

***If my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live, I wouldn't brood. I'd type a little faster. ~Isaac Asimov***

***Writing is easy: All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead. ~Gene Fowler***

**JOUR 3310-002**

**Feature Writing**

**Spring 2013**

**Instructor:** Mark Donald

**Class:** MoWe 9:30 a.m.-10:50 p.m.

GAB 114

**Teaching Assistant/Mentor:**

Christian McPhate,

Email: DavidMcPhate@my.unt.edu

Phone: 940-235-7525

**Required Books and Reading: (Paperback is fine!)**

- ✓ *A Writer's Coach, The Complete Guide To Writing Strategies That Work*, Jack Hart, First Anchor Books Edition, 2007.
- ✓ *Words' Worth, A Handbook on Writing & Selling Nonfiction*, Terri Brooks, Waveland Press, 2000.
- ✓ *Telling True Stories, A Nonfiction Writers' Guide*, Edited by Mark Kramer and Wendy Call, Penguin Group,
- ✓ *AP Stylebook*. Always have this with you.

**Suggested Reading:**

- ✓ *Americana: Dispatches from the New Frontier*, Hampton Sides, Anchor Books, 2004.
- ✓ *Floating Off the Page: The Best Stories from The Wall Street Journal*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2002.
- ✓ <http://www.pulitzer.org/bycat/Feature-Writing> (Pulitzer Prize-winning feature writing from 1995-2012).

**Textbook policy:** The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

**Course Design:** The design of this course is the brainchild of UNT journalism professor George Getschow, and with his permission, I am adopting and adapting some of its structure, format and syllabus.

***Let's talk!***

**Office: GAB 101C**

**Office hours:**

- TU: 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- W: 11 a.m.- noon
- By appointment
- Virtual office is always open. Just give me 24 hours to respond to your email.

**Cell phone:** 214-402-6518

**Email:** mark.donald@unt.edu

**Course Description:** From the time of the ancients, storytelling has engaged our senses, keeping us enthralled, enriched and entertained as it subtly offers up meaning and helps us make sense of our world. This course is all about storytelling through the medium of journalism, which employs feature writing as its vehicle. Feature stories have a different intention than the news stories you learned to craft in courses such as JOUR 2310. They are not merely meant to inform but rather to draw in readers, to hold them down for a longer sit. Some are just a good read; others present issues large and small, but make them easier to digest by framing them through the people who live them. And many, if they are working their storytelling magic, put us in touch with our own humanity by allowing us to empathize with the joy and pain of strangers. The feature story does this through the use of narrative devices that, until the last century, were primarily the province of fiction—among them, scene setting, character development, dialogue, point of view and voice. And amazingly, it employs these narrative devices while still rigidly adhering to the truth, to accuracy, to journalistic ethics. Pretty tall order, but one I will ask you to fill you at least four times during this course.

The good news is, we will all be in this together. Each week we will combine lectures and workshops to help you craft your features stories and make them publishable. To guide us along the way, we will be drawing from the three primary textbooks listed above, which will offer unique, even contradictory points of view from highly regarded writers, editors and academics. When taken together this source material weaves a strong foundation for feature writing, integrating techniques of good reporting with solid organizational structure and great writing suggestions. In addition to the rich narrative elements of scene, character and the like, these materials offer an organizational framework that helps shape raw story ideas into polished feature stories worthy of their craft. But there are many approaches to structuring feature stories and we will also read from other source materials. Although the real lessons are in the doing, we still can learn from those who have done it well. We will examine stories from publications such as *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *the Atlantic*, *Rolling Stone*, *Texas Monthly*, *D Magazine*, *Harpers*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *Dallas Observer*, *Fort Worth Weekly*, to name just a few, each of which has its own style of storytelling. We will read and deconstruct A-heds, a compilation of the odd and offbeat stories that run on the *Wall Street Journal's* front page each day.

At the top of this syllabus, I quote two writers, and the curious among you—whom I trust is all of you, or you wouldn't be taking this course—might be asking why. To me, each author reveals a different side of the writing equation—Gene Fowler tells us what we likely already know: that writing is hard work, that it is only through sweat equity (in his case, blood equity) that we come to know our craft. And from sci-fi writer, Isaac Asimov, we learn that writing is about passion, a zest for craft so vital we feel compelled to do it. It's my hope the virtues of hard work and unbridled passion will inform your work in this course and help you realize your potential as a storyteller.

