Fall 2013 Class Syllabus
University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Magazine Writing and Reporting
19:122:SCA (4 s.h.)
Class ICON page: https://icon.uiowa.edu/index.shtml

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

Instructor: Anne Duggan
Office: E350D AJB
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Departmental DEO: Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Julie Andsager, E305 Adler Journalism Building, 384-3428.

Administrative Home
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 Academic Policies 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 correspondence. (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
All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The date and time of every final examination is announced by the registrar generally by the tenth day of classes. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. It is the student’s responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the final exam.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Academic Policies 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 website.
COURSE OVERVIEW: Objectives and Goals

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 study three general types of magazine-length articles: profile, trend/informational, and enterprise/investigative. 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 shorter exercises.

Good writing 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, “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 deadlines. In this class, you are expected to do the same.

You are expected 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. They listed at the end of the syllabus.
**Expectations**
*Attendance is required and will be taken.*

As noted below (under “Grading”), attendance counts for 15 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 assigned during a class you miss, it is your responsibility to get it from one of your classmates or from ICON. It is also your responsibility to get class notes from a classmate. Please do not ask your instructor 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 the instructor and approved ahead of time (no later than the class period before the one you will miss). An email on the day of the class is not an excused absence.**

You are expected to be on time to class. This 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. We will spend a number of class sessions in workshops. Even the most experienced writers find the 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 & Courtesy**
*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 still be due at the assigned time.*

Cell phones and other communications devices must be turned off during class. You may use laptops in class to read articles that are under discussion. In addition, there will be times when we go online to check sources or other information on the Web. It is obvious when you are checking Facebook, Twitter, chatting, or emailing during class. I may not always say anything to you, but I will notice.

*I shouldn’t have to point this out, but please give presenters and guests your full attention. Treat them as you expect to be treated.*
Reading & Writing
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 for the class. Part of your grade will be based on participation in class discussions.

Grammar and style: Pay attention to those squiggles that Microsoft Word puts under words. Reread your work. Have someone whose judgement you trust read it.

Spelling: It counts. (WARNING: Instructor fixation)

Some excellent web sources of magazine/longform articles:
www.instapaper.com
www.kk.org/cooltools/the-best-magazi.php
blog.longform.org/

Required class texts (Available at Prairie Lights Bookstore under the instructor’s name and this course number)

Associated Press Stylebook 2011

Subscribe to Iowa Center for Public Affairs Journalism’s newsletter, Iowa Watch.
http://iowawatch.org/

Roy’s Writing Tools, by Roy Peter Clark, download FREE through itunes

Writing Tools is also available through the Student Dropbox volume on jmcserver.iowa.uiowa.edu. You can copy the audio files from there.

Windows:
From the Start menu, enter the following in the Search box at the bottom of Start menu:
\\jmcserver.iowa.uiowa.edu\Student_Dropbox\Roys_Writing_Tools

Mac:
From the Finder, select Connect to Server from the Go menu and enter the following address in the dialog box:
afp://jmcserver.iowa.uiowa.edu/Student_Dropbox/Roys_Writing_Tools
You are strongly recommended to read the *New York Times* daily. 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.

**Other great books on writing**

*Eats, Shoots and Leaves, The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation!,* Lynne Truss, Gotham Books,

*On Writing, A Memoir of the Craft,* Stephen King, Scribner

*Bird by Bird, Some Instructions on Writing and Life,* Anne Lamott, Anchor Books


*The Elements of Style,* William Strunk and E. B. White, many editions

**Online references**

*Elements of Style* Online (searchable), [http://www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/)


For current editing issues, follow #APStyle on Twitter

**Help closer to home**

The SJMC Resource Center, located in Room E350 Adler Journalism Building, is a place for students to study, relax between classes, work on group projects, check e-mail, do research, and browse key publications in the field of journalism and mass communications. You can also find writing assistance with Journalism writing assignments. The Writing Assistance Project is staffed by SJMC teaching assistants. The Resource Center is open Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am–8 pm, Friday: 8:30 am–5 pm
ASSIGNMENTS

A. One 350-500 word piece describing someone who raised you.
B. Shorter assignments, including an interview exercise, written ideas for articles, writing exercises, and presentations, will be completed 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, travel, community news, 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 and idea, event, question, controversy, or trend. One “source” for your story should be a report or other research material.

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 magazine writing, you are judged by what you can put down on paper. You are also judged by your ability to meet deadlines, to provide accurate and clean copy, and ability to produce timely revisions. This is also true for this class.

The three articles (C, D, and E) are worth 20, 20, and 25 percent, respectively, of your overall grade. Because your instructor also reads your drafts as part of the workshop process, your improvement and willingness to incorporate corrections and edits will be noted. (A=exceptional work, B=very good work, C=average work, D=unacceptable work, F=failing.)

Your writing will be graded on the following:

Content: This includes background research, sources, reporting, and complexity of the story.

Writing skill: This is both 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 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.

Final Exam
Your Enterprise project will be your final for the class. Your instructor will announce the final date/time in class and post it to the class ICON page.
Calendar
This schedule is subject to change. Additional information and any changes to the syllabus and/or class schedule will be posted on the course’s ICON page.

