

## **JN217 - Feature Writing Spring 2015 Syllabus**

Instructor: **Rob Priewe**

North Santiam Hall 114 ~ 541-917-4563 ~ rob.priewe@linnbenton.edu

Class Blog: robpriewe.blogspot.com ~ Twitter: @robpriewe

Facebook: LBCC Journalism

### **Course Description (CRN 48460)**

Feature Writing is a three-credit workshop focusing on reporting, research and writing articles for newspapers, online and other media. It builds on basic skills students learned in News Reporting. In addition to feature stories, you will craft profiles, reviews and opinion columns.

Your stories will be posted on your online blog as well as shared with The Commuter, LBCC's student newspaper. Publication of your stories online and in The Commuter will provide the clips you need to build your portfolio, which is the culmination of this class.

### **Course Schedule**

1-1:50 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Forum Computer Lab, Room 202

### **Course Outcomes**

- Become a more confident and skillful writer by crafting various stories, including profiles, opinion columns and reviews.
- Improve at reporting, interviewing and research.
- Learn social media techniques, especially how to maximize use of Twitter/LinkedIn.
- Build and present a portfolio of quality work published in print and online.

### **Course Texts**

- **Required** -- **“On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft”** by Stephen King (*copy on reserve at the LBCC library*)
- **Required** -- **“Associated Press Stylebook”** (Any recent edition)
- *Optional* -- **“Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism”** by Tim Harrower (Any Edition)
- *Optional: "Reporter's Guide to Multimedia Proficiency" by Mindy McAdams (available for download through Moodle)*

### **JN215A Journalism Lab (CRN 40023)**

This one-credit writing lab requires writing and submitting stories to The Commuter, LBCC's student newspaper and online site. The stories you write for Feature Writing can count toward the Journalism Lab credit. Your grade for JN215A will be based on stories published in the Commuter.

### **A Note About Writing 121**

Feature Writing is an intensive writing workshop. So the expectation is that students have

completed Writing 121 and/or News Reporting (JN216) with a grade of C or better. If not, please see the instructor on the first day of class.

### About the Instructor

Consider me a resource for ideas, insights and contacts acquired during 30-some years in journalism. Most of that experience comes from my work as a reporter, copy editor, and managing editor at the Corvallis Gazette-Times. I also have experience writing sports stories, columns and editorials, along with taking photos.

Through professional connections such as the Associated Collegiate Press, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association I can advise you on pursuing a career in media. You can find a variety of journalism links and resources at the class blog -- [robpriewe.blogspot.com](http://robpriewe.blogspot.com) -- and on Twitter -- [@robpriewe](https://twitter.com/robpriewe).

### Grading

- **Feature Stories** – 200 points (FOUR best grades on FIVE stories – 50 points each)
- **Weekly Forum/Writing Assignments** – 100 points (10 points per week)
- **Portfolio** – 50 points (LinkedIn profile, cover letter, your blog)
- **Associated Press Style Quizzes** – 80 points (8 highest scores out of 9 weekly 10-point quizzes)
- **Participation/Reading Responses** – 50 points (5 points per week)

A – 90 to 100 percent (432 or more points)

B – 80 to 89 percent (384 to 431 points)

C – 70 to 79 percent (336 to 383 points)

D – 50 to 69 percent (240 to 335 points)

F – 49 percent and below (239 points and below)

### ***Total possible points - 480***

Students must turn in **all FIVE** stories during the term. About half of your final grade will be based on your FOUR highest-graded stories. Students must complete all FIVE stories to have a shot at earning an A. Turn in only FOUR stories and the highest grade you can earn is a B. Turn in only THREE stories and the highest grade you can earn is a C.

**NOTE:** To earn an A, students also must publish **at least FOUR of their stories in the Commuter or another publication**. Students can earn extra credit by publishing more than the required five stories for this class.

