

# **JOU 4308: Magazine & Feature Writing (section 1B18)**

## **Course Syllabus: SPRING 2020**

**INSTRUCTOR:** *Yelena M. Alpert, M.A.*  
yelena.alpert@jou.ufl.edu  
*Office Hours: By Appointment*

**CLASSROOM:** CBD 0230  
MONDAY 6:15 PM - 9:10 PM [Period 11 - E2]

**WEBSITE:** *e-Learning:* <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

*Make sure to check Canvas regularly for course readings, class announcements and assignments, lecture notes, grades and discussions.*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

This course will teach you about magazine content, such as front-of-book articles, essays and features. Each student will finish the semester with at least one solid pitch letter.

You will learn how to:

- Identify section editors and pages open to freelancers
- Compose pitch letters (and to follow-up)
- Apply reporting and storytelling techniques to an article
- Edit articles

This class will be conducted like an editorial meeting. Consider yourself an assistant editor. You will figure out if your story ideas work for your chosen magazines, as well as fine-tune your voice and style to reflect current publications.

### **REQUIRED READING**

**Writing to Persuade by Trish Hall**

ISBN: 978-1-63149-305-8

**On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction by William Zinsser**

ISBN: 978-0-06089-154-1

**Alone in the Kitchen with an Eggplant: Confessions of Cooking for One and Dining Alone edited by Jenni Ferrari-Adler**

ISBN: 978-1-59448-313-4

**Canvas: Select magazine articles**

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

To write for magazines, you must understand magazine content. To understand magazines, you have to read them cover to cover. Read your dream publications.

### **The Associated Press Stylebook 2019: and Briefing on Media Law**

(54<sup>th</sup> Edition, Hachette Book Group)

ISBN: 978-1-5416-9989-2

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is crucial to the success of this class. In addition to lectures and discussions, periodic activities and peer-editing exercises will take place during class. This will count toward your participation points.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

Do not be late. Class starts promptly at 6:15 p.m. Each student will be granted a one-time tardy of 10 minutes, or less. Each tardy thereafter will count against your participation grade.

## **MAKE-UP POLICY**

It is the student's responsibility to advise the instructor before class of any personal emergency that might affect his/her performance in the course. In the case of an emergency, or an extenuating circumstance that causes you to miss class over an extended period of time, please notify the instructor as soon as possible via e-mail, or phone. The student will be held responsible for missed class notes, handouts, and any announcements made in his/her absence.

No make-up opportunities will be offered without a valid excuse that is approved in advance. Excused absences include religious holidays, medical and/or family emergencies, and participation in extracurricular university events. Documentation is required, such as a dated and signed note from a medical center (i.e. Student Health Care Center).

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

## **ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

All assignments are due on the dates specified in class. Assignments should be printed and uploaded to the e-Learning website. If the assignment is not uploaded by the time specified, the upload function will no longer be available. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all (correct) files have been uploaded. Backup all files on Google Drive and/or iCloud. Please leave ample time to deal with technical issues, giving you the opportunity to upload using university computers, or to alert the instructor in advance. At the instructor's discretion, e-mailed and/or

hard copy assignments will be accepted if students communicate an uploading issue well in advance of the due date.

### **Late Assignments**

Deadlines are extremely important. Expect a **10 percent** deduction for every day the assignment is late. Late assignments should be emailed directly to the instructor.

If you are having problems with an assignment, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor and discuss possible solutions to ensure the assignment is on track. This should be done with sufficient time prior to the due date, not the day before. It is recommended that students make an appointment in advance to discuss questions during office hours.

### **EMAIL POLICY**

Please allow 24 hours for a response to emails sent between Monday and Friday. I will do my best to reply in a timely manner. Students should not have the expectation that I will reply to questions about assignments the night before they are due.

### **GRADING POLICY**

Grading rubrics will be discussed before all assignments/exercises, so that students have a clear understanding of how they will be graded. Students are welcome to meet with the instructor during office hours to discuss questions or concerns regarding grading policies or their specific grades.

