**COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES:**
This course will cover the basic elements involved as you begin to write a fiction or a non-fiction book. You can choose from genres such as memoir, historical, essay, autobiography, self-help, how to, humor or the novel. Each student will be expected to complete all readings and assignments, along with participating fully in class exercises, activities, and discussions. Student writing will be constructively discussed through individual workshop sessions. Students will complete two major projects: a non-fiction or fiction book proposal and a sample chapter, along with a number of smaller writing exercises and a book presentation in the Author’s Pavilion.

**TEXTS:**
All readings will be assigned on ICON during the semester. This material will be synthesized, evaluated and debated in discussions. Students are required to complete all readings and be prepared to participate in class discussions.

**WRITING/STORYTELLING LEARNING GOAL:**
Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work.

Learning Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.

Learning Objective 2: Students will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

Learning Objective 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.

**NOTES:**
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 at [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/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, k.11](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook)).

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES - The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which includes but is not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability and needs special accommodations. Please see me after class or during my office hours. See [http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/](http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/) for information.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY - All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook): "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." Student Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether in writing or speaking. Cheating includes submitting someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions - the professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. Each situation is handled individually, but if found guilty you will definitely receive an F on the assignment and possibly an F in the entire course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. 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 EXAM POLICIES** - The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. **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. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

**SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS** - Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

**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 contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**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. In the case of really bad weather like an ice storm, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.

**NONDISCRIMINATION IN THE CLASSROOM** - The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. Expressions of hate and bigotry directed at individuals or identities are not acceptable. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, diversity@uiowa.edu or visit diversity.uiowa.edu.

**EMAIL** - Make sure your email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly. University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty must use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual, III.15.2. *Scroll to k.11.)

**ATTENDANCE** - Attendance is mandatory. Every class is important so please don’t ask my permission to miss a class. If you must miss a class you will need to provide a written explanation and adequate documentation for me to consider suspending the penalty. Missing 30 minutes of one class can be considered an absence. You can miss two classes without penalty.

**DEADLINES** - Deadlines in this class are firm. Late assignments should be pre-approved. NO assignment will be extended more than one week past the deadline – NO exceptions. It is your responsibility to turn in your assignments directly to the professor when they are due. If you turn in an assignment in some other way (under office door or email), at some other time (before or after due date), the professor not responsible if it is lost or misplaced. It is always a good idea to keep a copy in case there is a problem.
RESOURCES – The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences offers a number of resources for student success. For example: The Writing Center, The Speaking Center and Tutor Iowa. The School of Journalism Resource Center (E350 Adler) also offers a broad range of help including computer access, writing assistance and relevant journalism materials.

CHANGES - It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus according to how readings, videos, speakers, and assignments flow throughout the semester. A number of new videos have been ordered. So a currently listed video in the syllabus may be replaced by a new one depending on arrival date.

WARNING - If any of the videos shown in class are offensive you are not required to stay and view them. However, each video has been selected because of its appropriateness to the particular section studied. And all are available on television or on the Internet.

COLLABORATION – If a group project is assigned, each group member is expected to contribute equally. If, the professor receives a complaint, each student will be required to complete a self-evaluation describing the equality or the lack of it during the group’s project. Students who misrepresent themselves as equal partners in this collaborative project but who are actually letting others do the bulk of the work will be reported to the College for academic dishonesty.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Student Rights and Responsibilities include your right to expect a classroom environment that enables all to learn comfortably, plus you have a responsibility to this class and your own education to help create a classroom environment where the same is possible for everyone. At the most basic level, this means that you will respect the other members of the class, including the professor, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTER- Once class starts you may not use the computer to check your email, go on Facebook or any other computer activity outside of class work. You will lose 5 points each time the professor discovers an inappropriate use of the computer. It is also rude and unacceptable to work on the computer while the professor or fellow students are presenting to the class or a video is playing. Please be respectful at all times.

