

JN217 - Feature Writing Spring 2020 Syllabus

Instructor: **Rob Priewe**

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Class Blog: robpriewe.blogspot.com ~ Twitter: [@robpriewe](https://twitter.com/robpriewe)

Facebook: LBCC Journalism ~ [linkedin.com/in/robpriewe](https://www.linkedin.com/in/robpriewe)

Course Description (CRN 42155)

Feature Writing is a three-credit workshop focusing on reporting, research and writing articles for newspapers, online and other media. In addition to feature stories, you will craft profiles, reviews and opinion columns, building on the skills you developed in Writing 121 and/or News Reporting.

Your stories will be posted on your online blog as well as shared with The Commuter, LBCC's award-winning 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 online via Zoom.

Course Outcomes

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Use basic journalism skills such as interviewing, research and gathering facts to write feature stories, including profiles, opinion columns and reviews.
- Edit news and feature stories according to Associated Press style guidelines.
- Use social media platforms such as Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn to gather information as well as distribute and promote feature stories.
- Build an online portfolio of work that can be published and shared with readers, The Commuter and potential employers.

Course Texts

- **Required** -- **“On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft”** by Stephen King
- **Required** -- **“Dispatches from 1320”** by Tom Hallman Jr.
- **Required** -- **“Associated Press Stylebook”** (*Any recent edition*)

JN215A Journalism Lab (Optional)

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 -- and on Twitter -- [@robpriewe](https://twitter.com/robpriewe).

Office hours: Before or after class Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or just send me an email and we'll set a time to meet online.

Grading

- **Feature Stories** – 200 points (FOUR best grades on FIVE stories – 50 points each)
- **Weekly Writing Assignments** – 100 points (10 points per week)
- **Portfolio** – 50 points (LinkedIn profile, cover letter, your blog)
- **Participation** – 50 points
- **AP Style Quizzes** – 50 points (Minus your lowest score on these weekly 10-point quizzes)

A – 90 to 100 percent (405 and above)
B – 80 to 89 percent (360 to 404 points)
C – 70 to 79 percent (315 to 359 points)
D – 60 to 69 percent (270 to 314 points)
F – 59 percent and below (269 points and below)

Total possible points - 450

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 must compile at least 360 points AND publish **at least TWO of their articles in the Commuter or another publication**. Students can earn extra credit by publishing more than the required five stories for this class. So you know, the editors of The Commuter are also looking forward to working with you this term, and want to publish as many of your stories as possible.

Among the types of stories we'll examine this term are:

- **Feature Story**
- **Review**
- **Profile**
- **Column**
- **“Solutions” Journalism**

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 supply 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. 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.

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.

Participation -- *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 textbooks, Moodle and "On Writing," the Stephen King memoir. The expectation is that all students are in this class to engage with the material. So let's do that!

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 – April 6-10: Introduction to Feature Writing

- Monday: Welcome and introduction to Feature Writing
- Wednesday: Brainstorm Feature Story ideas; Create or revive online blog
- Friday: Weekly Writing Assignment due

Week 2 – April 13-17: 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 20-24: 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 27-May 1: 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 – May 4-8: 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 11-15: 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 18-22: The Column

- *Finish for Monday “On Writing”*
- Monday: Working on The Column
- Wednesday: **AP Style Quiz 6 due Friday**; Weekly Writing Assignment due on blog
- Friday: **Column due**

Week 8 – May 25-29: Writer’s Choice

- Monday: *NO CLASS - Memorial Day Holiday*
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 7 due Friday
- Friday: Weekly Writing Assignment due

Week 9 – June 1-5: Writer’s Choice

- Monday:
- Wednesday: AP Style Quiz 8 due Friday
- Friday: **Writer’s Choice due**; Weekly Writing Assignment due

Week 10 – June 8-12: The Portfolio

- Monday: The Portfolio (Cover letter; LinkedIn profile; Blog)
- Wednesday: Portfolio work; AP Style Quiz 9 due Friday
- Friday: **Portfolio due**; Weekly Writing Assignment due

Cultural Richness at LBCC

To promote academic excellence and learning environments that encourage multiple perspectives and the free exchange of ideas, all courses at LBCC will provide students the opportunity to interact with values, opinions, and/or beliefs different than their own in safe, positive and nurturing learning environments. LBCC is committed to nurturing the development of culturally literate individuals capable of interacting, collaborating and problem-solving in an ever-changing community and diverse workforce.

Statements of Inclusion and Nondiscrimination

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 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.

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.

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/future-students/make-it-official/registration.

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. 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 is located in the Learning Center on the second Floor of Willamette Hall. For more information, call 541-917-4708 or see www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/study/learning-center/writing-assistance.

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.

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