

JOUR 5580/7580
Magazine Article Writing
Fall 2009
11-12:15 Tuesday and Thursday
Grady College

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Office Hours: 9-10:30 Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment

“We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”
Ernest Hemingway

This class is designed to help you learn to write for magazines and the web. You will write, read and analyze good writing, utilize good reporting and journalism skills, and learn how to target your writing to specific markets. Class time will be spent in discussions, lectures, and writing exercises.

Required Text: *The Best American Magazine Writing 2008*, compiled by the American Society of Magazine Editors.

Grading determination:

10 percent	In-class exercises
	Participation in class
10 percent	Peer review
15 percent	Service article (information, how-to)
20 percent	Profile
15 percent	Essay
10 percent	Long-form feature draft (Minimum of 10 credible sources)
20 percent	Long-form feature final version

Assignments will be graded for four qualities: *

Concept: clear purpose, well-defined audience, achievable goal

Structure: strong organization, flow, coherence

Reporting: solid research, sources

Writing: Clean, compelling, creative

Style/Grammar: free of errors

A: Outstanding. Copy usually is publishable with little or no editing.

B: Superior. Copy usually is publishable with minor editing and revisions.

C: Adequate. Portions of copy probably would need to be rewritten and closely edited before story could be published.

D: Marginal. Copy contains major structural, writing or usage flaws.

F: Unacceptable. Copy fails to meet even minimum standards for the assignment.

(Fact errors and misspelled names will result in a failing grade on any assignment.)

Plus/minus grading will apply.

*(borrowed from Dr. Hume for consistency among classes)

Some topics we will discuss in class:*

Story ideas	Style and voice
Researching magazines	Profiles
Writing queries	Sophisticated structure
The service piece	Freelancing
Fact finding and reporting	Specialized writing techniques, including for the Web
People and paper sources	The art of rewriting
Interviewing	Depth reporting
Leads and endings	Ethical issues for magazine writers
Organization	Writing short/writing long
Human interest	Narration and description
Writing the essay	Writing with Power
Holding the reader's interest	Careers in magazine writing

*(borrowed from Prof. Boyd for consistency among classes)

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor will be necessary. Various guests will visit during the semester.

Schedule

Aug. 18	Introduction and class objectives Generating and developing ideas, readings
Aug. 20	How to pitch ideas to editors, writing a query letter
Aug. 25	Read for discussion: "China's Instant Cities" by Peter Hessler (National Geographic)
Aug. 27	Writing service articles and profiles to include varieties
Sept. 1	Read for discussion: "The Black Sites" by Jane Mayer (The New Yorker)
Sept. 3	Query for service article deadline How to find profile subjects
Sept. 8	Concise writing Read for discussion: "Underworld" by Jeanne Marie Laskas (GQ)
Sept. 10	Query for profile article deadline Reporting and use of senses, dialogue, quotes Guest: Steve Fennessy, editor Atlanta Magazine

- Sept. 15 Read for discussion: “Present at Creation” by Matthew Scully (The Atlantic)
- Sept. 17 Style and voice, editing and rewriting
- Sept. 22 Guest: Ramsey Nix, editor Lake Oconee Living Magazine
- Sept. 24 Ethics and fact checking
Read for discussion: “Pat Dollard’s War on Hollywood” by Evan Wright (Vanity Fair)
- Sept. 29 **Service article deadline (put copy on listserv for class members to read)**
Using dialogue
- Oct. 1 Read for discussion: “Casualties of War” by Steve Oney (Los Angeles)
- Oct. 6 Peer Review discussion on service articles
- Oct. 8 Read for discussion: “Everybody Sucks” by Vanessa Grigoriadis (New York)
- Oct. 13 Long-form feature writing
- Oct. 15 **Profile deadline (put copy on listserv for class to read)**
Read for discussion: “You Have Thousands of Angels Around You” by Paige Williams (Atlanta)
- Oct. 20 **Query deadline for long-form feature** / Essay Writing
Read for discussion: “The Autumn of the Multitaskers” by Walter Kirn (The Atlantic) and “I Am Joe’s Prostate” by Thomas E. Kennedy (New Letters)
- Oct. 22 NPR essay style writing
- Oct. 27 Depth reporting
Read for discussion: “Out in the Cold” by Mike Kessler (5280: Denver’s Mile-High)
- Oct. 29 **Essay deadline (put copy on listserv for class to read)**
Oct. 30 Fall Break
- Nov. 3 Telling a story on the web with pod casts, audio and video
- Nov. 5 Peer Review discussion on essays **Draft, long-form feature deadline** / Building the story

"It is better to write a bad first draft than to write no first draft at all." Will Shetterly

Nov. 10	Story conferences on long-form ideas
Nov. 12	Story conferences on long-form ideas
Nov. 17	Rewriting, rewriting, rewriting
Nov. 19	Future of feature writing
Nov. 23-28	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 1	Long-form feature final version deadline
Dec. 3	Writer's Block

Details

FACTS: Get them right. Don't assume anything. Fact errors will result in failure on an assignment. You will be required to submit names and phone numbers for sources in your stories. These will be contacted. A source list is to be included with every assignment.

DEADLINES: Not to be missed. Extensions are for real emergencies and must be negotiated prior to the deadline. Assignments are due at the beginning of class.

PROFESSIONALISM: A must.

HONESTY: All academic work must meet the standards outlined by the University's publication "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Plagiarism and deception are particularly serious offenses.

ATTENDANCE: There will be no attendance taking. You are adults. I will be here, be prepared, and be eager to share all I can about writing with you. Twenty percent of your grade will include in-class exercises and peer reviews. Plus, if at the end of the semester I do not know you, I cannot write letters of reference.

DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor during regular office hours or by appointment.

Always keep copies (electronic and paper) of all your articles.

"A young musician plays scales in his room and only bores his family. A beginning writer, on the other hand, sometimes has the misfortune of getting into print." Marguerite Yourcenar