California State University Long Beach

Journalism and Mass Communication Department

Literary Journalism

Jour 315 (4723)

Dr. Heloiza G. Herscovitz

Fall 2014

Meeting Times: Tu/Th, 3:30PM - 4:45PM

 Room: SS/PA 006

My Office: SS/PA 009

My Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

 Or by appointment

E-mail: heloiza.herscovitz@csulb.edu

 (please include ‘Jour 315’ and your full name in the subject line)

Phone: (562) 985-5667 (e-mail is better!)

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to literary journalism, a type of non-fiction that transcends the limits of daily news writing and reporting. It is also known as long form journalism or slow journalism. You will become familiar with the theory and the techniques of this genre by analyzing the work of brilliant journalists and studying their lives, their styles and methods. You will learn ethical guidelines that keep literary journalists from crossing the line between fact and fiction (“do not add,” “do not deceive”). Finally, you will gain literary journalism skills that you will apply in your own writings, and become familiar with literary journalism digital and multimedia techniques.

Main Topics:

History of Literary journalism

Different Styles and Techniques

Criticism and ethical dilemmas

Diversity in Literary Journalism

Digital and Multimedia Literary journalism



Ernest Hemingway

Course Outcomes:

By the end of this course you will be able to

* Recognize the theoretical and factual intersections between literature and journalism, as well as the several definitions of the genre, including its digital and multimedia forms.
* Develop critical thinking skills to evaluate classical and contemporary literary journalism writing;
* Explain and synthesize key relationships between form and content as well as the historical context and the topics chosen by literary journalists studied in this course;
* Acknowledge gender and ethnic diversity in literary journalism, and learn to report across cultures;
* Follow ethical guidelines while interviewing subjects and writing long form pieces;
* Try writing techniques and literary devices used by nonfiction writers that can help you to move beyond the “who, what, where, when, why” to create a more detailed, vivid picture of real events not only in traditional writing, but also in multimedia platforms.
* Feel inspired to read more and write better.

Modes of Instruction:

The course combines lectures, small and large group discussions, group assignments and class presentations, in-class readings and film/video/online presentations. Above all, it involves class participation! This course will only be successful if you come to class prepared to participate in the discussions.

Required Textbooks:

1. Telling True Stories, a Nonfiction Writers’ Guide, edited by Mark Kramer and Wendy Call, edited by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, Penguin Group.

2. The Art of Fact, a Historical Anthology of Literary Journalism, edited by Kevin Karrane and Be Yagoda, published by Simon & Schuster

Bring them to every class.

Websites you should consult frequently:

Kiosk: <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/kiosk/>

Go to <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/litjourn/publications/> and read stories by students who major in literary journalism at UCI

Salon: <http://www.salon.com>

The Nieman Narrative Digest: <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/digest/index.html>

Harper’s Magazine: <http://www.harpers.org/>

The Atlantic: <http://www.theatlantic.com/>

The New Yorker: <http://www.newyorker.com/>

Esquire: <http://www.esquire.com/>

The Nation: <http://www.thenation.com/>

Granta: <http://www.granta.com/>

Creative Nonfiction: <http://www.creativenonfiction.org/index.htm>

Rolling Stone: <http://www.rollingstone.com/>

The New Republic: <http://www.tnr.com/>

Vanity Fair: <http://www.vanityfair.com/>

The New York Review of Books: <http://www.nybooks.com/>

[](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://homesteadbook.com/store/images/gonzo_hunter_s_thompson_biog.jpg&imgrefurl=http://homesteadbook.com/store/product_info.php/products_id/196&usg=__Btue5IEr8p7CEZxSvDsRSkoyxdA=&h=500&w=500&sz=52&hl=en&start=59&tbnid=8niVmLbQA7jTiM:&tbnh=130&tbnw=130&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dhunther%2Bthompson%26start%3D40%26gbv%3D2%26ndsp%3D20%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN)

Norman Mailer

Truman Capote

Tom Wolfe

Additional bibliography if you want to know more about the subject:

* “The Art of Fact”, edited by Kevin Kerrane and Ben Yagoda, 1997
* “The Literature of Fact: Literary Nonfiction in American Writing,” by Ronald Weber,

1980.

• “The Gang that wouldn’t write straight,” by Marc Weingarten

* “A History of American Literary Journalism, the Emergence of a Narrative Form, “by

John C. Hartsock, 2000.