GRADING:
You must earn 60% of the available points in order to pass this class. I have rigorous expectations and grade accordingly. Assignments will be graded with these guidelines in mind: A = Exceptional work, B = Very good work, C = Average work, D = Poor work, F = Unacceptable work. Grades for each assignment will be determined within the range of that particular assignment. Grades are not based on percentages, but on points. The final grade will be based on the total points earned for all class assignments and activities (see grade scale below). Plus/Minus will only be added to the final grade and only if total points are on the edge of the point range. You should plan to put sufficient time and attention into this class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>30pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Book Analysis</td>
<td>15pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Proposal</td>
<td>50pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Chapter</td>
<td>50pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Reading</td>
<td>15pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>15pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Outline</td>
<td>21pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class exercises (12/2pts. Each)</td>
<td>24pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>250pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Grade Scale:
- 250-225 = A
- 224-200 = B
- 199-170 = C
- 169-150 = D
- Below 150 = F
ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

**Participation** - Participation in class discussion is a very important component. Points will be distributed based on your contribution to workshops and other class discussions. Minimum contribution/rarely speak - 10pts. Average contribution/sometimes speak - 20pts. Exceptional contribution/always speak - 30pts. All members of the class must be respectful of each other when commenting. Constructive criticism only. **No exceptions!!!!!**

**Class Writing Exercises** – In class you will complete a number of short writing exercises dealing with specific topics like narrative, point of view, voice, transitions, word choice, flow, framing, and others. You will be asked to turn in some of those assignments at the end of the class period for credit. You should always be prepared to read your writing in front of the class. You should volunteer to present your work when you can because authors must be outgoing concerning the promotion of their books.

**Book Proposal** - Choose a topic for your novel or non-fiction book. Research that topic and develop a book proposal including these specific elements: title, hook, synopsis, market/competition, promotional activities, bio, and chapter outline.

**Chapter Outline** - Estimate the number of chapters for your book (at least 12 chapters) and write a paragraph explaining what will be included in each chapter (See handout below). Must be double-spaced with one-inch margins – average typeface Times 12/14).

**Synopsis** – Your synopsis should explain the entire novel story or non-fiction book topic from beginning to end – no surprises. Need to show the main characters or issues, core conflict, what is at stake, and resolutions. Stick to the basics, but narrative should be visual and compelling because it represents your writing style.

**Sample Chapter** - You will write one chapter from your novel or non-fiction book. The chapter should be about 7 pages, double-spaced with one-inch margins, average typeface Times 12/14.

**Model Book Analysis** - You will complete a book analysis based on a model book chosen in your genre. For the fictional novel, identify the six major structural elements and discuss how the book relates to the story you want to write – title, characters, plot, prose, point of view, etc. For the non-fiction book summarize the effectiveness of major concepts like: the title, chapter structure, narrative style, and topic. (Maximum 2 pages) Make sure that you document the main points of your analysis by including examples from the model book.

**Proposal/Chapter Workshops** - The two primary writing assignments: a fiction or non-fiction book proposal and sample chapter must be completed and submitted to ICON drop box by the deadline (see course schedule). Everyone must read all classmates assignments before the scheduled workshop. Prepare a one page typed comment sheet for each classmate and also be prepared to participate in a constructive discussion during critique session. Your participation is crucial because you are all potential readers and your comments can help fellow classmates to develop the best book possible. Evaluation will cover Focus/Clarity/Logic, Structure/Organization, Narration/Style/Flow, Substance/Content, Grammar/Language/Mechanics.

**Author’s Pavilion** - You will participate in an Author’s Pavilion at the end of class. You will select a three-minute reading from your sample chapter (approximately 3 pages). Start with background on yourself and set up for the context of the reading. Evaluation will include: confidence/eye contact, inflection/clarity, and rhythm/flow. Make sure you practice ahead of time so that you are comfortable presenting your text. After reading we will take a couple of minutes for questions and answers if there is time.

