent — Midterm (live event coverage story — a video/print package for web).

25 percent — Final project — (Story on a national celebrity/entertainment media outlet).

Grading scale

A = 90 or above

A- = 87 - 89

B+ = 84 - 86

B = 80 - 83

B- = 77 - 79

C+ = 74 - 76

C = 70 - 73

C- = 67 - 69

D+ = 64 - 66

D = 60 - 63

D- = 57 - 59

E = 56 or below

Class attendance, make-up exams, etc.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Your feedback

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

And finally... This is a fun class with lots of writing assignments. You will also be required to do original reporting. Please plan your schedule accordingly — we'll be busy. I look forward to working with you and learning more about you and your goals. :-)