*BEWARE: This course **DOES NOT** include writing articles about your family and friends! Should this occur, you may earn a zero on that article and will have to write a new story. If in doubt, ask the instructor!*

Your five stories will include one of each of the following:

- **Feature Story**

- **Review**
- **Profile**
- **Column**
- **Writer's Choice**

Stories will be graded on 50-point scale that includes these criteria:

- An effective and compelling lead
- A “nut graf” that tells the reader “why this story matters”
- Research/reporting (including multiple sources)
- Content and organization
- Clarity and creativity of writing
- Editing and AP style
- Inclusion of "At a Glance" information and online LINKS.
- Stories should be a minimum of **500 words**.
- *You can earn extra credit if you take a photo to go with your story.*

**Revising Stories** – To improve your grade, you are encouraged to **edit and revise your stories** throughout the term. Re-submit your stories for a higher grade, even if they already have been published. **WHEN RE-SUBMITTING STORIES, TURN IN THE EVALUATION FORM.** One of the most important lessons of this course is the *process* of journalism, which puts a premium on revising work for publication in print as well as online.

**Deadlines Matter!** – You will be given deadlines for turning in each of your stories. *Failure to turn in stories on the specified dates may result in a reduction of at least one letter grade on your story.* Extensions on deadlines must be discussed with the instructor **IN ADVANCE** to avoid this penalty. **Stories must be posted on the day they are due!**

**Your Blog** – During the first week of class, students will create (or revive) their online blog. Your blog is where you will post your stories, along with other writing assignments. Remember, your blog is online for all the world to see, so only post what you want all to see.

Your blog posts will be graded on a variety of factors, including online **links**, grammar and spelling (Remember, these reflect on your abilities as a journalist!), and elements such as photos and videos (Properly attributed and permitted, of course).

**Twitter** -- We will use Twitter during the term to keep up with current events, learn about things in the world of journalism and let people know about the stories we are publishing and working on in class. Sign up for an account during the first week of classes at Twitter.com. Then start following those who can help expand your knowledge of journalism.

**Portfolio** – Your final assignment will be to complete your portfolio, including updating your "profile" on LinkedIn.com, writing a fresh cover letter and noting the URLs to your blog and LinkedIn profile. Your portfolio is due the last day of class.

**Participation/Reading Responses** -- *Be Prepared for Class!* Students are expected show up

each class ready to share progress on the story on which they are working as well as to discuss the assigned readings from the textbook, Moodle and "On Writing," the Stephen King memoir. Each week students will have a Reading Response that we will complete in class. These are in addition to weekly Moodle Forums and other written assignments.

### **Moodle**

We will use Moodle, LBCC's online learning system. By logging on to Moodle you can access your grades, quizzes, the syllabus, story ideas and other information. To get started, log on to LBCC's eLearning site at <http://elearning.linnbenton.edu>. If you've never used Moodle before, you will find a helpful tutorial video on your Moodle home page.

### **Course Outline and Assignments**

**NOTE:** *This syllabus may be revised by the instructor as needed.*

#### **Week 1 – March 30-April 3: Introduction to Feature Writing**

- Monday: Welcome and Introduction
- Wednesday: Brainstorm Feature Story; Create or revive online blog
- Friday: Weekly Forum/Writing Assignment due

#### **Week 2 – April 6-10: Refining the Feature Story**

- *Read for Monday "On Writing": Sections 1-18*
- Wednesday: AP Style and why it matters! ; AP Style Quiz 1 due before class Friday;
- Friday: **First Feature Story due**; Weekly Forum/Writing Assignment due

#### **Week 3 – April 13-17: The Review**

- *Read for Monday "On Writing": Sections 19-38*
- Monday: *The Review*
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 2 due Friday
- Friday: Weekly Forum/Writing Assignment due

#### **Week 4 – April 20-24: The Profile**

- *Read for Monday "On Writing": "What Writing Is" through "On Writing" - Section 1*
- Monday:
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 3 due Friday
- Friday: **Review Due**; Weekly Forum/Writing Assignment due

