JOU 4311: ADVANCED MAGAZINE WRITING

PROFESSOR
Ted Spiker
2070 Weimer
392-6990
tspi@jou.ufl.edu
Skype: ProfSpiker (by appointment)
g-chat: ProfSpiker (by appointment)

OFFICE HOURS
By appointment
or drop-in

REQUIRED READING
Writing Tools, Roy Peter Clark, Little, Brown
Other readings will be sent via email

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. In short, what you give, you get.

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
Interviewing
Diversity of Sources
Ethical Issues
Story Structure
Style/Voice
Marketing/Audience
Reporting/Research
Revision
Writing Short, Writing Tight
Story Genre
Literary Devices

GRADING
You will be graded on a 1,000-point scale:

A: 925–1000
A-: 900–924
B+: 875–899
B: 825–874
B-: 800–824
C+: 775–799
C: 725–774
C-: 700–724
D+: 675–699
D: 625–674
D-: 600–624
E: 0-599
ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

Main Story (600 points)
50 points: Idea memo
100 points: Story excerpt
200 points: First draft
200 points: Revision
50 points: Query/pitch

Other (400 points)
50 points: Warm-Up Writing Assignment
150 points: Short feature
100 points: Reading Quizzes
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 3,000. 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 will be discussed in class:

Idea memo:
No more than one page single-spaced.
Due Wednesday 2/4 at noon by email.
50 points: Judged on overall quality

Story excerpt:
About 500 words of any part of your story.
Due the week of 2/16 at your individual conference.
100 points: 50 points on quality of reporting, 50 points on quality of writing

First draft:
Due 3/16 in class.
200 points: Point breakdown to be handed out in class

Revision:
Due 4/6 in class.
200 points: Point breakdown to be handed out in class

Query/pitch:
Due 4/6 in class (no more than a half of a page single-spaced).
50 points: Judged on overall quality
Other

Warm-Up Writing Assignment
No more than 1,000 words.
Due 1/16 at noon by email.
50 points: Details given in first class, judged on overall quality

Short Feature
About 500 words.
Due 4/13 in class.
150 points: 75 on quality reporting, 75 on quality of writing.
Story can be of any magazine-style genre (no news), except essays and reviews. Some reporting required. You can do mini-profiles, how-to’s, trends, etc… Ideas must be approved.

Reading Quizzes
We’ll have short quizzes to make sure you do the reading. They’ll be straightforward if you have done the reading. Links to magazine stories will be sent out the week before they’re due.

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 20 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).

READING SCHEDULE
(Links or PDFs will be emailed)

For 1/26
Writing Tools: Intro, Part One and Part Two

For 2/2
Writing Tools: Part Three and Part Four

Links for approximately six long-form pieces will be sent out the week before the reading is due

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

*Failure to follow guidelines will result in a point penalty at instructor’s discretion*
DEADLINES
Failure to meet deadlines for writing assignments will result in a 20-point deduction for every 24-hour period that it is late.

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, please leave the room to do so.

THE INSTRUCTOR
Associate Professor Ted Spiker is the interim 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.