

# **JOU 4308 — Magazine and Feature Writing**

**Spring 2017 — Room FLG 0275 — Tuesday 3-6 p.m.**

**Instructor: Miss Andrea Billups**

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**Office - Weimer Hall Room 3024 (3rd Floor/inside the INC)**

**Office hours — 2-3:30 on Thursdays and by appointment**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This fun class merges reading, discussion and writing. In it we will discuss the organization and creation of articles for general and special interest magazines and newspaper magazine supplements, and the development of article ideas and pitches for such publications. It will also include inductive analysis of contemporary magazine articles and critical review and discussion of non-fiction writing in books, magazines and online. This course looks at great storytelling and the writers behind such stories. It is also my hope that this class will help students to develop more deeply their own writer's voice and become stronger in feature writing and long-form narrative journalism.

## **COURSE GOALS:**

- Understand the characteristics of feature stories.
- Understand different kinds of features (i.e. profile, how-to, etc.)
- Identify differences in target audiences and understand how to tailor ideas to those specific audiences.
- Use a variety of research techniques while gathering information, including human sources, documents and web-based sources for strong, ethical reporting in the features realm.
- Use a variety of interviewing techniques to draw out useful and colorful information
- Integrate various non-fiction storytelling techniques into feature stories (i.e. anecdotes, colorful quotes, description, etc.)
- Soundly structure a feature story using those elements and tie them together with a clear and compelling focus.
- Write pieces that make our readers care.
- Prepare feature writers ready for freelance work/employment.

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

### **FEATURE WRITING, THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE**

ISBN: 9780205747801

Author: FRIEDLANDER

### **WRITING TOOLS - 50 ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR EVERY WRITER**

ISBN: 978031601499

Author: ROY PETER CLARK

**Please bring your laptops to each class (as our room is not a writing lab)**

## **Schedule:**

Jan. 10 — Introduction to class.

Lecture: What Makes a Feature Story Interesting, Unique — and How Should I Organize.

Dwyane Wade's Next Career Move & Why He Doesn't Care What You Say About His Style

**<http://oceandrive.com/dwyane-wade-on-miami-heat-fashion-choices-and-family-time>**

The Last Martin of Gilchrist County

**<http://www.jeffklinkenberg.com/2015/10/the-last-martin-of-gilchrist-county/>**

Jan. 17 — Guest speaker: Journalist and veteran editor Cindy Spence, who will present her profile of "Joe Spence and His Castle." This is a story anchored by history and place — a fascinating story of one man's reclaiming of his childhood and a dream to make good. First story assigned: PROFILE. Pitches due in class next week.

Jan. 24 — Guest speaker: TBD — Interviewing for the profile. Review of pitch ideas — roundtable. Review of websites.

Reading: (Out of Class) **<http://niemanstoryboard.org/stories/7-great-reads-this-years-asme-finalists-in-featureprofile-writing/>**

Jan. 31 — Lecture: Sourcing — How to Find Ideas, People and Get Them to Talk

Reading: (In class) Story Dust: Lessons Learned on Feature Writing

<http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/writing/380008/story-dust-lessons-learned-on-feature-writing-from-lane-degregory/>

Reading: (In class) A message from Roger

[http://www.sptimes.com/2003/07/10/Southpinellas/A\\_message\\_from\\_Roger.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2003/07/10/Southpinellas/A_message_from_Roger.shtml)

Feb. 6 — Writing from your senses. In-class exercise. Please bring your laptops.

Reading: (In class) The Bravest Woman in Seattle

<http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/eli-sanders>

Feb. 13 — PROFILES DUE

Second story assigned — "Heroes Among Us"

Feb. 21 — Lecture: "The Devil is in the Details — Why Real Reporting Sets a Feature Story Apart"

Reading: (In class) The Girl in the Window

<http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/lane-degregory>

Heroes pitches due

Feb. 28 — "Feature Writing and Celebrity." Reading: TBA

March 7 Spring Break — No Class — Please frolic.

March 14 — Second story due — "Heroes" — Roundtable discussion of your stories.

March 21 — Final story pitches due. Reading: TBA

March 28 — Lecture: "The Art of the Interview." — Rewriting the Proust Questionnaire.

Readings (Out of Class):

[https://www.ted.com/talks/marc\\_pachter\\_the\\_art\\_of\\_the\\_interview?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/marc_pachter_the_art_of_the_interview?language=en)

Reading: (Out of class) — <http://www.bravotv.com/inside-the-actors-studio/season-20/videos/matthew-mcconaughey-biggest-personal-moment>

<http://www.bravotv.com/inside-the-actors-studio/season-21/bryan-cranston>

April 4 — Guest lecture TBD

April 11 — Lecture: "Writing for different places and spaces — how feature content thrives across the spectrum." Infographics, memes, videos, guides, lists, event reviews, product reviews, opinion posts (blogs and editorials), how-to's, podcasts.

Extra Credit: Assignment: "10 Things About ..."

April 18 — Final story due. 1,500-2,000 words

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Guidelines: This class meets once a week for three hours. Please attend class. If you miss, it will be hard to keep up, and attendance counts as part of your class participation grade. If you cannot come, please give me the courtesy of letting me know in advance of the class you must miss. This way, I can make sure to let you know what we are covering and what you are responsible for. I frequently deviate from the syllabus. Deadlines are crucial. Missing deadlines can result on a zero grade. Please adhere to those.

Assignments: You will do three feature stories in this course. Your stories, which will be typed double-spaced and turned in during class (unless otherwise specified, and typically NOT emailed), must follow course rules on length and sources. The specifics for each story will be reviewed in class. All stories MUST contain three sources minimally — most will include more. None of those sources can be UF students or students at any other universities. All work must be original. You must use Associated Press style in all class assignments and proper grammar. Failure to do so will significantly impact your grades. Please include at the bottom of each story a list of con-

tacts for those you interviewed with name, email and phone number. This source list is mandatory for your story to be graded — no exceptions.

You will also create and maintain a website for your writing. We will discuss this in class. All assignments must be posted there after they have been edited and graded. This professional quality website is a part of your grade.

### Grading:

Class participation and attendance: 10 percent

Website creation and maintenance: 15 percent

Story 1: 25 percent

Story 2: 25 percent

Story 3: 25 percent

You may receive extra credit for publishing your stories in a credible place.

Stories will be graded on strength of ideas, content, mechanics and AP style. Failure to follow stated guidelines (for ex: use of proper sources, missing deadlines) may result in stories not being graded at all. All stories that receive a C grade or below may be rewritten for a better grade with permission of the instructor. This option must be discussed in person prior to the re-submission. The goal is to get your stories in the best shape for publications that they can be. These types of stories will require significant editing, so be prepared for revisions.

### Grading Scale:

A 90-100%

B+ 87-89%

B 80-86%

C+ 77-79%

C 70-76%

D+ 67-69%

D 60-66%

F 59% and below