WEEK 1
8/27: Welcome
Introductions, course overview, review of syllabus, review of first assignment due 8/29. One subject we will discuss is the difference of reports vs. stories, in Writing Tools. (#25 “Learn the Difference Between Reports and Stories”)

In-class assignment
Fill out a short questionnaire about your interests and reading habits. Included among these will be question “If you were writing an article about yourself, what would you write?” We’ll share the responses.

8/29: Readings
Read assigned articles, noted below. Think about what works and what doesn’t. What interested you as a reader? What do you think about the writing process? There are two surprises in these stories (one each). A hint about the Kanye story: This story was an award winner in 2011 because it bridged celebrity “access” and social media. How do you think about the two articles you’ve read after you listened to the Writing Tools chapters? Have our authors followed the “rules?”

“Kanye West Has A Goblet,” Slate, Aug. 25, 2010, 
www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2010/08/kanye_west_has_a_goblet.html

Writing Tools, #1 “Begin Sentences with Subjects and Verbs,” 
#2 “Order Words for Emphasis,” #3 “Activate Your Verbs,” #4 
“Be Passive Aggressive,” #14 “Get the Name of the Dog,”

In-class exercise: Conduct 10-minute interview with assigned 
classmate, based using his or her questionnaire as a jumping off 
point. Tell us about your subject, what questions you asked, which 
one’s elicited good answers and which ones didn’t, and how you 
would structure a profile of him or her.

Assignment due 8/29: Write a 350-500 word profile describing one of 
the people who raised you. Turn in paper version at start of class. 
This will be graded as a short assignment (A).

Next Thursday, we will begin presentations led by members of the 
class. Over the course of the semester, each one of you will be 
responsible for choosing and leading a discussion about the article 
with the class. The articles must be approved ahead of time by the 
instructor.

Week 2—Profiles
9/3:
Assignment
Due at beginning of class: 350-500 word profile describing one of the 
people who raised you. This will be graded as a short assignment.

Readings
These four articles represent the three types of articles you will be 
assigned this semester. Read and be prepared to discuss the 
characteristics that make them what they are. How are they similar? 
How are they different from each other? Note the lede and where it
comes in the story. Be prepared to suggest other stories that fit these descriptions.

**Profile:** A profile can be a chronological exploration of a person’s life, a moment in time for one person, or a representative of a program or effort. There are similarities and differences in each of these, but what they have in common is passion: passion for an activity, for another person, or for life.

How does this relate to passion?
“Happily Evie After,” *Bicycling*,

**Trend/Informational:** How is this informational? What do you learn from it? How much information do you think had to be distilled to end up with an informative, yet short, description?
“Spin City: Four ways to enjoy bicycling in 2012 — race, ride, watch, volunteer,”

Between Informational and Enterprise:
“Drivers, Bicyclists Have Uneasy Relationship in East Iowa,”

**Enterprise:** What makes this an investigational piece? What’s the “call to action?”
“Broken,” *Bicycling magazine*,

9/5 — *Profiles*
*Class Presentations*
See Class ICON site for requirements and responsibilities for Class Presentations. Presenters will be responsible for the following: getting the instructor’s approval of the story, distributing the link to the class via email, and leading a discussion in class about the article. Look at the structure of the article. What makes it different from others? Where’s the passion? In addition, presenters will be expected to discuss how the assigned Writing Tools chapters relate to their article.

**Readings**

*Clark’s Writing Tools, #5 Watch Those Adverbs,” #6 “Take it Easy on the “-ings, #7 “Fear Not the Long Sentence”*

**Assignment**

*Sign up for presentation date*

Bring to class **THREE profile story ideas** you find interesting, along with the type of publications in which they might appear. Pay particular attention to what it means to write for different audiences. 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. This will be graded as a short assignment.

**Week 3—Profiles**

**9/10:**

*Assignments*  
The draft of your profile is due 9/16. The final version is due 9/24.

Continue to refine your profile topic. Use Clark’s #40 “Draft a Mission Statement for Your Work” to hone your story idea. It doesn’t have to be as long as the one he cites—2-3 sentences should do it. Bring to class a printed summary of your profile topic, including a mission statement and a list of sources, to pitch to the class. Your fellow
writers will help you think about your story. Turn in printed sheets at the end of the class period.

**Readings**

“300 Cats, Yes, Craziness, No.” *New York Times*, Jan 9, 2013


“Firebrand for Science and Big Man on Campus,” *New York Times*, June 17, 2013

**9/12:**

*Class Presentations*

**Readings**

*Writing Tools:* #8 “Establish a Pattern, Then Give it a Twist,” #9

“Punctuating with Power and Purpose,” #11 “Prefer the Simple Over the Technical”

*Sign up for workshop session.* Review workshopping principles (download worksheet from ICON). If you are not in class on 9/12, the instructor will assign workshop sessions. Workshop assignments will be posted to class’ ICON page.

**Week 4—Profiles**

*All* profile drafts must be uploaded to folder in ICON dropbox by midnight on Monday, 9/16. All drafts must be uploaded by the deadline, regardless of your workshop session.
9/17:  
WORKSHOP  
Read and be prepared to discuss drafts for workshop group #1, according to workshop principles.

