Fall 2015

JOUR 5710

Will Peneguy

University of New Orleans

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Syllabus

Jour 5710       Feature Writing

SECTION 001    MoWe    3:30-4:45    Liberal Arts Building 210
Will Peneguy    Office: LA  341
e-mail: wpeneguy@uno.edu    Office Hours:  MW 4:50-5:20, or by appointment

This course explores the human interest element of news, peeling back the surface information for a deeper look at people, places, and things. Interviewing techniques and story writing will be discussed as well as current topics. Students will be expected to offer creative insight into everyday occurrences. Each of the five senses plays a roll in the discovery process and the creative development of useful/entertaining material. Requirements include the development and writing of both short and in-depth features. Guest speakers will contribute to discussion.

The skills learned in this class will be utilized along with the skill sets from your previous writing classes to conceptualize, seek, write, and edit feature stories for mass media. Different communication delivery platforms will be discussed.

Both short articles and longer stories will be written. Both the mid-term and final exam will consist of 800 word (minimum) stories.

All stories will follow AP style.

All stories will be given to the instructor in hard copy.

The class will be conducted in manner to best simulate a professional editor/writer working environment. Consults, drafts and rewrites are an integral part of the process.

No textbook required.

Attendance Policy:  Attendance in class is important both for your grade and your career. Attendance and class participation will influence final grades.

Deadlines: Because deadlines are an integral part of a writer’s professional life, stories must be turned in on time. Missing deadline will result in a story being counted as late and will be graded accordingly.

Guest Speakers: Several guest speakers will be invited to share their expertise. Their availability will determine scheduling.

Transportation: Pursuit of stories may require students to leave campus. New Orleans is an easy to navigate (once you learn the four basic directions: uptown, downtown, river side, lake side) and has public transportation. Phone interviews, normally a staple for news reporters, will be discouraged for feature writers. The rationale for this will be clear once the interview process is discussed in class.
**Student Learning Outcomes:** The goal of this class is to produce world class story tellers. Two former UNO students have won Pulitzer Prizes for writing. Do not underestimate your outcomes. By the end of the semester, graduate students will:

1) have the ability to sense, construct, and tell an engaging story;

2) develop a sense of resolute fact-finding, dependent on understanding an audience, keen observation and the ability to organize thought;

3) evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses in story development, critical thinking, and creativity.

4) be able to demonstrate the ability to work as a professional independent contractor by developing a business plan to write and market an audience-targeted story. Each student will lead a class discussion on their project.

The following will be written:

Short (less than 250 words) **descriptive** essays designed to illuminate a:

1. Personality;
2. Place or Thing

A minimum of four full length (800 words or more) stories will include, but are not limited to:

Personality profile and a news feature, 1 each required.

An issue or object related feature.

One or two snapshot stories (approximately 400 words)

**Final Project:** Graduate students will be asked to develop a publishable story, selected and submitted for a specific audience publication. Each student will be asked to discuss their idea development, marketing plan for publication, and business plan for placement and payment.