### **Course Requirements:**

*You are required to produce four (4) feature stories for the class.*

1. A traditional news feature story, which feature-izes a recent news issue, event, or trend affecting the UNT or Denton community by putting a human face (or two or three) on the news. This feature should *not* profile, or tell the story of any one institution or individual although one or more individuals might represent a larger group who are similarly affected by the issue. Profiles will be assigned later in the semester. Instead students should look for features that either look at the people behind a recent news development, or features that look at the impact of a news development on those people most directly affected by it. This is the stuff of most feature stories in mainstream newspapers. They begin with an anecdotal, narrative or scene setter (descriptive) lead, contain a nut graph that tells the reader where the story is headed, and then spend the rest of

the story using examples, quotes, statistics and other scenes and anecdotes to support and explain the nut graph. They are a combination of scene and summary. They often end with a circular ending, anecdote or possibly complete the narrative that begins the story. You will need at least **four** live sources. Think Wall Street Journal formula you learned in 2310. Think 1,000-1200 words. I am providing a news feature story idea bank to get you started and can be found under Story 1—News Feature in Dropbox, but feel free to pitch your own idea within the confines of this assignment.

2. An in-depth profile of an individual who is part of or has an impact on the UNT and/or Denton community. Your friends, family members or significant others are not proper subjects for your profiles.
3. An A-hed or “bright.” This is a short, lively feature story similar to those running on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* and found in your suggested reading, *Floating Off the Page: The Best Stories from The Wall Street Journal*,
4. A personal essay.

*There are three ways to earn extra credit:*

1. By producing outstanding audio, video and photos to accompany your features. This additional multi-platform request is intended to prepare you for a future in an industry focused on media convergence. All future jobs require this multi-dimensional approach to the art of storytelling.
2. By writing two (2) critical response essays analyzing the writing techniques employed by the Pulitzer Prize-winning feature stories found at <http://www.pulitzer.org/bycat/Feature-Writing> (only the winners, not the finalists).
3. By producing a fifth feature.

*(See “Grading” section to determine how extra credit will figure into your overall grade.)*

Coming up with compelling feature story ideas is critical to the course. We want you to dig deep, to find out what is really happening in the UNT and Denton communities. You will be required to do preliminary research and interviews and write a story proposal.

Writing a proposal is a crucial step in developing a feature story because it forces the writer to boil the story down to its basic dimensions—the theme, the setting, the scope, the characters—and to demonstrate that you have a plan for executing the feature. Magazine writers, in particular, are required to submit a well-crafted proposal or “pitch” to those designated to vet them on the editorial staff, often the editor or managing editor. They determine whether the story is right for their publication and worthy of being published based on the quality of the proposal. In this class, you also will be required to submit well-crafted proposals for at least three of the four features.

Once your proposal is approved, you will have one week to complete the first draft of your first feature. That draft will be evaluated and critiqued during the workshop. *(See workshop evaluation forms)*. You should leave the workshop with specific, concrete suggestions on how to improve your draft. You will

then have another week to revise the feature, whereupon it will be critiqued in a “revision workshop.” You will then have another week to turn in the final feature that will be edited and graded. With subsequent features, you may be afforded less time and fewer drafts as the semester and your familiarity with the process progresses (*See Tentative Course Schedule*).

I expect you to be developing each feature story for freelance publication in a local newspaper, magazine or blog, among them, the *Denton Record Chronicle*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *D Magazine*, *the Dallas Observer*, *the Fort Worth Weekly*. George Getschow, my colleague who previously taught this course, has spoken with the editors of *The Dallas Morning News*, *D Magazine*, *the Dallas Observer*, *Fort Worth Weekly* and other publications that accept freelance. They have agreed to consider your story proposals for publication. I will spend some time in class talking about the process of preparing and targeting freelance stories for a specific audience and publication.

Reading well-crafted prose is essential for anyone who seeks to become a better writer. And that’s why you will examine the storytelling devices employed by nonfiction writers to make their stories come alive on the page. I encourage you to read the following blogs and websites that focus on storytelling:

<http://gangrey.com/>-- especially recommended; a website created by young writers who came to the conclusion that good feature writing might just save the newspaper business.

<http://mayborninstitute.unt.edu/> -- Sponsors the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference of the Southwest, a tribal gathering storytellers who are serious about nonfiction writing.

<http://www.poynter.org/> -- indispensable site for the journalist, print or electronic, and public relations professional.

<http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/narrative/digest/index.html> -- This site will keep you up on current thinking about features.

