Fall 2011 Class Syllabus
University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communications
Magazine Writing and Reporting
19:122:SCA (4 s.h.)

4:30P - 6:20P TTh W236 AJB

Instructor: Anne Duggan
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Departmental DEO: Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, David Perlmutter, E305 Adler Journalism Building, 384-3833. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the CLAS Code of Academic Honesty. Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies
Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.

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Conflict resolution. In all cases, I am open to hearing student concerns related to the course. I will be eager to work with you to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings. In fact, even though this may be difficult for you, I encourage you to resolve conflicts with me directly. If you feel uncomfortable bringing a concern to me, you may consult the following university authorities in the following order: Dr. Frank Durham, associate director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Dr. David Perlmutter, director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Dr. Helena Dettmer, Interim Assoc. Dean for Academic Programs in CLAS; the University Ombudspersons. For more information, see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook at: www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Course Overview
In news writing, we were taught to write in an inverted pyramid, with the 5 W’s at the top and narrowing to less factual information at the end. A magazine article is more of a rectangle, where the lede sets the scene, the body of the story is a bridge that supports the structure, and the ending takes you to your destination.

In this class, you will write three articles: a profile, a trend or informational piece, and an enterprise story that explores in depth an idea, event, trend, question, or controversy. You will have a fair degree of latitude to choose a subject that interests you. However, all final topics must be reviewed and approved by the instructor. In addition, you will be expected to complete a number of smaller exercises.

Good writing only seems flawless and easy. Writing is surprisingly difficult. Much of it involves ruthless editing, rewriting, and review. One of my favorite quotes is, “I love being a writer. It’s the paperwork I can’t stand.” Even in this electronic age, where an entire piece can be pitched, researched, and produced electronically, the “paperwork” is the amount of time and energy the writer needs to devote to make it coherent and whole.

Basic writing is a technique and can be learned. Good writing is an art that takes work. You can learn all the techniques but great writing is enriched with knowledge, experience, and a curiosity about the world. If you aren’t at least curious about your subject, about the world it lives in, and the subject it addresses, you will be a journeyman, not a master craftsman.

One note: In addition to strict ideas and great copy, editors expect strict adherence to are encouraged to keep in mind The Iowa Dozen throughout this course. These competencies and values reflect the ways in which this course will contribute to your overall Journalism education. You will be asked to identify their relevance to your major coursework in your senior portfolio. They listed at the end of the syllabus.

The Senior Portfolio: You should keep the stories you write for this class as part of your iFolio portfolio in order to have materials for your senior portfolio. Remember: This is a graduation requirement!

Expectations
Attendance is required and will be taken. As noted below (under “Grading”), attendance counts for 10 percent of your overall grade. You are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester; however, you will receive a zero on any short assignments that take place during that class. If a reading is handed out during a class you miss, it is your responsibility to get it from one of your classmates. It is also your responsibility to get class notes from a classmate. Please do not ask me to “fill you in” on what you missed. Students with excellent attendance and participation generally receive a better grade. Excused absences are those that have been discussed with me and approved ahead of time (no later than the class period before the one you will miss). I will not accept any excuse sent by email on the day of the class as an excused absence.

Being on time to class is not only courteous to your fellow students and the instructor; it is also expected. If a situation will get you to class late on a regular basis, discuss it with me as soon as possible. Courtesy and civility in dealing with fellow students and the instructor are also expected. Even the most experienced writers can find the workshopping experience difficult. During workshops, focus on content, structure, and mechanics. The content and the beliefs reflected in the stories are to be treated respectfully.

**Deadlines**

*Deadlines in this class are absolute.* All papers will be due in writing at the beginning of the class period. There will be no printing of assignments in class. No make-up work will be allowed, except for assignments due during excused absences. If you are taking an excused absence on the day an assignment is due, your assignment will be due at the class that meets before your absence.

Cell phones and other communications devices must be turned off during class. Please do not use laptops in class. There will be times when we go online to check sources or other information on the Web. However, Facebook, Twitter, chat, or email are NOT to be used during class. *This is especially important when we have guests.*

**Reading**

Stay up-to-date on local and world events by reading daily periodicals. Reading assignments may be made based on the *New York Times* print edition. Other assignments will be distributed in class or be available electronically. You should come to class ready to discuss all assigned readings during the following class. Part of your grade will be based on participation in class discussions.

Grammar and style: Use “spell check,” but verify.

