

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL FORM

®

***DEADLINES:**

REGULAR COURSE PROPOSALS: OCTOBER 23, 1998 FOR FALL, 1999 AND FEBRUARY 19, 1999 FOR SPRING, 2000
SHORT-TERM COURSE PROPOSALS: DECEMBER 11, 1998 FOR FALL, 1999 AND MARCH 26, 1998 FOR SPRING 2000

PROPOSAL TITLE: Advanced Feature Writing for Print Media 0661 557

SPONSOR/S: Julia MacDonnell Chang

DEPARTMENT: Journalism & Creative Writing, College of Communication

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:
 UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE

COLLEGE: Communication
If LAS: History/Humanities
 Math/Sciences
 Social/Behavioral Sciences

* * * * *

TYPE OF PROPOSAL (Check ALL that Apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> General Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Course (NOT Gen. Ed.)
<input type="checkbox"/> New Course in <u> </u> Bank	<input type="checkbox"/> Name Change (Dept., School, Major)
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing course, Add To <u> </u> Bank	<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in Degree Requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Multicultural/Global Designation	<input type="checkbox"/> Changes Involve Gen. Ed. requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing Intensive Designation	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor Changes to Existing Courses
<input type="checkbox"/> Literature Designation	<input type="checkbox"/> Course is NOT General Education
<input type="checkbox"/> New Minor/Concentration/Specialization	<input type="checkbox"/> Course IS General Education
<input type="checkbox"/> New Major/Degree Program	
<input type="checkbox"/> Short Term Course Proposal	

DEPARTMENT
 (SIGNATURE INDICATES APPROVAL)

David Lloyd 2/17/99 Debra Pollock chair

DEPT. CURRICULUM CHAIR / DATE DEPT. CHAIRPERSON / DATE

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
 DATE OF OPEN HEARING (if necessary) As before

APPROVED
 NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

[Signature] 4/23/99
 SIGNATURE DATE

ACADEMIC DEAN (& GRADUATE DEAN, for New Graduate Programs Only)

APPROVED
 NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

[Signature] 4/12/99
 SIGNATURE (Academic Dean) DATE

 SIGNATURE (Graduate Dean) DATE

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

DATE OF OPEN HEARING (if necessary) 4/28/99 College level only

APPROVED

NOT APPROVED

COMMENTS:

Approved 5/12/99
SIGNATURE DATE

SENATE

Date announced at Senate 4/30/99

Voted upon at Senate: Approved Not Approved Date:

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST

APPROVED

NOT APPROVED If no, reasons are as follows:

STUDENT CREDIT HOURS 3 FACULTY LOAD HOURS 3 EQUALIZED CREDIT HOURS _____

OFFICIAL COPY & APPROVAL SHEET FILED (DATE): _____

DATE/SIGNATURE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST [Signature] 7/21/99

REGISTRAR

DATE APPROVED COURSE DESCRIPTION RECEIVED _____

HEGIS TAXONOMY & COURSE NUMBER ASSIGNED 0661 557

DATE/SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR Robert A. Kuback 4/26/99

NOTIFICATION FORWARD:

SENATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS

ACADEMIC DEAN(S)

REGISTRAR

SPONSOR(S)

T.M.
8/16/99

COURSE PROPOSAL

1. DETAILS:

- a.) Course Title: **Advanced Feature Writing for Print Media**
- b.) Sponsor: Prof. Julia Chang, Department of Journalism and Creative Writing
- c.) Credit Hours: 3 credit hours
- d.) Course Level: 500-level graduate course
- e.) Curricular Effect: Required course for the journalism/creative writing track in proposed Masters of Arts in Writing. Open to students throughout the University.
- f.) Prerequisites: None
- g.) Suggested Time/
Scale of Implementation: Fall 1999, One Section
- h.) Resources: Teaching faculty on staff consistent with the College of Communication budget. New library acquisitions will be required over time.

2. RATIONALE

The proposed course is part of the Master of Arts in Writing currently under development by the College of Communication's Departments of College Writing, and Journalism and Creative Writing. The course can also be offered as an elective for students enrolled in other graduate programs across campus.

This course will offer a brief survey of the explosive growth and development of feature writing in American print media from the 1950s onward, with a particular emphasis on the evolution of writing and reporting styles. It will also provide students with an in-depth exploration of contemporary reporting and writing styles. It will utilize appropriate technologies, including Internet and Lexis/Nexis based reporting, in

keeping with those currently used at commercial publications.