• “How Fiction Works,” by Oakley Hall, 2001

* “Global Literary Journalism,” edited by Richard L. Keeble and John Tulloch, 2012.

Please, **leave all electronic devices in your backpack**, **including your laptop, iPad, iPod and cell phone (with the ringer turned off, please).** In the past, I allowed students to use laptops in class for note taking, but too many used them to surf the net and keep up with their social media life. Therefore, I favor traditional note taking. Bring pencils, pens and paper pads. For your benefit, I will post power point presentations on Beachboard after the classes. I will let you know when you can use your laptop in class.

Course Rules

*Style*: Everything you write in this course needs to have a creative title. I expect your work to be well-written and well-edited. Essays and papers should be double-spaced, with paragraph indents and without extra spacing between paragraphs. Use Times New Roman,12 point-font. Pay attention to spelling, accuracy, clarity and grammar. Poorly written assignments will be penalized. Number your pages. Any instance of plagiarism, fabrication of sources or other information will be grounds for failure in this course.

Rewrite policy: you may rewrite one designated assignment to try to improve its grade. If you rewrite it, the grade recorded for that assignment will be the average of the grades on both versions (attach the earlier version to the new one). You are not guaranteed a better grade on a rewrite—your material must be revised, and include additional information instead of merely corrected one. Consult me if you are unsure about what you need to do. Rewrites must be submitted within one week of the original due date. This policy does not cover your final assignment.

*Plagiarism*: Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing at any time and on any type of assignment, exam, quiz or homework risks receiving an “F” for the course or some component of the course at the instructor’s discretion. Additionally, a copy of the offense may be forwarded to the Office of Judicial Affairs for review and potentially action on your permanent school record. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid excuse. We will use Turnitin for the some assignments.

Read more about it: <http://www.mantex.co.uk/samples/plgrsm.htm>

Class Participation & Attendance

☺☺☺ Interacting with students is my passion. My office is always open to you. Feel free to stop by and/or email me. If you feel confused, bored, unchallenged, or distressed, please talk to me. If you are facing a problem that affects your class performance, talk to me. Don’t wait until the end of the semester to tell me something serious. I will go out of my way to help you and make sure you get back on track and do not drop the course.

Please, read CSULB policy on attendance, late assignments and missed exams:

[http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/grad\_undergrad/senate/documents/policy/2001/01](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/grad_undergrad/senate/documents/policy/2001/01/)

*Attendance* *is mandatory*. After TWO unexcused absences during the semester, each additional absence will lead to a 5-point penalty for each one. I will excuse only legitimate absences as defined by the Journalism Department and CSULB (see the syllabus addendum) and only with an adequate supporting document and my consent.

*****Perpetual tardiness*****is disruptive and will be affect your grade. After the second one, every tardy one will lead to a 2.5–point penalty.

Missed points related to absences and tardies will lower your final grade.

Check Course Schedule (subject to change) in a separate document.

Always bring your textbooks to class!

Grading

You work will be judged on your ability to understand, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate evidence and conclusions. Originality, quality of writing, creativity, adherence to journalistic principles, grammar, punctuation and style also count. “Because students operate on different levels and will not all catch on at the same time” as explained by Ken Bain, p. 44, in “What the Best Colleges Teachers Do”, I take a developmental view of learning and challenge you knowledge and curiosity through different assignments. Your grade will be based on your overall performance.

Grading Breakdown:

Video Presentations 100 points

Story 1: Profile 100 points

Story 2: Final Project 100 points

Mini memoir 40 points

Discussion Boards (3) 30 points

In-class assignments (3) 30 points

Consistent Class Participation \* 30 points

Detailed Final Story Idea 20 points

Total 450 points

\*Class Participation is distinct from Class Attendance.

Calculate your grade based on the total points (450 points).

A= + 405 points (outstanding performance)

B= 360 - 404 points (superior performance)

C= 315 - 359 points (adequate performance)

D= 270 - 314 points (marginal performance)

F= below 269 points (unacceptable performance)

If, at the end of the semester, you miss the cutoff by one point, I will automatically move your final grade up to the next grade.

