

WOLLO UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
COURSE PLAN

I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Title and Module Number: Print & Web Journalism (JoCo-M2061)

Title and Course Number: Investigative Journalism and Feature writing (JoCo2065)

Credit Hours: 3 Cr. Hrs. / 5 ECTS

Class Schedule: **M34 T12 W12**

II. INSTRUCTOR

Tesfaye Bezabih (Dr.)

Telephone: 0991502190

Office Hours: 3-5 a.m. T, TH or by appt.

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III. ABOUT THE COURSE

This course covers the significance, preparation, planning and reporting techniques and methods of investigation. The course shows students how to manage and develop different sources during investigation and what kind of danger they will face during investigation. With case analysis, it equips students with basic techniques and skills of as to how a journalist exposes immoral, illegal and unethical deeds of organizations, officials or individuals.

This course also deals on feature article story structures and/or opinion based approaches of writing stories. It is a build up on newspaper journalism and is characterized by an advanced form of writing with emphasis on feature writing; profiles of people and places, issues, stories, commentaries and investigative reporting etc. Students will be expected to complete numerous off-campus writing assignments, as well as in-class writing exercises.

Your previous classes in newspaper Journalism must have provided a solid journalism foundation to help move you to the advanced writing techniques of this course, and in particular, how to successfully craft both short and in-depth or longer-version pieces of nonfiction and pitch it to an appropriate publication. Class time will be spent working on writing lessons under my

supervision as well as reading and critiquing industry work, and discussing such elements of writing as voice, style, use of language and command of various lead writing and story structure techniques. While the thrust of this course is written by definition, many of the tools and techniques you learn here can be applied to media work industry-wide.

Course objective and competences to be acquired

At the end of the course students are expected to:

- Define what investigative reporting is
- Comprehend the essential stages of Investigative reporting
- Know how to report investigated stories
- Understand the desired qualities of an investigative reporter/journalist
- Featurize news and newsworthy events being very well
- Acquainted with the necessary skills of feature writing
- Identify various feature types and practically internalize the
- Distinctive quality and technique each feature type needs
- Develop skills of generating ideas for features and looking into
- The fresh angles and tastes of events and happenings
- Produce variety of feature articles which measure students'
- Competence on class room discussions.
- Identify the angle, lead and hook
- know the difference between a hard news and feature
- Approach to a story or blend of each
- Be familiar with traditional types of feature articles (anecdotal, personal profile, etc.)
- Adapt various interviewing techniques
- Use of various sources of information duly analyzing
- Advantages and drawbacks of each
- Appreciate various means of organizing information in a feature piece
- Structurally and thematically analyze the writing of others in order to
- Learn new techniques, approaches and skills.

COURSE CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

- 1.1. Definition and scope of investigative reporting
- 1.2. Historical overview of investigative reporting
- 1.3. Investigative reporting Vs other types of reporting
- 1.4. Methods of investigation
- 1.5. Challenges of Investigative Reporting
- 1.6. Essential attitudes and qualities for investigative reporter

Reading: Harcup, Tony. (2009). Journalism Principles and practices . (P.95-111)

D.B., Hugo (2003). Investigative Journalism.

CHAPTER Two: Areas of Investigative reporting (3 weeks)

- 2.1. Government organization
- 2.2. Private organizations
- 2.3. Individuals
- 2.4. Religious institutions
- 2.5. NGO/CBO

CHAPTER THREE: Stages of Journalistic Investigation (3 weeks)

- 3.1. Story selection

3.2. Allocating resource and assigning tasks

3.3. Research

Reading. D.B,Hugo(2000).Investigative Journalism: Context and practice

CHAPTER FOUR: Reporting Journalistic Investigation (3 weeks)

4.1. Story Assembly

4.2. Pre-Publication/broadcast check

4.2.1. Confrontation Interview

4.2.2. Legal checks

4.2.3. Preparing for consequence of publication

CHAPTER FIVE: Nature and Definition of Features

1.1 Defining Features

1.2 News and Feature

1.3 Elements of Good Feature

1.4. Features and other forms of non-fiction stories

Reading:

Hay, Vicky. (1990). The Essential Feature: Writing for Magazines and Newspapers. New York: Colombia University Press. (pp. 3-10)

CHAPTER SIX: Types/Kinds of Feature

2.1 Human Interest Sketches

2.2 Interesting Persons narratives

2.3 Autobiographical Human Document

2.4 Historical Features

2.5 Travel Sketches

- Unusual/Interesting People

- Unusual/Interesting Places

2.6 Interpretative Features

2.7 Popularized Science Articles

2.8 Practical Guidance Article

Readings:

Hay, Vicky. (1990). The Essential Feature: Writing for Magazines and Newspapers. New York: Colombia University Press. (pp. 185-256)

Maskell, Vin & Perry, Gina. (1999). Writing to Publish: Writing feature articles for magazines, newspapers, and corporate and community publications. Leonards: Allen & Unwin. (pp. 54-63)

Pape, Susan & Featherstone, Sue. (2006). Feature Writing: A Practical Introduction. London: Sage. (pp. 79-94)

CHAPTER SEVEN: Writing a Feature Lead: Some Styles

3.1 Lead Varieties

3.1.1- The New Summary Lead, The Distinctive Incident lead, The Quotation Lead, The Short Sentence Lead, The Question Lead

3.1.2- The Contrast Lead, The Analogy Lead, The Picture Lead, The Janus-Faced Lead

Readings:

