COM 325 Feature Writing

Credit Hours: 3
In-Class Instructional Hours: 3 Labs: 0 Field Work: 0

Catalog Description:
Prerequisite. COM 210, COM 302

Theory and advanced practice in writing magazine articles, newspaper features and similar stories for online publications; writing for specialized audiences; introduction to freelance procedures.

Reasons for Revision:
(2007) This course, formerly called Feature and Magazine Article Writing, was last revised in 1989. This revision is part of a general program review, through which Communication seeks to update its courses in light of departmental experience with the previous program version, evolving departmental needs, and expanding scholarship in the field. Additionally, the department is undertaking this revision to position itself for accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Student Learning Outcomes:
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate an understanding of the role of feature writing in journalism and the various types of feature stories
2. Articulate the relationship between feature writing and news reporting
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the freelance process, including familiarity with the freelance market
4. Critically analyze and evaluate the structure and style of feature stories
5. Use appropriate interview, research, writing and editing techniques to prepare effective feature stories in various genres
6. Generate ideas for marketable feature articles
7. Recognize work by award-winning feature writers and demonstrate an understanding of the techniques of literary non-fiction that contribute to their success

Course Content References:

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Course Content:

I. Feature-Based Journalism
   A. Relationship with news writing
   B. Venues for feature writing
   C. Interviewing and research for feature writing

II. Feature Writing
   A. Attribution
   B. Dialogue
   C. Vignettes
   D. Rewriting

III. Feature Structure
   A. Headlines, titles and leads
   B. Story structure and organization
   C. Conclusion and wrap-up

IV. Feature Topics
   A. News peg
   B. Current events and trends
   C. Contemporary issues
   D. Celebrities and newsmakers
   E. Average persons

V. Feature Formats
   A. Personality profile, portrait and sketch
   B. Trend story
   C. Human interest
   D. In-depth
   E. News feature and backgrounder
   F. Travel articles
   G. Service or “how to” articles

VI. Freelance Process
   A. Market analysis
   B. Audience research
   C. Query letters
   D. Procedures and etiquette for submission

VII. Ethical and Legal Issue
   A. Copyright
   B. Plagiarism
   C. Attribution
   D. Truth
Resources:

Classic Scholarship in the Field.

Current Scholarship in the Field.

Periodicals:
Columbia Journalism Review
Editor & Publisher
Journalism Quarterly
Washington Journalism Review