9/19:  
WORKSHOP  
Read and comment on drafts for workshop group #2 and be prepared to discuss each submitted draft, according to workshop principles.

Week 5 — Trend/Informational  
Final (paper) versions of Profile due to instructor at start of 9/24 class session.

9/24:  
What is a trend/informational article? How does the writer distill a large amount of information to attract the reader to an event or business? How can you use your writing skills to capture the reader’s attention and teach us something?

Readings  
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/03/magazine/47-hour-train-ride.html


9/26:  
Class Presentations

Readings  
Writing Tools, #15 “Pay Attention to Names, #28 “Put Odd and Interesting Things Next to Each Other,” #34, “Turn Your Notebook into a ‘Camera’”

Assignment  
Bring to class, in writing, three trend/informational story ideas that interest you. Be prepared to discuss. Hand in to instructor at end of class.

Week 6 — Trend/Informational  
10/1:  
Readings  
“The Sharp, Sudden Decline of America’s Middle Class,”  
Rolling Stone, June 25, 2012  

“The Hunter Games,” New Yorker, 7/2/12, PDF is available on ICON and Resource Center

Assignment  
Bring to class a printed summary of your trend/informational topic, including a mission statement and a list of sources, to pitch to the class. Your fellow writers will help you think about your story. Turn in printed sheets at the end of the class period.

10/3:  
Class Presentations
Readings

*Clark's Writing Tools, #18, “Set the Pace with Sentence Length,”
#19, “Vary the Lengths of Paragraphs”*

Assignment

Continue to discuss trend/informational story ideas.

**Week 7—Trend/Informational**

**10/8**

Readings


‘Millennials Struggle with Financial Literacy,” *USA Today*, April 23, 2012

**10/10:**

*Class Presentations*

Readings

*Writing Tools, #37 “Shape Shorter Works with Wit and Polish,” #38 “Use Subtle Symbols, not Crashing Cymbals”*

**Week 8—Trend/Informational**

**10/15:**

*Sign up for workshop.*
Readings
“Pearls Before Breakfast,” Washington Post, 4/8/07

Post Magazine Chat: Too Busy to Stop and Hear the Music,”
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2007/04/06/DI2007040601228.html

Also watch:
http://www.snopes.com/music/artists/bell.asp
http://youtu.be/zfghlQbe32I

10/17:
Class Presentations

Readings
Writing Tools: #10 “Cut Big, Then Small,” #28 “Put Odd and Interesting Things Next to Each Other,”

Assignments
Outline your trend/informational story by sections, as we have discussed in class. If we have time, you will share your outline in class with other writers.

Sign up for Workshop

NOTE:
Trend/Informational drafts are due 10/20. All versions must be uploaded to ICON folder by midnight, 10/20 (Sunday night).

Week 9 — Trend/Informational Workshop
10/22:
Workshop trend/informational story.
10/24:
Workshop trend/informational story.

Week 10 — Enterprise

10/29:
Readings:


For the last few years of his life, film reviewer Roger Ebert was unable to speak. Thanks to technology, he could communicate with those around him. When you are reading this story, think about the obstacles for a writer accustomed to a “conventional” interview. What would you do? Do you ever stop thinking about Ebert’s disability? If so, when?


10/31
Class presentations

Readings

Writing Tools, #31 “Build York Work Around a Key Question,” #32 “Place Gold Coins Along the Path,” #33 “Repeat, Repeat, Repeat”

Week 11 — Enterprise

Trend/Informational story final print version due at beginning of class session, 11/5.
11/5:
Readings
Pay close attention to the structure of the articles. What is the writer trying to say to the reader? Also, how important is it to be able to interpret science in a story like this? Look at how they are organized, and how the reader is brought along to understand the point of the story.


Assignment
Bring to class 2-3 ideas for Enterprise story, including possible 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 with class

11/7:
Class Presentations

Readings
Writing Tools, #24 “Work from a Plan,” #39 “Write Toward and Ending”

Assignment
We will continue to share Enterprise story ideas.

Week 12 — Enterprise
11/12:
Readings


Assignment
Bring to class a printed summary of your enterprise topic, including a mission statement and a list of sources, to pitch to the class. Your fellow writers will help you think about your story. Turn in printed sheets at the end of the class period.

11/14:
Class Presentations

Readings
Writing Tools #39 “Write Toward an Ending,” #45 “Break Long Projects into Smaller Parts”

Week 13 — Enterprise
11/19:
Readings

11/21:
TBA
Readings
  Clark’s *Writing Tools*, #13 “Play With Words Even in Serious Articles,” #16 “Seek Original Images,” “#17 “Riff on the Creative Language of Others”

THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/25-30

Week 14
12/3: TBA
12/5: TBA

Sign up for workshopping session.

**Enterprise story (E)** must be posted to appropriate folder in ICON dropbox by **noon** on Sunday, 12/8.

Week 15
12/10: Workshop group #1
12/12: Workshop group #2

Exam week

*Final version of Enterprise story (E) due in my office. Final date will be posted on ICON page.*
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.