Spelling: It counts. (WARNING: Instructor fixation)

Some excellent web sources of magazine articles are:

- www.instapaper.com
- umagazinology.jhu.edu (looks at the best of University magazines)
- www.kk.org/cooltools/the-best-magazi.php
Class texts (Available at Prairie Lights Bookstore under the instructor’s name and this course number)

*The best American magazine writing 2010*, compiled by the American Society of Magazine Editors

*The New, New Journalism: Conversations with America’s Best Nonfiction Writers on their Craft*, by Robert S. Boynton

*Associated Press Stylebook 2011*

You are strongly recommended to read the *New York Times* daily edition. Class discussions, in addition to focusing on the readings, will bring in information from other timely sources. Free copies of the *New York Times* are available to students in designated boxes across campus, including the AJB.

Assignments

A) One 350-500 word piece describing someone who raised you.

B) Short writing assignments, including written reaction to articles read for class, a query letter, and writing exercises, will be assigned during the semester.

C) One 750-1,200 word personality profile. This should not be the person from assignment A.

D) One 1,200-2,000 word trend/service/informational, personal essay, or behind-the-scenes story, drawing on local events, sources, and issues.

E) One 1,800-2,500 word enterprise story—a feature that explores in depth an idea, event, question, controversy, or trend.

Assignments C, D, and E should be written with a particular publication in mind. All story topics must be approved in advance by the instructor.

Grading

In the magazine writing world, you are judged by your writing. However, you are also judged by your ability to meet deadlines, to provide accurate and clean copy, and make timely revisions. This is also true for this class.

Your three articles (C, D, and E) are worth 20, 20, and 25 percent, respectively, of your overall grade. First drafts will be assigned tentative letter grades; revisions will earn the final grade. (A=exceptional work, B=very good work, C=average work, D=unacceptable work, F=failing.)

Your writing will be graded on content (background research, sources, reporting, complexity), writing skill and style (voice, transitions, complex sentences, interesting word choice), and mechanics (grammar, spelling, organization, etc). Revisions between your first draft and final story should show that you have listened to comments made by your classmates and instructor during workshopping. Significant revisions that greatly improve a piece improve your chances of getting a better grade. However, changes alone
don’t guarantee a higher grade. You must also pay attention to content, writing and style, and mechanics. If you have any questions about your grade, please see me.

*Class attendance is worth 15 percent of your grade.*

*Preparation, participation, following instructions, etc., are worth 10 percent of the grade.*

*Short assignments* will be noted as 5=exceptional, 4=good, 3=satisfactory, 2=unsatisfactory, or 0=non-existent. They are *cumulatively worth 10 percent of your grade.*

**Calendar** This schedule is subject to change, depending on the availability of guest speakers, etc. Any changes will be announced in class and on the class ICON page. Additional information and any changes to the syllabus and/or class schedule will be posted on the course’s ICON page.

**Week 1 — Introductions**
8/23: Welcome: introductions, course overview, review of syllabus. In-class assignment: answer a short questionnaire about your interests and reading habits. We’ll share what answers.

In-class exercise: Conduct 10-minute interview based on the questionnaire answered by your classmate and be prepared to discuss how you would structure a profile of him or her.

*Readings for 8/25:*

*Assignment for 8/25:* Bring to class 3 feature story ideas you are interested in writing about, along with the names of three publications each for which they might be appropriate (B). These may or may not be the ideas you end up using for your assignments. Be prepared to share and we’ll talk about these ideas as a class. Turn in your printed list of ideas at the end of class.

*Assignment due 8/30:* A 350-500 word profile describing one of the people who raised you (A). This will be graded as a short assignment.

**Week 2 — Profiles**

*Readings for 8/30:*
2. “Lost Son,” by Calvin Trillin, *The New Yorker*
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/03/14/050314fa_fact3?currentPage=1
   http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/16/theater/16vanessa-redgrave.html?
   r=1&n=Top%2fFeatures%2fTheater%2fNews and Features%2fPeople%2fVanessa Redgrave

**Assignment for 8/30:** Due at beginning of class: 350-500 word profile describing one of the people who raised you (A). This will be graded as a short assignment.

**Readings for 9/1:**

Be prepared to discuss local media sources that use feature material.

**Week 3 — Profiles**

**Readings for 9/6:**
   http://nymag.com/arts/all/features/17244/
sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1157377/index.htm
   http://susanorlean.com/articles/orchid_fever.php

**Reminder:** Profile ideas in writing will be due next class.

**Assignments for 9/8:**
Guest Kathryn Howe, writer/editor & Tina Owen, editor, *Iowa Alumni Magazine*,
http://www.iowalum.com/magazine/index_public.cfm

A Monster Called Meth: http://www.iowalum.com/magazine/dec06/Exclusive/meth.cfm

Iowa Alumni Magazine Digital issue:

Bring 2-3 ideas for profiles to pitch to the class. Include 2-3 possible sources for article, not including subject. Class will help you think about the assignment (C). Turn in printed sheets at the end of the class period.