The proposed course will be beneficial to all students wishing to develop their skills writing non-fiction narrative and, more particularly, to those seeking to publish their work in newspapers and magazines.

3. ESSENCE OF THE COURSE

A.) Objectives

This proposed course has 11 objectives:

1. To develop to a professional level students' reporting (information gathering) skills as they relate to specific feature writing assignments
2. To hone interviewing skills, understanding that the interview is the feature writer's most important reporting tool
3. To learn and utilize Associated Press style
4. To learn how to recognize, develop, and present to editors, ideas for feature stories
5. To develop a personal writing style consistent with the industry's demanding standards
6. To understand journalistic ethics as related to writing and reporting features for publication
7. To understand communication law as it relates to writing and reporting features for publication
8. To develop multicultural sensitivity as it relates to the language and focus of feature stories
9. To gain insight into the rigorous and highly competitive milieu of newspaper and magazine publishing; to learn how to propose articles (pitch story ideas!) to editors
10. To learn how to organize and structure a long story, with particular emphasis on lead (opening paragraph) and nut graf (informational paragraph used in conjunction with 'soft' or feature leads)
11. To learn the types of leads - anecdotal, scene-setting, quote, etc. -- most often used by feature writers

B.) Topical Outline:

Students in this proposed course will be required to develop a portfolio that contains the following work:

Eight varied features, types and topics to be determined during the semester, including at least one 'team-reported' story. The stories must be of publishable quality and every effort will be made to place them with appropriate publications. Students will have some opportunity to revise their work, although the emphasis will be on 'getting it right the first time,' the skill by which most journalists survive.

The goal of these writing assignments is for students to demonstrate their mastery of various journalistic techniques and their understanding of the content being presented by the instructor.

In addition, members of the class will share with classmates, in a workshop setting, their experiences reporting and writing. Members of the class will also analyze and critique each others' work. Through this process, students will begin to act as editors and will learn how to become their own best editors.

C.) Grading Procedures:

Final course grade will be based upon the quality of the portfolio and the quality and quantity of student participation in class throughout the semester.

D.) Course Evaluation:

The proposed course will be evaluated using the College of Communication student evaluation forms (adapted from W.J. McKeachie) and critical review by College of Communication writing faculty. Student evaluation forms will assess effectiveness of content and content delivery, assignments, and texts. The critical review by College of Communication writing faculty will determine whether the course meets the goals outlined. Critical review by the department faculty can be met in several ways: classroom observation, syllabus review, faculty meetings at regular intervals to assess progress.

4. Results of Consultations:

The Department of Journalism and Creative Writing in the College of Communication is the only department in the university offering advanced writing workshops geared toward commercial publication.

Outside consultations were sought, and received from:

Dr. Joan Mellen, a full professor in Temple University's Master's in English and Creative Program, a novelist, biographer and free-lance journalist who publishes regularly in The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Baltimore Sun.

Everett Landers, former executive editor of the Courier Post and currently director of training and staff development for Gannett's northeast region.

Dr. Mellen wrote: "The feature writing proposal sounds so exciting I would like to sign up for the course myself. I like the combination of specific aims (how to organize a long story and a lead) with practicalities like the understanding of communication law and how to hone interviewing skills along with more abstract concerns like how to intriguing.

Mr. Landers said the proposed course is thorough and up to standards currently demanded in newsrooms. He suggested an even stronger emphasis on the development and presentation of story ideas.

5. Additional Supporting Information:

The Department of Professional Writing oversees two publications that will be of benefit to students in the proposed course: **The Whit**, the award-winning weekly newspaper of Rowan University; **Venue**, the satirical review. Both provide opportunities for publication by graduate students. Moreover, Rowan is located in one of the most competitive newspaper regions in the United States, offering students' the opportunity to have work published in a plethora of daily and weekly publications.

