

MOGLE 3301 Fall 2022

Syllabus

Course Title: Feature Writing

Course Number and Section: MCOM 3301.001, Fall 2022

Scheduled Class Days and Times: 11:15 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, CAS 106

Instructor Name: John Daniel Mogle

Office Location: 204A

Phone Number: 903-617-8196

Email: jmogle@uttyler.edu

Best way to contact: text or call

Office Hours: Days/Times AND by appointment: 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday or by appointment. I welcome and encourage office visits.

Course Information

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a study of the purposes, character and subject matter of different types of feature stories -- most notably narrative writing. Emphasis is placed on writing and analyzing the feature story in its many forms. Students learn feature writing techniques; how to find story ideas, plan, write and revise features; and how to market writing.

Prerequisite: MCOM 2311

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Identify literary devices, story structures and techniques of compelling storytelling; write professional-quality feature stories in multiple formats and for a target audience; and explain the role of storytelling as part of a media strategy to entertain and inform the public.

a. Competency: Media Literacy

- Demonstrate the ability to identify different types of media and the messages they are sending.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze, evaluate and create media products in different forms.
- Explain the impact of media messages on one one's life and the lives of others.

b. Competency: Legal and Ethical Principles

- Demonstrate the ability to apply the First Amendment and other legal principles involving strategic communication and multimedia journalism.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and issues involved in multimedia journalism and strategic communication.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior involved in mass media including social media.

c. Competency: Writing/Storytelling

- Apply grammar, spelling and punctuation to feature stories.
- Use literary techniques more commonly found in fiction writing to create compelling true stories.
- Use interviewing skills, research and observation to gather information for feature stories.
- Create schedules, outlines and subheads to organize the writing process.
- Adapt feature writing to the needs and expectations of different markets and audiences.

d. Competency: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry

- Conduct research and evaluate information using methods appropriate to multimedia journalism and strategic communication.
- Explain differences in writing styles, goals and outcomes of feature writing versus news writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to understand how narratives shape culture and viewpoints.

e. Competency: Grammar Proficiency

- Demonstrate the ability to use words properly in a sentence.
- Demonstrate the ability to spell words correctly
- Demonstrate the ability to punctuate sentences properly in English grammar.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- Associated Press Stylebook. New York: Associated Press. Also available online at www.apstylebook.org (Links to an external site.). No older than 2020 edition.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING GUIDES

Select readings and videos posted in Canvas over the course of this semester.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Immerse yourself in mass media to get the most out of this class. Read newspapers and magazines in print and online. Watch news programs and listen to NPR. Look at YouTube, Facebook and other social media sites in the context of this class. Good sources for captivating narratives are Texas Monthly and Vanity Fair

Other recommendations:

- Clark, Roy Peter. (2006) Writing Tools, 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer.
- Strunk Jr., W., & White, E.B. The Elements of Style (4th Ed.), New York: Longman.

SPECIAL COURSE NOTES

Basic Requirements

This course requires that you have access to a computer and a reliable internet connection. You will be required to go off campus to collect information for some stories. There are additional expenses, such as an admission to Caldwell Zoo, required for this class.

Communication

If you have a question, concern or just want to talk about something, call or send me a text at 903-617-8196. Tell me your name, what class you are in and why you are reaching out to me. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

- You can also send me an email at jmogle@uttyler.edu.
- Check the Announcements tab of Canvas regularly.
- If there is a valid reason that you cannot turn in work on time (such as becoming sick), contact me.

Completing Work on Time

Each assignment is in Canvas and has a deadline. You must meet the deadline to receive full credit.

Academic Honesty

The University's academy honesty policies apply. You, and only you, must do the work that you submit.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, unattributed use of others' work (including test and paper "banks"), disruption of class, and discourtesy to, or harassment of, other students or your instructor. Anyone caught cheating will earn a "0" for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment, may fail this class and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Go here for more:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php> (Links to an external site.)

ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTS/POINTS VALUE

Each assignment has an assigned value, instructions and information on how the grade is determined.