### **Other Sites:**

<http://www.dallasobserver.com/blogs/>

<http://www.dallasblog.com/>

<http://dallasprogress.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.newswatch.org/>

<http://reporter.umd.edu/>

The goal is to make you a better writer. And the best way to accomplish this is to read and examine models of good writing in books, newspapers and magazines. To that end, we will read and deconstruct some of the best feature writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Denton Record Chronicle*, *D Magazine*, *the Atlantic*, *Harpers*, *Outside*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, and other newspapers and magazines.

### **Workshops:**

Critiquing other writers will also help you focus on the strengths and weaknesses of your own writing. That’s why workshops are an integral part of this class. Every student will learn how to constructively critique each other’s features.

We will use the file hosting system Dropbox to submit your feature drafts for class workshoping and meeting deadlines. Within the first week of class, you will receive an email from Dropbox inviting you to the JOUR 3310 spring folder. If you already have a Dropbox account, simply join the folder.

Before attending workshops, you are expected to have printed out the drafts of those in your workshop, read their drafts and make written notations on their stories and on the student evaluation form which you can find in Dropbox under Needful Things. Fill out the form in duplicate, one to be given to me and one to be given to the writer during the workshop. You should focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the piece with respect to the quality of the research, clarity, comprehensiveness, creativity, characterization, sense of place, and other storytelling elements. In critiquing the features, you are also expected to ask yourself: Does the lead grab my attention and draw me into the story? Does it relate to the larger theme of the story? You will note the presence or lack of vivid and concrete detail, anecdotes, metaphor, scene setting, dialogue and other devices employed in nonfiction storytelling.

**Unless otherwise instructed, all story ideas, proposals and preliminary drafts are due in Dropbox by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the Wednesday workshop. Work turned in after 5:p.m. will be considered late.**

### **Grading:**

Each feature story will account for one-fifth (20 percent) of your grade, comprising 80 percent of your total grade. Each story will be evaluated based on the quality of the writing and the quality of the reporting. **To pass this class, final drafts in all four stories must be completed. There are no exceptions.**

The remaining 20 percent of your grade will be allocated as follows:

1. Attendance: 5 percent
2. Quizzes, homework and classwork: 5 percent
3. Workshop Work: Meeting deadlines for each draft and critique, participating in workshops and making revisions suggested in workshops: 10 percent

A good editor can immediately detect when stories are thin or underreported. Since the goal is publishable work, your features must meet the highest standards of journalism. No newspaper is obliged to publish your features just because you've written them for a class. You will be competing against staff writers and other freelance writers for space. It's the stories that are well researched and well written that get published.

*Deadlines:* Missing deadlines is career suicide in publishing. You will be expected to provide your best-effort drafts for workshoping and turn in your finished features when due.

- Except for excused absences, missing a deadline on a draft, preliminary or final, will result in the loss of ½ a letter grade (5 points) for each day late.
- Except for excused absences, NO final draft will be accepted unless it is received within 10 days of the date it was due. If it is received after 10 days, the student will receive a zero (0) for the feature and you will be asked to drop the course.
- If you miss a quiz or class assignment and you do not have an excused absence, you will receive a zero (0) for that day's work.
- Missing a deadline on homework will result in the loss of ½ a letter grade (5 points).
- NO homework will be accepted unless it is received within 4 days of the date it was due.

**\*\*ALL WORK FOR THIS CLASS MUST BE TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED AND USE THE TEMPLATE FOUND IN DROPBOX. POINTS WILL BE TAKEN OFF IF YOU USE POOR GRAMMAR, SPELLING AND DO NOT FOLLOW AP STYLE \*\***

If you provide shoddy drafts or no drafts for the workshop, you can see how this will adversely affect your grade. It will also affect your ability to approve as a writer because you are not taking advantage of the process that the course affords to enable you to progress from one draft to the next.

All letter grades will be converted to a numerical equivalent, equi-spaced from each other, based on a 100-point scale. Then, they will be averaged and converted back to the letter grade you will receive as your final grade. As you likely know, UNT has no plus/minus system in its grading.

A+ = 98, A = 95, A- = 92

B+ = 88, B = 85, B- = 82

C+ = 78 C = 75, C- = 72

D+ = 68, D = 65, D- = 62

F = 55

You will receive a "0" for work that is not turned in.

**Engrade:** Your grades, assignments and attendance will be regularly maintained on Engrade (<https://www.engage.com/class/edit.php?clid=5000005393223>) which in addition to Dropbox, I will invite you to join so you can keep up with your grades. This is my first semester with Engrade so bear with me as I figure out the program. If it becomes too big a hassle to maintain both the Dropbox file share and the Engrade grading system, I reserve the right to dump Engrade.

