

COJR3426, Magazine Writing Fall 2009

Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30 – 12:45 p.m., Arts & Sciences 242

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Course description

Overview of the U.S. magazine industry. Emphasis is placed on researching and writing articles, and on identifying target publications. Prerequisite: COMM 1421.

Course goals

To develop research and writing skills necessary for production of professional-quality magazine-style writing and to be able to analyze the U.S. magazine industry in order to market freelance writing to target publications.

Required texts

- Ruberg, Michelle. *Writer's Digest Handbook of Magazine Article Writing* (2nd edition).
- *AP Style Manual*
- Additional material will be provided on Blackboard or distributed via e-mail or in class.

IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 8 Last Day of Add/Drop and Late Registration
Oct. 9 Last Day for Withdrawal with No Signature Required
Oct. 23 Last Day for Withdrawal with Professor, Dean Signatures

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

“Practice” writing (writing to improve your skills)

There will be several practice writing assignments this semester. Most of your practice writing will be done outside of class, although some may be done in class. Your practice writing will be collected into a portfolio and evaluated at the end of the semester. You will have some leeway in selecting what to include in the final portfolio. You will include three pieces, along with a short paragraph giving your rationale for why you chose each assignment. During the semester, practice writing will be marked “satisfactory” (met deadline and minimum requirements) or “unsatisfactory” (did not meet deadline or did not meet minimum requirements). Only assignments that received a “satisfactory” may be included in the portfolio. You are encouraged to revise your practice writing prior to inclusion in the portfolio, provided that the original was judged “satisfactory.”

Writing for publication

You will write two major articles suitable for publication: (1) a profile of someone in the Seton Hall or surrounding community, and (2) a full-length feature. You will receive more details on these assignments during the course of the semester. For each article, you will submit a query letter, a first draft, and a final version with revisions, each of which will be graded.

Magazine analysis assignment

There will be a magazine analysis assignment early in the semester where you will prove that you know how a magazine is put together.

Quizzes

There will be periodic pop quizzes over the readings and material covered in class. There may be more than four quizzes, but only the top four scores will count toward your grade. There is no make-up for quizzes. If you come to class late or miss a class period in which there is a quiz, you will receive a zero for that day's quiz.

COURSE POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Etiquette

Classes will begin on time and end on time. Please make every effort to arrive on time. Turn off cell phones and any other electronic devices that might distract you or your classmates.

Laptops

Please bring your laptop to class. Laptops are to be used only for note-taking and other class-related purposes.

Attendance

Attendance is expected at all class sessions. Students who have no recorded absences will receive a four-point attendance bonus to be added to the final score at the end of the semester. Students with no more than two absences will receive a two-point attendance bonus. Students must attend the entire class period; tardiness and/or leaving class early counts as an absence under this extra-credit bonus policy. Excused absences are still absences, and more than two absences disqualify the student from earning an attendance bonus. This extra-credit policy goes into effect with the first class period following the end of add/drop. An attendance sheet will be circulated and will constitute the official record in determining the attendance bonus. It is your responsibility to make sure you have signed the attendance sheet.

Deadlines

The out-of-class assignments must be handed in by the beginning of class on the assigned date. Those handed in late will be penalized. An assignment handed in up to 24 hours late will be lowered by a full letter grade (e.g., a B+ would become a C+), an assignment handed in from 24 to 48 hours late will be an additional letter grade (e.g., a B+ would become a D+), and an

assignment handed in more than 48 hours late will receive a zero. Extensions may be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor and may require documentation of a serious illness or emergency. The instructor reserves the right to impose a deadline penalty *even if* an extension is granted.

Academic honesty

Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Any incident of academic dishonesty **may result in an F for the course**. Students suspected of academic dishonesty on any assignment may be required to re-do that assignment or a similar assignment at the sole discretion of the instructor, with no proof of academic misconduct required.

Disability policy

Students at Seton Hall University who have a physical, medical, learning or psychiatric disability, either temporary or permanent, may be eligible for reasonable accommodations at the University as per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In order to receive such accommodations, students must identify themselves at the Office of Disability Support Services (DDS), provide appropriate documentation and collaborate with the development of an accommodation plan. The DDS phone number is (973) 313-6003. For further information, please go to the Web site at <http://studentaffairs.shu.dds>.

Grading

Points will be awarded as follows:

Profile (60 points)	
Query letter	10 points
First draft	25 points
Revised draft	25 points
Full-length feature (70 points)	
Query letter	10 points
First draft	30 points
Revised draft	30 points
Practice writing portfolio	30 points
Magazine analysis assignment	20 points
Quizzes (top 4 scores)	20 points

Total:	200 points

Grading scale:

188-200 (94%) A	156-163 (78%) B-	124-131 (62%) D+
180-187 (90%) A-	148-155 (74%) C+	110-123 (55%) D
172-179 (86%) B+	140-147 (70%) C	Below 110 F
164-171 (82%) B	132-139 (66%) C-	

NOTE: Borderline grades – grades that are within a half point (0.5) of the next highest grade – will be rounded up or down based on class participation. Only students with exemplary class participation will earn the higher grade. For example, a point total of 171.5 will earn a B+ if the student's contribution to class discussion has exceeded expectations, as determined by the instructor.

Your standing

To determine your standing in the class at any point in the semester, divide your point total by the total possible points to date and compare the percentage with the percentages in the scale. You should retain all materials graded and passed back until you receive your final course grade. You should retain a printed or electronic copy of all assignments. Any questions concerning grades should be raised when the assignment is passed back. The instructor will NOT re-evaluate scores on individual assignments at the end of the semester.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule may be updated and modified during the semester.
Chapters listed below are from the *Handbook of Magazine Article Writing* textbook. Additional readings may be provided via Blackboard or e-mail.

DATE	TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT(S)	READING
8/31	Introduction to the course	
9/2	Overview of magazines and the magazine industry	

9/7	<i>LABOR DAY – NO CLASS</i>	
9/9	The magazine audience	

9/14	Finding story ideas	Ch. 1
9/16	Discussion of Magazine Analysis assignment DUE: Magazine Analysis	

9/21	Finding story ideas (cont.)	
9/23	The query letter	Ch. 2

9/28	Researching	Ch. 5
9/30	Interviewing	Ch. 6
	DUE: Query for profile story	

10/5	Writing techniques	Ch. 8
10/7	Writing common types of articles	Ch. 9

10/12	Show, don't tell: Writing concrete description	
10/14	Show, don't tell: Writing concrete description (cont.)	

10/19	Titles, intros, and conclusions	
10/21	Telling the story: Use of narrative DUE: Draft of profile story	

10/26	Peer editing of first story drafts	
10/28	Telling the story: Use of narrative (cont.)	

11/2	Accuracy, legal issues, and ethics	Ch. 7
11/4	Working with an editor DUE: Revised profile	Ch. 10

11/9 Reprints and rewrites Ch. 3
11/11 Finding markets Ch. 4

DUE: Query for long feature

11/16 TBA
11/18 TBA

11/23 TBA

DUE: Portfolio of practice writing assignments

11/25 *NO CLASS*

11/30 TBA
12/2 TBA

DUE: Draft of long feature

12/7 Peer editing of feature drafts
12/9 Wrapping up

EXAM
WEEK **DUE: Revised long feature**