<b>COURSE GRADES</b>	<b>POINTS</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL</b>
<b><i>Magazine Review Presentation</i></b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b><i>Pitch Letter Roundup</i></b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b><i>FOB "Study" Write-Up</i></b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b><i>Front-of-Book assignment</i></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20%</b>
<i>1st Draft Pitch Letter + Article</i>	40	
<i>Final Pitch Letter + Article</i>	60	
<b><i>Reported Essay assignment</i></b>	<b>125</b>	<b>25%</b>
<i>1st Draft Pitch Letter + Essay</i>	50	
<i>Final Pitch Revision+ Essay</i>	75	
<b><i>Edit Test</i></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b><i>Participation</i></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20%</b>
<i>In-Class Activities</i>	50	
<i>Reading Discussions</i>	25	
<i>Attendance</i>	25	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

- **Magazine Review Presentation:** In-class presentation (~15 minutes) evaluating your favorite magazine.
- **Pitch/Query Letter Roundup:** Three pitch letters, each outlining an idea.
- **FOB “Study” Write-Up:** A pitch letter and 100-200 word summary of a recent study.
- **FOB assignment:** A short front-of-book story selected from your pitch letters.
- **Reported Essay assignment:** First-person essay (backed by supporting sources) on a topic of your choosing.
- **Edit Test:** Take-home test that will resemble a real Edit Test given by editors during the interviewing process.
- **In-Class Activities:** Five 10-point activities will take place during class throughout the semester. If you are absent or come in late, you miss the activity (and the points).
- **Reading Discussions:** Analyzing magazine content based on weekly reading assignments.
- **Attendance:** Think of this class as an editorial meeting. You are to show up on time, take part in discussions and respect your colleagues (put away your phone, use laptops for in-class purposes only, don’t bring your dinner).

## GRADING SCALE

<i>LETTER GRADE</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE</i>	<i>POINTS</i>
A	93 – 100%	465 – 500
A-	90 - 92%	450 – 464
B+	87 – 89%	435 – 449
B	83 – 86%	415 – 434
B-	80 – 82%	400 – 414
C+	77-79%	385 – 399
C	73-76%	365 – 384
C-	70-72%	350 – 364
D	60-69%	300 – 349
E	Below 60%	Below 299

Grades will not be rounded up. Students must earn the minimum whole number associated with each letter grade to qualify for that grade. See current UF policies for assigning grade points here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## EXTRA CREDIT

Your goal is to write publishable stories. Should you sell at least one of your assignments from this course, you will get **15 points** toward your grade on any assignment published in a student-run publication (e.g. *Alligator*), and **25 points** on

an assignment published in any other local or regional magazine, newspaper or website.

If you sell your story to a national magazine or website you'll earn **50 points**. You'll have to show an assignment letter confirming acceptance, or bring in published work **before April 20**. If you're unsure how your target publication ranks (e.g. local/regional or national), check with the instructor before pitching.

### **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Unless noted otherwise, all assignments must be PRINTED OUT (and stapled) as well as UPLOADED via Canvas. Assignments for peer-editing should be printed out prior to class start time.

Each FILE NAME should include your name, assignment and draft number (YelenaAlpert\_FOB\_1).

Each Word document should include your name, assignment title, and date.

Ex. Yelena Alpert  
Front of Book Draft 1  
1/6/19

Please use 12-point font and double-space your work.

### **CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS**

Please put away your cell phones and turn off the sound as not to disturb the class. Using your phone during class will result in participation point deductions. You can check your phones during the scheduled break.

Laptops are encouraged for note taking. However, using your laptop during class for non-course-related activities will result in a deduction from your participation grade.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

**January 10:** Last day to add/drop classes without penalty

**January 20:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no class)

**March 2 – March 6:** Spring Break (no class)

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## **UF POLICIES**

### **UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

**UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

**THE HONOR CODE:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “*We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.*”

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

*“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”*

The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

All individual, or group, work submitted for academic credit should be the original work of the individual, or individuals, seeking credit.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. *Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.*
2. *Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.*

Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

## **ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

## **GETTING HELP**

### **Health and Wellness**

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

*Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center,* 392-1161.

*University Police Department,* 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).  
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

### **Academic Resources**

*E-Learning technical support,* 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

*Career Connections Center,* Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.  
<https://career.ufl.edu/>

*Library Support,* <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask> Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

*Teaching Center,* Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

*Writing Studio,* 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

*Student Complaints On-Campus:* <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honorcode-student-conduct-code/>

*On-Line Students Complaints:* <http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/>