**Extra-Credit** – Identify three possible agents to send your proposal to. Write a paragraph explaining why you chose each agent (1 page), then write a query letter for those agents about your book project and yourself (2 pages maximum).
COURSE SCHEDULE:

**August 22-24th** - Introduction/Syllabus Overview
Video/Speaker Interview – History and Future of Books (35 min) / Charlie Rose: Writers on Writing (14 min)/ Inside Random House (10 min)
Discussion/Exercises  Fiction/ Non-Fiction proposal exercises/Synopsis assignment/Writing prompts

**August 29-31st** – Book Proposal structure & examples
Video/Speaker Interview – Digital Publishing 2015 (30 min) Shifting Identities (20 min)
ICON READING: Creating a Award Winning Proposal pp. 70-81 by Frishman and Spizman
Stephen King: The Writing Craft
Discussion/Exercises Narrative Structure/ Explanation

**September 5-7th** – Title, Synopsis & Themes
Video/Speaker Interview – Mary Karr/Memoir (10 min) / CSpan Q & A: Malcolm Gladwell (30 min)
ICON READING: Writing the Breakout Novel pp. 229-246 by Donald Maass
Elizabeth Lyon: Dissecting the Synopsis
Discussion/Exercises Wording Exercises /Connections Model Book assignment  **Synopsis Due September 7th!**

**September 12-14th** – Audience, Market Analysis & Publicity
Video/Speaker Interview – Journalists Fact to Fiction Panel (30 min) J. K. Rowling on Charlie Rose (30 min)
ICON READING: Write the Perfect Book Proposal pp. 18-27 by Herman and Herman
Ryan Van Cleave: Publicity Campaigns
Discussion/Exercises Characterization & Dialogue Exercises

**September 19-21st** – Scene Construction and Show Don’t Tell
Video/Speaker Interview – Science Fiction Writers Panel (100 min) John Irving (30 min)
ICON READING – Manuscript Makeover by Elizabeth Lyon pp. 3-50
Peter Elbow: Ways to Revise
Joyce Armstrong Carroll: Show Don’t Tell
Discussion/Exercises Show Don’t Tell/Point of View Exercise  **Model Book Analysis Due September 21st!**

**September 26-28th** – Revision, Clarity and Depth
Video/Speaker Interview – Louise Erdrich/Marilyn Robinson/Jane Smiley (30 min) /
Toni Morrison, Fiction (30 min)
ICON READING – Manuscript Makeover by Elizabeth Lyon pp. 3-50
Peter Elbow: Ways to Revise
Discussion/Exercises Learning to Layer/Clarity & Depth Exercises

**October 3-5th** – Chapter Outline and Sample Chapter
Video/Speaker Interview – Writer’s Space and Place (30 min) Historical Fiction (30 min)
ICON READING: Bulletproof Book Proposals by Brodowsky and Neuhaus  pp. 63-71
Eisenhuth & McDonald: The Writer’s Reader pp. 125-129/148-152/198-201
Discussion/Exercises Metaphor/Revision/Transition Exercises  **Chapter Outline Due October 5th!**

**October 10-12th** – Author Bio, Agents and Query Letters
Video/Speaker Interview – The Hollywood Reporter: Literary Agent Panel (58 min)
ICON READING: The Novel Proposal pp. 43-81 by Camenson and Cook
Sol Stein: Craft Techniques
Discussion/Exercises Creating Powerful Scenes Exercises

**October 17-19th** – Research and Writing Days  **All Proposals Due October 20th by 6pm!**
COURSE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

**October 24-26th** – Proposal Workshops  
Discussion – Ten students will receive 15-20 minute individual constructive sessions

**October 31st -November 2nd** - Proposal Workshops  
Discussion – Ten students will receive 15-20 minute individual constructive sessions

**November 7-9th** - Research and Writing Days  
**All Chapters Due November 10th by 6pm!**

**November 14-16th**- Chapter Workshops  
Discussion – Ten students will receive 15-20 minute individual constructive sessions

**November 21-23rd** – Thanksgiving Break

**November 28-30th** - Chapter Workshops  
Discussion – Ten students will receive 15-20 minute individual constructive sessions

**December 5-7th** – Author’s Pavilion/Wrap Up/Evaluations

**December 12-14th** – FINALS WEEK  
**EC – Agents Query Due December 12th by 6pm!**

Bibliography


Mendelsund, Peter. (2014). *What We See When We Read.* New York: Knopf Doubleday

