

# JOU 4311

## ADVANCED MAGAZINE WRITING

Tuesday periods 6-8  
Weil 279

### PROFESSOR

Ted Spiker @ProfSpiker  
2070 Weimer  
392-6990  
[tspiker@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:tspiker@jou.ufl.edu)

### OFFICE HOURS

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

### REQUIRED READING

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

### OBJECTIVE

This course aims to prepare students for narrative-style reporting, writing, and revising. You will assume the role of a professional 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. You will also work on engagement strategies to improve the reach of your work.

### GOALS

- >>To use a variety of advanced research and interviewing techniques
- >>To develop advanced writing, rewriting and storytelling skills
- >>To improve techniques and strategies for story engagement

### 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
Social Media/Engagement	Multimedia

## 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 (550 points)*

50 points:	Story excerpt 1
50 points:	Story excerpt 2
100 points:	First draft
200 points:	Revision
150 points:	Social media/engagement/multimedia support

### *Other (450 points)*

200 points:	Short practice writing assignments
100 points:	Reading quizzes/Writing Tools test
50 points:	Reading presentation
100 points:	Attendance/participation

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Main Story**

You will write one narrative, longform story, 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. Idea must be approved. Word count of final draft: 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.

You must publish these on Medium, another site of your choice, or a media outlet by the assigned date. While it's not required that you have access to analytics, it will be helpful if you can publish with an outlet in which you have that information.

Details of each of the following elements will be discussed in class. All deadlines are at the start of class on that day.

#### *Story excerpts:*

About 250 words of any part of your story.

Excerpt 1: Due 9/26

Excerpt 2: Due 10/10

50 points each: 25 points on quality of reporting, 25 points on quality of writing

*First draft:*

Due 10/24

100 points:

- Quality of lede: 10
- Quality of nut: 10
- Overall structure: 20
- Quality of reporting/info: 40
- Writing strength/mechanics: 20

*Revision:*

Due 11/14

200 points:

- Overall quality of writing (structure, mechanics, etc...): 100
- Overall quality of reporting (compelling and unique info): 100

*Engagement/Multimedia Support:*

Part of the media world is not just reporting and writing the story, but making sure people read it. To that end, we will work on engagement techniques and measure the reach (here's where the publishing requirement comes in).

First drafts of everything (do not post any of this initially) due 10/31

150 points

*Supporting material (50 points):*

- 2 photos (you may assign these to a photographer)
- Headlines and subhed for story (not for social, but for actual story)

*Social media bundle (100 points):*

- List of five influencers who could potentially share your story
- 1 30-second video trailer for your story (you may work with others to produce)
- 2 Instagram posts
- 4 Tweets
- 1 Facebook post

## **OTHER ASSIGNMENTS**

*Short Practice Writing Assignments*

Details and deadlines given out in class

200 points: 4 each of 50 points

*Reading Presentation*

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

50 points

*Reading Quizzes/Tests*

We'll have short quizzes on the assigned reading. A Writing Tools test will be given 9/12.

100 points

### *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).

100 points

### **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

>>Email a copy of your work (or send a link in a google doc to [profspiker@gmail.com](mailto:profspiker@gmail.com)

>>For short practice assignments, send digital copy and bring a printed copy to class

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

>>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 use your phone, please leave the room to do so. Bring laptops to class.

### **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. He was recognized as the University of Florida Teacher of the Year for 2016-17. 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 almost 20 books, including the national bestselling *YOU: The Owner's Manual* series. Twitter/Instagram/Snapchat: @ProfSpiker. Web site: [www.tedspiker.com](http://www.tedspiker.com).