

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

Tuesday periods 4-6, Weimer 3219

### **PROFESSOR**

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

Wednesday 2-4 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 (500 points)*

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

### *Other (500 points)*

- 75 points: Warm-Up writing assignment
- 150 points: Short feature (75 for first draft, 75 for revision)
- 75 points: Writing Tools test
- 50 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 2,000 to 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 **Tuesday 9/13 by email and hard copy in class.**

50 points: Judged on overall quality (unique idea, specifics and details)

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

About 500 words of any part of your story.

Due **Tuesday 9/27 by email and hard copy in class.**

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

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

Due **Tuesday 10/11 by email and hard copy in class.**

150 points:

Quality of lede: 25

Quality of nut: 25

Overall structure: 25

Quality of reporting/info: 50

Writing strength/mechanics: 25

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

Due **Tuesday 10/11 by email and hard copy in class.**

50 points: Judged on overall quality (appropriate market, specific sell, structure)

**Revision:**

Due **Tuesday 11/29 by email and hard copy in class (10-point bonus if turned in on or before 11/22).**

200 points:

Overall quality of writing (structure, mechanics, etc.): 100

Overall quality of reporting (compelling and unique info): 100

## **Other**

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

No more than 750 words.

Due **8/30 in class by email and hard copy.**

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

### **Short Feature**

About 500 words.

First draft: **Tuesday 11/1 by email and hard copy in class.**

Revision: **Tuesday 11/15 by email and hard copy in class.**

75 points each: Overall quality of reporting, writing based on genre.

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/Tests**

We'll have short quizzes on the assigned reading. They'll be straightforward if you have done the reading. A Writing Tools test will be given 9/13.

### **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).