**Week 4 — Profiles in different media**

**This week:** Confirm profile subject with instructor

**Readings for 9/13:**
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/04/26/100426fa_fact_kramer

*Readings for 9/15:*
2. “Can You Say … ‘Hero’?” by Tom Junod, *Pittsburgh in Words*  
http://www.pittsburghinwords.org/tom_junod.html

Sign up for workshopping. If you are not in class on 9/15, instructor will assign workshop sessions. Workshop assignments will be posted to class’ ICON page.

**Week 5 — Trend/Informational**

*Readings for 9/20:*
Review workshopping principles (download worksheet from ICON)

2. Adrian Nicole Leblanc, *The New New Journalism*, 227  
http://littlevillagemag.com/content/2010/12/03/renovating-lives/  

*9/20: Profile drafts (C) due on paper at start of 9/20 class.* Electronic versions of stories must be posted to folder in ICON dropbox by midnight 9/20. *Second hour:* Workshop group #1.

*9/22:* Workshop group #2. *Second hour:* Discuss readings, if time.

**Week 6 — Profiles**

9/27:
*First hour:* Workshop group #3.  
*Second hour: Guest TBA*

*Readings for 9/29:*
4. “When ‘Bite Me’ is ‘Off the Record,’” *The Atlantic*
Week 7 — Trend/Informational

Final paper versions of Profile (C) due at start of 10/4 class session.

Readings for 10/4:

Assignment for 10/6: Bring, in writing to class, three trend/informational story ideas that you are interested in. Be prepared to discuss.

Readings for 10/6:
3. “Secret of AA: After 75 Years, We Don’t Know How it Works,” *Wired*, by Brendan I. Koerner

Week 8 — Enterprise

Readings for 10/11:

Assignment for 10/11: Turn in trend/informational story (D) idea in writing, along with at least two sources you plan to interview for the story to instructor.

Assignment for 10/13: TBA

Week 9 — Enterprise

Readings for 10/18:
10/18: Discuss readings

10/20:
*Guest:* Tim Schoon, Photographer, University Relations Publications.

**Week 10**

**Trend/info drafts (D) due at start of 10/25 class.** All stories must be posted to appropriate folder in ICON dropbox by midnight 10/25.

*Assignments for 10/25:* Draft of trend/informational story (D) due at beginning of class. Bring in final proposal for enterprise story (E), plus two sources, in writing, to pitch to the class. Turn in written versions at end of class session. Be prepared to discuss in some depth enterprise story (E) with class.

*Guest speaker TBA. Sign up for workshop*

10/27: Workshop group #1 trend/informational story (D).

**Week 11**

**Enterprise story (E) proposals due:**

11/1: Workshop group #2 trend/informational story (D).

11/3: Workshop group #3 trend/informational story (D).

**Week 12 — Enterprise**

*Readings:*


*Schedule individual meeting with instructor to discuss progress on enterprise assignment (E).*

**Trend/Informational (D) final version due at beginning of class session, 11/8**

11/8: Trend/Informational story (D) final due at beginning of class session. Discuss readings.

11/10: TBA
Week 13 — Enterprise

Readings for 11/15:
2. Review http://www.Spot.us website and be prepared to discuss stories and set-up of site.

*Speaker TBA (tent)*

11/17: Discuss readings. Schedule workshopping session.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15

11/29: **Enterprise story (E) draft due at start of 11/29 class.** All stories must be posted to appropriate folder in ICON dropbox by midnight 11/29. Revised versions may be posted up until 8 a.m. on day of your workshop session.

Workshop group #1 enterprise (E) stories.

12/1: Workshop group #2 enterprise (E) stories.

Week 16

11/6: Workshop group #3 enterprise stories (E)
11/8: Workshop group #4 enterprise stories (E)

Week 17

**Final version of Enterprise story (E) due in my office by 7 p.m. 12/12**
The Iowa Dozen

As one of more than 100 programs in journalism and mass communication accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), we assess student learning to assure that each of our graduates meets the following standards.

We learn to...

Write correctly, clearly and well.
Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
Edit and evaluate carefully.
Use media technologies thoughtfully.
Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value...

Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
A diverse global community.
Creativity and independence.
Truth, accuracy and fairness.

We explore...

Theories and concepts.
The history, structure and economy of media institutions
The role of media in shaping cultures.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Policies and Procedures

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www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml
**Academic Fraud** Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services who enforces the appropriate consequences.

[www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtm](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtm)

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