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| **Journalism and Mass Communication Department**  **Cal State Long Beach** |  | **Spring 2016 Tuesdays/Thursdays**  **11:00 am - 12:50 pm**  **LA 4, room 207** |
| Jour 316  **Feature Writing** |  | **Instructor: Dr. Heloiza Herscovitz E-mail: heloiza.herscovitz@csulb.edu Phone: (562) 985-5667 Office: LA 4, 206 D Office Hours: 9:30 am- 10:30 am** |
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**Required Materials**

1. **Textbook Feature Writing: The Pursuit of Excellence, 7th edition, by Edward J. Friedlander and John Lee**
2. **A current AP Style Book**

**SPJ Code of Ethics:**

[**http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp**](http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp)

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| **Overview** This course teaches students how to write compelling feature articles that inform and engage a diverse audience. Students learn the basics of feature writing using multimedia elements and storytelling techniques (description, anecdotes, imagery, quotes, dialogue). Stories are ethically informed by the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics, but are written in a creative, less formal tone although precise and truthful. In addition, students conceive, report, write and revise several types of feature stories. They practice pitching stories and writing effective query letters. Special attention is paid to incorporating a variety of live and online sources (data sets, government and non-government databases). Reading and commenting on classic pieces will be essential to succeed in this class. Furthermore, getting published in the school media or outside is a course requirement. **Learning Outcomes** Upon successful completion this course, students will be able to:   * Demonstrate refined reporting, writing, analytical, storytelling, research and multimedia skills * Work comfortably on deadline and/or high-pressure environments independently as well as collaboratively. * Identify the roles of beat reporters, general-assignment reporters, staff writers of feature sections, national and foreign correspondents, bloggers, freelance journalists and their editors on contemporary media * Contribute effectively to team projects, demonstrating a strong work ethic, professionalism and collegiality * Critically evaluate their work and the work of others for accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and grammatical correctness. * Sharpen observation, listening and interviewing skills. * Seek truth through a variety of voices and perspectives across ethnicity/race, religion, age, gender, class and sexual orientation.  **Other Reading Materials**  * Read the *New York Time*s and the *Los Angeles Times.* * Read extra articles posted on BeachBoard * Read at your own discretion from magazines and websites   that do top-notch feature writing such as *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, *National Geographic*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Salon.com*, *Slate.com*, and so forth.  **Course Rules**  **Format of News Stories**  Stories should be written in **double-space, 12 pt. Times New Roman font**. Indent paragraphs and do not leave extra spacing between them. **Save your work in Word (doc or .docx);** **do not use .pdf**. Pay attention to spelling, accuracy, clarity and grammar. Poorly written assignments will be penalized. **Print them and bring them to class by the** **deadline**. **At the same time, post them on dropbox**. Use AP style and always bring your two textbooks to class as you will need to consult them frequently.  On the left upper corner of the first page of your assignments, include your name, course, date, headline in caps and word count. Follow this example:  John Smith  J316 Herscovitx  Date  HEADLINE IN CAPS  Word count: XXX   |  | | --- | | **Late Work** | | Deadlines are crucial. If your story (either draft or final version) is turned in on the same day but after the dropbox deadline/assigned class, it will miss 10 points. On the second day it will miss 20 points; | | on the third day it will miss 30 points. After that, you will receive a zero on the assignment. | | Late work may be accepted with my consent and with adequate supporting documentation in strict accordance with CSULB policy (read below) such illness or injury to the student, death, injury, serious illness of an immediate family member, religious reasons jury duty, and university sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips, etc.). Do **not** send me assignments by email unless instructed by me.  Check policy at [**http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic\_information/class\_attendance.html**](http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_information/class_attendance.html) | |  | |  |   **Cheating and Plagiarism**  **Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing at any time and on any type of assignment risks receiving an “F” for 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**. Please read the CSULB policy on Turnitin at <http://www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/bb/faculty/turnitin_assignments.html>  **Attendance**  **It is mandatory. After two unexcused absences during this 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 adequate supporting documents and my consent.**  **Perpetual tardiness is disruptive and will affect your final grade. After the third one, every tardy one will lead to a 1–point penalty.** Yet, if you arrive up to ten minutes late, I rather have you entering the classroom quietly than standing in the hall and missing important content.  **Grading**  Stories will be graded on how successfully you have researched, reported and written your feature concept. As with any journalism, you’ll also be graded on accuracy, clarity, organization, AP style, fairness/balance, completeness/omissions, grammar, punctuation, spelling and the ability to meet deadlines.  Don’t be discouraged if your first few stories aren’t highly graded. This class is about learning to be a writer, and stretching to reach that goal.  **Rewrites**  Rewrites will be encouraged. They will be accepted on stories written in the first two months of class/up to the midterm, and the rewrite grade will be your final grade. In other words, if your initial grade is a C but you rewrite it and improve it to a B, the B will be your grade on that assignment. However, that would require substantial reworking of your story – simply making the fixes I note in your original copy won’t do much to improve you grade. **Rewrites must be done within two weeks of the date the original assignment was due.** You need to turn in the original story with the rewrite.  **Assignments**  In-class writing exercises and quizzes: 100 points (about 10 points each)  Midterm: a 1,000- to 1,500-word piece: 100 points  Final: a 1,500- to 2,000-word piece: 100 points  Published story (option 1 or 2): 20 points  Class Participation: 20 points  Total points: 340  **(Assignments will be detailed in a separated document)**  **Stories will be graded as follows**:  1. An “**A**” story is exceptional. It is well written and requires only minor editing. In other words, it’s publishable.  2. A “**B**” story needs more than minor editing and may have spelling or style errors. Writing is poorly organized or it may need more details and reporting to be compelling.  3. A “**C**” story needs considerable editing and may have other writing or style problems.  4. A “**D**” story is substandard and an “F” story has even more problems. For instance, make major factual errors and you’re likely looking at an “F” story.  **If you are struggling, ask me for help. That’s why I am here!**  **Getting Published**  **It is a class requirement to get some of your work published.** Failing to do this may knock down your final class grade.  Here are the details of what is required – you have options!  **The One-Story Option:** If you get published by an off-campus publication for which you don’t already work and so have to pitch a story to an editor you don’t know, one story satisfies your requirement.  **The Two-Story Option:** If you get published by an on-campus publication (Daily 49er, Dig) two stories satisfy this requirement. (If you work or intern at an off-campus publication, talk to me about how we’ll handle this. You’ll need to do something beyond the work assigned to you.)  These stories can be ones you are writing for a class assignment, or they can be extra stories (not a class assignment). Other published stories beyond the one or two that are mandatory may qualify for extra credit. Please attempt this -- the practical experience you will gain is invaluable.  **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.  **Student Learning Assessment**  The national accrediting agency for journalism education has established a requirement that all accredited journalism schools assess student mastery of 12 core values and competencies that any graduate of a journalism and mass communication program should possess. According to the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), all graduates, irrespective of their particular specialization, should be able to:   1. Understand and apply principles of law of freedom of speech and press for the United States, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of expression around the world – including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances. 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications. 3. Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in the United States in relation to mass communications 4. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society. 5. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information. 6. Work ethically in the pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity. 7. Think critically, creatively and independently. 8. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professionals in which they work. 9. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve. 10. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness. 11. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts. 12. Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world. |  |  |
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