#### **Week 5 – April 27-May 1: Refining the Profile**

- *Read for Monday "On Writing": "On Writing" - Sections 2-9*
- Monday:
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 4 due Friday
- Friday: Weekly Forum/Writing Assignment due

#### **Week 6 – May 4-8: The Column**

- *Read for Monday "On Writing": "On Writing" Sections 10-16*

- Monday:
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 5 due Friday
- Friday: **Profile due**; Weekly Forum/Writing Assignment due

### **Week 7 – May 11-15: The Column**

- *Finish for Monday “On Writing”*
- Monday: *Guest speaker?*
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 6 due Friday
- Friday: **Column due**; Weekly Writing Assignment due

### **Week 8 – May 19-23: Writer’s Choice**

- Monday:
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 7 due Friday
- Friday: Weekly Writing Assignment due

### **Week 9 – May 27-29: Writer’s Choice**

- Monday: *No Class - Memorial Day Holiday*
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 8 due Friday
- Friday: **Writer’s Choice due**; Weekly Writing Assignment due

### **Week 10 – June 2-6: The Portfolio**

- Monday: Wrapping up the Portfolio
- Wednesday: Portfolio work; AP Style Quiz 9 due Friday
- Friday: **Portfolio due**; Weekly Writing Assignment due

### **Final Meeting – 1-2:50 p.m. Wednesday, June 10 – Meet with Instructor and Discuss Portfolio**

#### **Statement of Inclusion**

The LBCC community is enriched by diversity. Everyone has the right to think, learn and work together in an environment of respect, tolerance, and goodwill. We will work toward creating a community without prejudice, intimidation or discrimination. *(Related to Board Policy #1015)*

#### **LBCC's Statement of Nondiscrimination**

LBCC prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, age or any other status protected under applicable federal, state or local laws. *(For more information see <http://po.linnbenton.edu/BPsandARs>)*

#### **Disability Services**

Students who may need accommodations due to documented disabilities, who have medical information that the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in an emergency, should speak with the instructor during the first week of class. If you have not accessed services and think you may need them, contact Disability Services at 541-917-4789.

### **Late Assignments, Incompletes and Y Grades**

- Any assigned coursework with a fixed deadline that is not turned in on time may be reduced at least one letter grade.
- Students who don't show up for all classes the first week will be dropped from the class.
- "I" grades (incompletes) will not be granted.
- "Y" grades ("no basis for grade") will be granted only to those students who leave the class before completing at least 30 percent of the coursework.

### **If you withdraw from class**

Students who are unable to successfully complete the course should withdraw by submitting the proper paperwork prior to the end of the 7th week of class. For more information on withdrawing, including refund dates, see [www.linnbenton.edu/admissions/withdraw-deadlines](http://www.linnbenton.edu/admissions/withdraw-deadlines).

### **A Word About Plagiarism**

Do your own work! Claiming someone else's work as your own or using information or ideas without proper attribution can lead to your failing an assignment or the class.

Plagiarism is subject to disciplinary action as described in LBCC's guide on Student Rights and Responsibilities, which is available online in the "Student Life" section of the Linn-Benton home page – [www.linnbenton.edu/go/roadrunner-central](http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/roadrunner-central). Attribution is required whenever you use outside sources, especially ones on the Internet.

### **The Writing Center**

An excellent resource available to students is the Writing Center, where they can get help organizing, developing and revising written assignments. The Writing Center, located in the Learning Center on the second Floor of Willamette Hall, is open to students from 9 a.m. to noon and 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call 541-917-4708 or see <http://www.linnbenton.edu/learning-center/writing-center>.

**Note:** Students who use the Writing Center in preparing their stories for this class can receive extra credit on those stories. To earn extra credit, be sure to have the Writing Center note that you worked with one of the staffers to improve your story.

###