

Journalism 540  
Magazine Writing  
Spring 2012; Carolina Coliseum, Room 1015  
Instructor: Professor Cecile S. Holmes  
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**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

**Magazine Writing:** A Step-by-Step Guide for Success  
Nancy M. Hamilton

**The Best American Magazine Writing 2010**  
American Society of Magazine Editors

Handouts, Online references supplied by instructor

**Strongly recommended**  
AP Stylebook 2010 or 2011

Description: Understanding and analyzing magazines, magazine writing and the magazine industry; researching, organizing, writing and marketing articles for publication in general and specialized markets.

**Objectives:**

- \*Analyze and evaluate the work of professional magazine writers and understand the history and evolution of magazine journalism.
- \*Master advanced information and data gathering and interviewing
- \*Explore alternative storytelling forms, including narrative storytelling.
- \*Write clear and accurate articles for publication, using appropriate technologies, on assigned themes or topics that include appropriate primary and secondary sources.
- \* Write with truth, accuracy and fairness.
- \*Engage in research and critical evaluation.
- \*Advance ability to think creatively, critically and analytically.

**Requirements:** All students taking this course are expected to participate in class discussions and projects, which will include oral presentations. Possible report topics include a writer's life and work, how fiction-writing techniques may be used to craft narratives for magazine articles and viewpoints presented in books related to writing. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and to ask questions of guest speakers.

**Content:** We will cover a lot of ground in a short period of time. Course material will include an overview of writing, the preparation of query letters, several reading assignments (beyond material in required texts), critiques and analyses of magazine articles, the writing of article proposals and outlines targeted to the specific markets and

publications in which you are interested. We will pay special attention to the concept of “niche marketing,” or selling an article to specialty print or online publications. Your ideas and input are welcome and may be used to revise this syllabus if you suggest something that might benefit the entire class. Articles will be published in an online format later in the semester.

**Assessment:** Oral presentations and written articles, two exams, response papers to assigned readings, in-class participation, quick writes. Articles written for online publication

**Deadlines:** Meeting deadlines is essential to working for any publication. Late papers or articles WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED unless you make prior arrangements with the professor to turn in an assignment later than required and you have an acceptable reason for missing the deadline. Failure to meet a deadline will result in an F unless prior arrangements, acceptable to the instructor, are made.

**Grading:** Grades will be based on the two exams (40 percent) and class participation (10 percent). The remaining 50 percent will be based on the articles you write and present in class and your in-class presentations analyzing magazines and exploring magazine articles from the book, *Best American Magazine Writing*. All grades, especially those for your written articles and analyses, will be based on adherence to high standards for research, interviewing, writing, grammar and readability.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is required. Missing more than 10 percent of scheduled classes (2 sessions) will result in your final mark being reduced by at least 20 percent. Missing three classes can result in your failing this class, per university policy.

**Don't forget to spell check all work before you read it aloud and then turn it in for final grading.** Always refer to a good grammar text, a dictionary and writing texts if you are uncertain about sentence construction, the definition of a word or related questions. Class lectures and *your textbooks will offer examples and insight into such issues as story construction, organization, sentence structure and grammar*. In general, we adhere to the Associated Press Stylebook on style matters. In addition you will be expected to adhere to assigned length (word count) for specific article assignments. This course has two parts. Both the Practices section and the articles for the Applications section must be turned in hard copy and, when assigned, to the drop box on our Blackboard site. Turn in the hard copies on the date assigned. Put your name, the course number and the title of the assignment (i.e., slice of life, personal essay, etc.) on all work turned in. All assignments must be typewritten and double-spaced. All assignments must adhere to assigned word counts, and none may be more than 750 words.

We will have a mid-term exam and a final exam, based mainly upon the assigned readings in the Hamilton text with some material from lectures, powerpoints and the book of magazine articles. So it is advisable to keep up with assigned readings and to attend class. Much of that material will be covered in class, though some of it you must cover on your own.

*\*The syllabus and the accompanying class schedule may be amended at the discretion of the instructor to meet class or scheduling needs.*

*\*\* Students are responsible for attending class. If you miss a class, check with a classmate for any announcements, assignments or changes in the syllabus. You will also be assigned oral presentations based on articles in Best American Magazine Writing.*