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| “To write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write is to write."(Gertrude Stein)"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one." (Mark Twain). |

Assignments

* The Mini Memoir: Everyone Has a Story to Tell (not to be shared in class):

Memoirs are a common type of nonfiction. Often, they contain traumatic or heartbreaking personal experiences that reveal personal universal truths and offer elements that help readers to examine their own lives and experiences. Memoirs can also focus on great adventures, rites of passage, key travels or bonding experiences. They work better when they focus on one time period of your life that helped to define who you are now.

A memoir is a process of researching your own life. You will travel backward in time to discover what a certain moment in the past meant to you. Choose an event from your past from which you have a collection of photographs and write your mini memoir using the pictures to recreate the scene. Talk to someone else that was present at the event to compare/contrast the two experiences. Your reader does not know a thing about you so you must insert background information swiftly and casually. Use your journalistic training (Jour 120, 311 or other writing course) on deadline reporting to get to the top of the story as soon as possible in your essay. Think of character development. Age, gender, ethnic/religious background, class, city, set of habits/ shortcomings/traits, strengths/peculiarities helps you to sketch your character. The readers will bond with you if they find you enough amusing, interesting, typical, etc. The readers won’t like you if you show self-dislike neither if you seem too pleased with yourself. Don’t fall into traps such as the “I am right and the other others are wrong.” Humor or remorse attracts more sympathy, especially when you show you made hard choices under pressure. In addition, try to contextualize that moment but bringing in what was happening around in the larger world (key news in your city, region, country, etc.). This is the only assignment in this class that you will write in the first person. This is not a bio. Write a minimum of 600-words in a double- spaced article. Include a creative title. Post it on Beachboard by the deadline. Check the course schedule for deadline. This assignment is worth 30 points.

Check the textbook “Telling True Stories” pages 78-83 on personal essays.

Here are some memoir prompters (focus on the ones that matters to you):

1. What happened to you in that particular moment?
2. What was the context?
3. What characters were involved?
4. What’s the most frightening thing if any? What’s the happiest thing if any?
5. What images, sounds or smells come to mind when you cast your memory back to those days?
6. Describe what happened and how it turned out; include your feelings. Re-examine the situation, your decisions and choices. What have you learned from it?

**Be truthful:** DO NOT ADD THINGS THAT DID NOT HAPPEN; DO NOT DECEIVE YOUR READERS.

* Story 1: Profile

Select an exciting person that is demographically different than you are, such as a member of a minority group, and has an interesting life story to conduct a personal interview. Please, avoid family members for reasons we will discuss in class. You will employ the techniques prescribed by the textbook “Telling True Stories” pages 30-35 and other aspects discussed in class. Based on what you get from your subject through a couple of meetings (one meeting is never enough) and, if applicable, through an Internet search, write a profile of him/her. Print it and turn it in by the deadline in class. Add a photo caption of your subject of he/she agrees. By the way, the subject needs to agree to reveal his/her real name. To know more about profiles, check the textbook “Telling True Stories” pages 66 - 74. It will be nice if you can include some dialogue instead of mere quotations. Use AP style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/735/02/>).

Length: 1,000 words, double-spaced. This assignment is worth 100 points.

* Story 2: Final Project

Pick an issue or a situation that you really like or a curious about it. You will research this topic and find people related to it to be the central characters of your story. For example, issues can include being gay on campus or in any other setting; being an illegal immigrant, living with a critical health problem (cancer, Aids, Down syndrome, Autism, etc.); a situation can be the daily life of a cab driver in times of competition with Uber and other mobile companies; a prostitute that books her clients online vs. a prostitute that works in the street; a homeless person; a former marine with PTSD; a person with a major addiction; the behind the scenes of a theme park or the zoo, a restaurant’s kitchen, a dry cleaner, a comedy club, etc. The way you will research your topic and write your story is very different from the one you learned in traditional journalism format. You will rely heavily on your own observations and listen carefully to people’s stories, and will use some of the literary techniques your will learn in this course to construct your narrative. Use AP style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/735/02/>). Length: 1,000 words.