Possible Texts:

The Poynter Institute "*Best Newspaper Writing*" series, Christopher Scanlon, editor
The Associated Press Stylebook, latest edition
Biagi, Shirley. *Interviews That Work: A Practical Guide for Journalists*. 2nd edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1992
Brooks, Brian S. *Journalism in the Information Age*. Needham Heights, MA.: Allyn and Bacon, 1997
Clark, Roy Peter, *The American Conversation and the Language of Journalism*. St. Petersburg, Fla.: The Poynter Institute, 1994
Gutkind, Lee. *The Art of Creative Non-Fiction*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997
Hennessy, Brendan. *Writing Feature Articles*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Heineman, 1997
Harrington, Walt. *Intimate Journalism: The Art and Craft of Reporting Everyday Life*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications 1997
Mencher, Melvin. *News Reporting and Writing, 7th edition*. Madison, Wis.: Brown & Benchmark, 1997
Murray, Donald M., *The Writer in the Newsroom*. St. Petersburg, Fla.: The Poynter Institute, 1995
Rich, Carole. *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method*. 2nd edition. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1997
Root, Robert L., Jr., and Steinberg, Michael. *The Fourth Genre: Contemporary Writers of/on Creative Nonfiction*. Needham Heights, MA.: Allyn & Bacon. 1999
Strunk, William, Jr. and White, E.B., *The Elements of Style*. New York: MacMillan, newest edition
Wilbur, Rick. *The Writer's Handbook for Editing & Revision*. Lincolnwood, Ill.: NTC Publishing Group, 1997
Zinsser, William, *On Writing Well*, 6th edition New York: Harper Perennial, 1998

APPENDIX A -- CONSULTATIONS



TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
A Commonwealth University

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

Anderson Hall (022-29)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122
Fax: (215) 787-9620

February 10, 1999

Professor Julia MacDonnell Chang
211 Bunce Hall
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, New Jersey 08028

Dear Professor MacDonnell Chang:

I greatly enjoyed and found thought-provoking the two course proposals you forwarded to me, both the one for a Fiction Workshop and the one for Advanced Feature Writing for Print Media. Certainly the proposal for a fiction workshop meets the qualifications we set for our courses in the graduate program in creative writing at Temple University.

In particular, I admire your emphasis on students evaluating their classmates' work, and indeed serving as discussion leaders in workshop sessions. The written objectives for your course seem purposeful and designed for the students to gain the maximum benefit from the course. I believe that the students should receive copies of these objectives which might serve as a virtual "bill of rights" for fiction workshops everywhere. I approve of the emphasis, for example, on "self-editing and revision skills" since this is an aspect of creative writing programs which is never given enough time. I think you have done an absolutely splendid job.

I might suggest that the written commentaries students present of the work of their fellows be 2-3 pages rather than one page long, that the students be given guidelines on how to write these commentaries, and that the writer's journal be omitted as more befitting less experienced writers. But these are minor points. I have full confidence that the course you offer will be rich and profound and immensely helpful to apprentice writers who have chosen your program in the hope of becoming professional novelists or short story writers.

The feature writing proposal sounds so exciting I would like to sign up for the course myself. I like the combination of specific aims (how to organize a long story and a lead) with practicalities like the understanding of communication law and how to hone interviewing skills along with more abstract concerns like how to recognize and

From: Cpchief@aol.com
Date: Fri, 5 Feb 1999 12:06:49 EST
To: CHANG@rowan.edu
Subject: Feature Writing Course

Julia: The outline seems very thorough in terms of covering the basics. I can think of nothing to add or subtract. In the matter of establishing priorities of time, would suggest emphasis on how to develop ideas. I've noted in some of my training sessions reporters often struggle with that aspect of the work. It might be interesting and beneficial - and I've experimented with this - to break the class up into groups of five or less and let each group tackle a story idea. Once the basics are assembled each member could write his or her own story thereby not losing the individual writer's voice. It's a good idea to seed each group with one or two of the better writers. In the group dynamic there is often a good flow of ideas and a greater willingness to take risks and try new ideas. The weaker writers feed off the stronger ones and gain confidence they could not achieve on their own. Just an idea.

Suggest you add to the reading list a book of poetry. I'm especially fond of Robert Pinsky the poet laureate who often approaches his work with a journalist's eye for detail. His poem "Shirt" is I've used in training sessions as how to make a great story out of something quite mundane.

Good luck with the course. If I can be of any further assistance, just call or write.

The fellowship is very exciting.

Fondest regards, Ev

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Advanced Feature Writing for the Print Media

Students in this graduate level writing workshop will report and write eight publishable-quality features on varied topics. They will learn how to write feature leads and 'nut grafs' and how to structure long stories. They will also learn how to develop and present story ideas to editors and how to submit completed work for publication.