The graded work falls into five categories:

- writing jobs (as if you were a journalist working for a magazine or newspaper)
- graded discussions/class presentations
- skill-building assignments
- Specialty writing assignments
- case studies

There is a 100-pt. attendance credit. Students receive 5-pt. deduction for each unexcused absence.

No assignment is weighted more heavily than any other. However, some have higher point values than others.

Specialty Writing/Blog -- 450 points; 14.9% of grade

Students write a blog for four weeks and other forms of specialty non-fiction writing

Competencies: Media Literacy, Writing and Storytelling, Analysis and Systematic Inquiry, Grammar Proficiency

Case Studies -- 270 points; 8.9% of grade

Students analyze feature stories for content, literary devices and storytelling strategies.

Competencies: Writing and Storytelling, Analysis and Systematic Inquiry, Grammar Proficiency, Media Literacy

Skill-Building Assignments -- 280 points; 9.2% of grade

Students do assignments to master skills presented in class and/or Canvas.

Competencies: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry, Media Literacy, Legal and Ethical Principles, Grammar Proficiency

Graded Discussions/In-Class Presentations -- 225 points; 7.4% of grade

In online discussions, students answer questions and comment on other posts to learn from one other and see things from different perspectives. In class presentations, students share discoveries and seek input on writing assignments.

Competency: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry

Writing Jobs -- 1,500 points; 50% of grade

Writing jobs are the major featuring writing stories of the semester. They are presented as "jobs" in which the student becomes a reporter or freelance writer assigned to complete a story with a deadline and specific requirements.

Competencies: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry, Media Literacy, Legal and Ethical Principles, Grammar Proficiency

Attendance -- 100 pts.; 3.3% of grade

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If there is confusion on how to do an assignment, contact me at 903-617-8196 before you do the assignment.

GRADING SCALE

The final grade represents the number of points earned as a percentage to the total 1,700 points available.

- A: 90-100%;
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%
- F: 59% and below

Check Canvas frequently to learn the status of your grade.

LATE WORK AND MAKEUP EXAMS

All assignments have a deadline. Late assignments will receive a deduction. Any assignment more than two days late will be given a 0. Work can be made up for illnesses, family emergencies or an excused absence recognized by the University.

You are expected to be in class every time it meets. Talk to me about absences. This course is only five weeks long. It is extremely difficult to miss a class and keep up.

GRADED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Jobs

- Caldwell Zoo - 250 pts.
- East Texas Fair - 250 pts.
- Service Journalism - 250 pts.
- Profile - 250 pts.
- Sports Feature - 250 pts.
- Performance Review - 250 pts.

Writing Assignments

- 4 Blogs - 50 pts. each

- Describing Harvey Lake - 100 pts.
- How To ... - 50 pts.
- Cover Letter - 50 pts.

Online Discussions/In-Class Presentations

- Story Ideas - 25 pts.
- Writing Tips - 25 pts.
- Story Openings - 20
- Rate These Openings - 15
- Zoo Story Presentation - 30
- Tips for Better Writing - 20
- Service Story Update - 20
- Working in Groups - 20
- Profile Update - 30
- Being a Critic - 20

Case Studies

- "Tigers in East Texas" - 30 pts.
- "I'm Still Here" - 30 pts.
- "Offering Benevolence" - 20 pts.
- "The Rescuers" - 25 pts.
- "She Can do It Too" - 20 pts.
- "Fastest Women on Too Wheels" - 20 pts.
- Baylor Bears Superfans - 20 pts.
- Texas A&M Coach is a BBQ Champion - 20 pts.
- Lacrosse Player Serves His Country - 20 pts.
- "Funny Girl" - 24
- "Top Gun: Maverick" - 20 pts.
- Bad Bunny - 20 pts.

Skill Building Assignments

- Understanding Narratives - 25 pts.
- Putting Writing Tools to Use - 50 pts.
- Description & Details - 20 pts.
- Opening, Nut Graph, Ending - 35 pts.
- Preparing For Your Zoo Visit - 20 pts.
- Zoo Research - 30 pts.
- Zoo Story Self-Evaluation - 15 pts.
- Pitching a Story Idea - 20 pts.
- Applying Quick Fixes - 50 pts.
- Profile Self-Evaluation - 15 pts.