* Video Presentation (pairs of students): Select one literary journalist from the list posted on Beachboard (get my approval ahead of time), research his/her life and read his/her pieces. I will keep track of the list of authors selected by students. Select one short piece authored by him/her (or an excerpt long enough to understand the author’s topic and style) and email it to me and your classmates one week before your presentation so everyone has enough time to read it. I suggest you choose contemporary authors. You and your partner will produce a short video about your author and his/her work. Plan a video that is at least 5 min long and no longer than 10 min long. Feel free to be creative: You can talk to the camera for a short period of time, read a short passage from the excerpt you sent us that illustrate your point, use Prezi software presentation with voice over, pictures and short videos captured online (author saying something important on a television interview; author walking in the streets, etc.). Include brief information on his/her career, historical context (what was happening when he/she published his/her work, if it seems relevant), why this author is important to you, what critics say or said about him/her. Try to find out a quintessential aspect of both his/her writing style and/or his/her worldview. Each student needs to know all aspects of the project and be able to speak about it. Add a bibliography at the end. Avoid Wikipedia. This assignment is worth 100 points.

Tech issues: You can edit your work in iMovie or Windows Movie Maker. As long as you post it on YouTube, it will run on my computer (I have a MAC). Remember that content is more important than format. I will give you further instructions on this assignment.

* Discussion Boards: Throughout the semester, three discussion boards will take place on Beachboard. They will focus on your self-assessment of your mini memoir, profile and final project. The goal is to give you extra space for self-expression and stimulate interaction with classmates. Share your curiosity, your doubts, and your ideas. I am interested in knowing the techniques you attempted to use, who you interviewed, how you researched for these assignments, the difficulties you faced on remembering things, taking notes, interviewing subjects, following ethical guidelines, putting the story together, working on flow, scene construction, character development, etc. Of course, you will select the aspects that apply to each assignment and to your own style. However, on your third post, you need to discuss how you incorporated the main characteristics of literary journalism in your final project: scene -by- scene construction, the use of full dialogue instead of quotes, third-person point-of-view (author presents scenes through the eyes of particular characters instead of only the invisible narrator), and everyday detail also known as status life (characters’ behavior, possessions, friends and family, anything that indicate who the character really is). You can include other aspects if you wish. DBs are 150 words long and have a specific deadline. Grammar counts! Therefore, check your post for grammar and spelling before submitting it. Avoid caps, slang, cursing, and ‘text message’ language. In addition, in each DB you need to reply to a post by another classmate. Be creative and add meaning to your replies. “I agree,” “Me too,” “Good Job” posts do not count. There are no make-ups for DBs. Check the rubric for Discussion Boards before writing them. Each one is worth 10 points (30 total).
* In- Class Assignments: There are no make -ups for these assignments. They will be explained in class. Each one is worth 10 points (30 total).
* Detailed Final Story Idea: TBA on Beachboard. Assignment is worth 20 points.
* Class Participation: It is measured by the quality and the frequency of your comments and questions offered in class throughout the semester. Only insightful comments and well-elaborated questions will receive points for participation. I will keep a record of your class participation in every class and transfer this record to an Excel spreadsheet. You can receive up to 30 points in class participation. If you do not participate in class, you will get zero points on this item. Check the rubric on Beachboard. This grade is not associated to class attendance.

Helpful tips:

Clichés to avoid: <http://users.tns.net/~pamrider/list2>

Grammar: <http://dyslexiamylife.org/grammar.htm>

Editing: <http://www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess/editing.html>

Narrative & Descriptive:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/narrative.htm>

More on how to:

Take notes: <http://www.mantex.co.uk/samples/note.htm>

Summarize: <http://www.mantex.co.uk/samples/summary.htm>

Style: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/style.html>

Do a good class presentation: <http://www.mantex.co.uk/ou/a811/a811-01.htm>

Punctuate: <http://www.harmonize.com/PROBE/Aids/manual/punctuate.htm>

Improve your grammar: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/runons.htm>

 <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/01/>

Please note: Just because a student completes an assignment doesn’t necessarily mean the student will receive an A, or even a B. Students who complete an assignment satisfactorily (a good job on it) will receive a C; for a B, students should do a very good job on the assignment. An A is awarded to those who not only follow the steps listed above, but do an extraordinary job at the assignment. Therefore, students who receive As in assignments should be proud of their work, and will be setting the bar for what others are/were expected to do.

Make-up Policies: Will be accepted only in special situations and in agreement with University policy and allowed by me. Make-ups usually are granted in strict accordance with CSULB policy, which defines excused absences as (1) illness or injury to the student; (2) death, injury or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; (3) religious reasons; (4) jury duty or government obligation; (5) CSULB-sanctioned or approved activities [2002-03 Catalog, p.75]. *All requests for an excused absence must be documented*. Always keep backup copies of your assignments as you do them to avoid computer problems. Do not come up with lies to explain your late work or absence from exams – we all know the excuses, and I can tell you bad stories that came from those. Excused absences must be supported by proper documentation proving the allegations.