- Hay, Vicky. (1990). The Essential Feature: Writing for Magazines and Newspapers. New York: Colombia University Press. (pp. 75-82)
- Maskell, Vin & Perry, Gina. (1999). Writing to Publish: Writing feature articles for magazines, newspapers, and corporate and community publications. Leonards: Allen & Unwin. (pp. 124-5)

CHAPTER EIGHT: Anatomy/ structure of Feature

3.2 Story Forms

- Pyramid/Suspense
- Hour Glass Structure
- Wall Street Journal Formula

Readings:

Hay, Vicky. (1990). The Essential Feature: Writing for Magazines and Newspapers. New York: Colombia University Press. (pp. 75-82)

Maskell, Vin & Perry, Gina. (1999). Writing to Publish: Writing feature articles for magazines, newspapers, and corporate and community publications. Leonards: Allen & Unwin. (pp. 124-133)

Practice

Throughout their learning, students will be expected to compile a portfolio of various practical assignments starting from researching and or interviewing to final submission of their feature stories chronologically. The details of the practical assignments are listed as follows.

PRACTICE ONE: Using Fictional and Storytelling Techniques ... “the depth, imagination and sensitive handling of the human interest in a feature article will go for nothing if the writer does not have the basic reporting skills to build on a framework of facts, details and names as accurately as they would be in a news story.” B. Hennessey, *Writing Feature Articles* (2003: 9)

This section:

- examines the classic ingredients that should be contained in a feature
- explains pegs, angles, facts, use of quotes, pictures, graphics and panels
- explores how fictional techniques are employed in feature writing
- looks at the use of color, style and tone.

Readings:

Hay, Vicky. (1990). *The Essential Feature: Writing for Magazines and Newspapers*. New York: Colombia University Press. (pp. 88-97)

Pape, Susan & Featherstone, Sue. (2006). *Feature Writing: A Practical Introduction*. London: Sage. (pp. 41-56)

PRACTICE TWO: Researching and Looking for Sources of a Feature

How to find manuscripts, experts, documents or online materials?

How to source them?

“A journalist’s work involves a constant tension between nurture and trust and maintaining skepticism. This is nowhere clearer than in the relationship between reporters and sources.” K. Sanders, *Ethics and Journalism* (2004: 10)

This section:

- considers where journalists get their ideas and information
- examines what sources they find useful
- examines whether or not a feature writer needs a greater number of sources than other journalists
- looks at essential contacts

Readings:

Hay, Vicky. (1990). *The Essential Feature: Writing for Magazines and Newspapers*. New York: Colombia University Press. (pp. 30-48)

Pape, Susan & Featherstone, Sue. (2006). *Feature Writing: A Practical Introduction*. London: Sage. (pp. 11-22)

Matthew, Ricketson. (2004). *Writing feature stories: how to research and write newspaper and magazine articles*. Crows Nest: Allen &Unwin. (pp 95-110)

PRACTICE THREE: Basics of interviewing

“The joy of interviewing interesting people is almost infinite ... I can think of dozens such interviews where, even while I worried about my next question and whether the tape would run out, I was aware that I was experiencing a golden privilege.” L. Barber in S. Glover, *The Penguin Book of Journalism: Secrets of the Press* (2000: 205)

This part:

- examines some of the ways in which a feature interview differs from a news interview

- considers the research needed before an interview
- looks at the practicalities of setting up an interview
- includes guidance on the general rules of interviewing.

Readings:

Pape, Susan & Featherstone, Sue. (2006). Feature Writing: A Practical Introduction. London: Sage. (pp. 23-40)

∴ Assignment 2 (Profile or related long feature) due Friday week 12 at 3:00 pm.

PRACTICE FOUR: Interviewing practice

Students in pairs will play roles of informant and interviewer so as to apply the basic principles and give each other feedback. Eventually, they will handle individual interview projects on issues of their choice and produce a 10-15 minutes audio record of the interviewed spot. The process, challenges faced, lessons learned and remedies taken must be noted and added into portfolio entries.

Readings:

Students can refer to any literature on the issue or their class notes in due practice of this project.

PRACTICE FIVE: Writing Personal Columns and Critical Commentaries

“The heart of journalism may be news reporting, and the soul of journalism the editorial page, but the personality of journalism is the column.” M. McCabe Cordoza, You Can Write a Column (2000: 3)

This section:

- looks in more detail at personal columns and commentaries
- considers what makes personal columns and commentaries
- examines what a personal column should include.

Reading

Pape, Susan & Featherstone, Sue. (2006). Feature Writing: A Practical Introduction. London: Sage. (pp. 95-106)

- Assignment 3 (Personal column or related long feature) due Friday week 14 at 3:00 pm.

PRACTICE SIX: Intensive Editing of final draft of the feature assignment

Students will have a series of guided writing practices. Corrections effected on Assignment 2 and 3 will be communicated to me before the drafts make their way to the portfolio.

Assignment 4 (color story) due Friday week 15 at 3:00 pm.

PRACTICE SEVEN: Summary and finalizing of the portfolio due to Friday 3:30 pm the latest. (.: PORTFOLIO due Monday week 17 at 3:00 pm.)

Mode of Delivery

Lecture, field trip, assignments, presentations, quiz, mid and final exams

Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken daily. If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to contact the instructor prior to and be up-to-date for the next class. In the event of serious illness, continuous absence, misbehavior or a family emergency, the instructor abides himself to the University laws and regulations.

Approval

Approved by:

Name _____ **Signature** _____ **Date**

Head, Department/School