Attendance

Perfect Attendance - 100 pts. (5 pt. deduction for each unexcused absence)

CALENDAR

Census Date: The census date for the Fall 2022 semester is Sept. 2. This is the final date for many enrollment-related actions, including adding new courses, changing sections, or dropping courses without incurring grades of “W” or “Q”. Census is also the second drop for non-payment date each academic session. See the Office of the Registrar website for additional details.

Final exam: No final exam is given for this course.

Week by Week: Here is the week-by-week schedule. Sometimes circumstances require changes. Any changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.

	In Class	Graded Work/due dates
NARRATIVES Aug. 22, 24, 26		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP: Narratives (34) • Lecture: Introduce blogs, key dates 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Narratives 26 • Story Ideas - Aug. 26 • Blog 1: due Aug. 28,
TOOLBOX Aug. 29, 31, Sept. 2		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 2 - Harvey Lake writing • PP: Writer's Toolbox (51) • videos 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Narrative Tools: • Tip Discussion: Sept. 2 • Harvey Lake: Sept. 3 • Writing Descriptively: S • Blog 2: Sept. 4
OPENING, NUT, GRAPH ENDING Sept. 7-9		

	PowerPoint (58)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion - Rate Begin • Great Beginnings: Sept. • Analyzing Opening, Nut 9 • Blog 3: Sept. 11
GATHER, WRITE, ETC. (Zoo Week 1): Sept. 12, 14, 16		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 12: Discuss Zoo story • PP: Getting Started (18) • PP: Gathering Information (43) 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoo Research: Sept. 14 • Preparing for Zoo Visit: • Blog 4: Sept. 18
(Zoo Week 2): Sept. 19, 21, 23		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP - Write the Story (29) • PP - Edit Revise (24) • Zoo In-Class Presentations (Sept. 21, 23) 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Tigers in East Texas": S • Organizing Zoo Story: S • Zoo Story: Sept. 25 • Zoo Self-Evaluation: Sep
WRITE LIKE A PRO Sept. 26, 28, 30		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend ET Fair this week • PP: Quick Fixes (41) 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying Quick Fixes: S • Your Favorite Writing T • East Texas State Fair: O

IN-DEPTH (week 1) Oct. 2, 4, 7		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP: Writing About Issues • Discuss In-Depth Feature • Assign Groups 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'm Still Here": Oct. 5 • "The Rescuers": Oct. 5 • "Offering Benevolence"
IN-DEPTH (week 2) Oct. 10, 12, 14		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Project Work Days • In-Class Group Update Presentations Oct. 14 	•
		• Group In-Class Update:
IN-DEPTH (week 3) Oct. 17, 19, 21		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Project Work Days 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Evaluation: Oct. • In-Depth Story Due: Oc • In-Depth Self-Evaluatio
WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE (week 1) Oct. 24, 26, 28		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP: Writing About People • Video: The Perfect Profile • Introduce both People Assignments 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "She Can Do It": Oct. 26 • "Fastest Woman on 2 V 28
WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE (week 2) Oct. 31, Nov. 2, 4		
	Class Presentations Nov. 2, 4	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Blessed By Voice: Oct. • People Story Update: N • People Story: Nov. 4 • People Self-Evaluation I
SPORTS FEATURE Nov. 7, 9, 11		
	Reminder of Cowan Show Nov 10	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacrosse Player: Nov. 7 • Grilling Coach: Nov. 9 • Baylor Fans: Nov. 11
WRITING REVIEWS Nov. 14, 16, 18		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP: Writing Reviews • Videos on Reviewing 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Funny Girl": Nov. 14 • "Top Gun": Nov. 16 • Bad Bunny: Nov. 18 • Being a Critic: Nov. 18 • Your Review: Nov. 20
WRITING AS A PROFESSION Nov. 28, 30 Dec. 2		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP - Pitching a story (33) • Writing in Business • The Cover Letter 	•
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give Me Your Best Pitch • Cover Letter: Dec.4