Other Important Observations:

Grading: The grading policies and practices in this class are explained elsewhere in the syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to read them and to seek clarification if necessary. The student should be fully aware of what is required for success in the course, such as group participation, writing, speaking, completing assigned.

Seat in Class: An enrolled student may lose his/her seat in class if he/she misses the first class meeting without notifying the instructor. At the instructor’s discretion, a student who attends the first class but not subsequent classes may also be dropped from the course.

Withdrawal from Class: Students may withdraw from a class from the third to the 12th week for “serious and compelling reasons.” Normally these are defined as anything of importance that is beyond the control of the student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, death or serious illness in a student’s immediate family or a documented change in a student’s work schedule. Poor performance, tardiness and unexcused absences are not considered serious or compelling reasons beyond the student’s control for purposes of withdrawing.

Absences from Class: Grades in a course may be adversely affected by absences, and students should seek clarification from the instructor regarding the course absence policy. Make-ups usually are granted in strict accordance with CSULB policy, which defines excused absences as (1) illness or injury to the student; (2) death, injury or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; (3) religious reasons; (4) jury duty or government obligation; (5) CSULB-sanctioned or approved activities [2002-03 Catalog, p.75]. *These and any other requests for an excused absence must be documented*.

CSULB Cheating/Plagiarism/Fabrication Policy: CSULB takes issues of academic dishonesty very seriously. If you use any deceptive or dishonest method to complete an assignment, take an exam, or gain credit in a course in any other way, or if you help someone else to do so, you are guilty of cheating. Making something up constitutes fabrication. If you use someone else’s ideas or work and represent it as your own without giving credit to the source, you are guilty of plagiarism. This does not apply if the ideas are recognized as common knowledge, or if you can show that you honestly developed the ideas through your own work. Any instructor can show you the correct ways of citing your sources, and you should use quotation marks, footnotes or endnotes and bibliographic references to give credit to your sources according to the format recommended by your instructor. The Department of Journalism has a zero-tolerance policy in these areas, and any instance of academic dishonesty -- cheating, plagiarism and/or fabrication -- may result in your failing of the assignment, immediate removal from class with a failing grade, removal from the College of Liberal Arts, expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as the instructor deems appropriate.

Responses, Penalties and Student Rights: Students should consult the appropriate sections of the Catalog for examples of cheating, fabrication and plagiarism, and instructor and/or CSULB response options in such circumstances. The Catalog also outlines student rights.

**Students with Disabilities**:

Students with disabilities who need assistance or accommodation to participate in the course should inform the instructor and then contact Disabled Student Services within the first week of class. In addition, students should establish their eligibility for assistance by contacting the Disabled Student Services Office (Brotman Hall 270) at 562-985-5401.

Students are to provide the instructor verification of their disability from Disabled Student Services. If the service offered is insufficient or inadequate, the student should confer with the instructor and the director of Disabled Student Services. If these efforts are unsuccessful, students have the option of directing their concerns to the Office of Equity and Diversity (University Student Union 301) at 562-985-8256. Responsibility for oversight and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act has been delegated to the campus director for disability support and accommodation.

University Emergency:

 <http://emergency.csulb.edu/pdf/emergency-procedures2.pdf>

University Police: (562) 985-4101

Additional Student Learning Assessment

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at California State University, Long Beach is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

ACEJMC has established educational requirements and standards and provides a process of voluntary program review by professionals and educators, awarding accredited status to programs that meet its standards. Through this process, the Council assures students, parents, journalism and mass communications professionals, and the public that accredited programs meet rigorous standards for professional education.

Accreditation by ACEJMC is an assurance of quality in professional education in journalism and mass communications. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, appropriate resources and facilities, and a competent faculty.

ACEJMC lists 12 professional values and competencies that must be part of the education of all journalism, public relations, and mass communication students. Therefore, our graduates who major in journalism and public relations should be able to do the following:

* understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
* demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
* demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
* demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
* understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
* demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
* think critically, creatively and independently;
* conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
* write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
* critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
* apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
* apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.