If you earn extra credit in any of the enumerated ways above, that work will become part of your overall evaluation. If you're wavering between a "B" and an "A" and say, for instance, your critical response essays are well written and demonstrate that you've learned much about writing from the reading, you will earn an "A." If you're wavering between a "B" and an "A" and your critical response essays are weak, you will earn a "B." The same guidelines hold for the other two ways of earning extra credit.

### **Internet Research and Interviews:**

The Internet is a good place to start your research, but only to find sources. Sites such as Lexis Nexis archive a huge collection of articles that can be a good starting point in the research. Lexis Nexis can be accessed through the UNT Library Website under Electronic Resources. Websites may not be used as primary source material.

Email interviews are also discouraged. If a source will only grant an interview through email, I suggest finding another source. If you feel that source is crucial to the story, discuss the problem Christian or myself.

**Attendance:**

You cannot afford to miss this class. If you're not attending class and the workshops, you will not be able to learn and absorb the storytelling techniques that will inform your work. Consequently, attendance at both lectures and workshops is mandatory. One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem. If you miss more than two classes during the semester without a doctor's excuse or my permission, your grade will automatically be reduced from say, an "A" to a "B" or from a "B" to a "C." **If you miss more than six classes that are unexcused absences in the semester, you will be dropped from the course.**

Being late to class (after I check roll) twice will count as one absence; leaving class early twice will count as one absence; any combination of being late to class and leaving class early will count as one absence. If you come to class late, it is your obligation to notify me at the end of class so I can correct the roll. Failure to notify me will result in your being absent without excuse. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.

ALL CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF WHEN ENTERING CLASS. LAPTOPS CAN ONLY BE USED FOR IN-CLASS EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES.

Attendance at the final is mandatory.

**First Class Day Attendance:**

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

**Academic Honesty:**

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable.

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It is a firing offense in the professional world.

Plagiarism and falsifying stories are the two most serious offenses in journalism, and have ruined the careers of otherwise promising writers and journalists. The minimum punishment in this class for such cheating will be an F for the assignment in which the offense occurred. The offense will also be reported immediately to the department administration for possible further disciplinary action. In the professional world, a single incident of plagiarism can cost you a job -- if not a career and when publically revealed casts a large shadow over the credibility of the entire profession.

You are responsible for making copies of all your work and saving all edited copies of your work that have been returned to you.

**Accuracy:** Your work must also be accurate. Make sure you check every name, fact, quote in your notes against what appears in your features. You should also double check any editing changes made by your editors, including the graduate student (s). If an editor inadvertently makes an error in your copy during the editing process, make sure it gets fixed before it gets into the newspaper or magazine. For accuracy sake, you should ask to see your features after they've been edited for publication by the paper's copy desk. Careless editing mistakes happen.

Since some of the features you write for newspapers and magazines will be published after you leave this class, you will be required to list your sources, their titles and phone numbers where they can be reached at the bottom of every story you write, including first drafts.

### **Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy:**

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

### **Journalism Course Registration:**

1. The Mayborn School of Journalism, in conjunction with the Registrar's Office, has eliminated the need for individual class codes for the majority of journalism courses. Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program; thus, we are unable to maintain the traditional waiting list as has been done previously.
2. By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.
3. A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all pre-major courses, and Math 1680 and also have applied for major status. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses. **Pre-majors** must file a formal application for major status in the final semester of pre-major status to be eligible for early registration of major-level classes in the following semester.



**Email communication:** Communicating with students using the UNT student email account is part of the university's contract with students. Electronic communication with students in this class will be through the students' myunt accounts rather than personal email accounts.

### **Re-taking Failed Courses:**

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

### **Textbook policy:**

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

### **Disability Accommodation**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

### **SETE:**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The Mayborn School of Journalism needs your input to improve our teaching and curriculum. This short survey will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Prompt completion of the SETE will mean earlier access to final semester grades. You're a critical part of our growth and success. We look forward to your input through SETE

### **Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, the Mayborn School of Journalism:**

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute

adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course will help you to:

- 1). Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- 2). Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications
- 3). Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- 4). Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- 5). Think critically, creatively and independently
- 6). Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- 7). Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- 8). Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- 9). Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**You'll learn a number of important concepts about feature writing in this class. These include:**

- 1). Research and interviewing techniques for features
- 2). How to shape raw ideas into a "pitch"
- 3). Getting focused: how to develop a theme that illuminates the deepest meaning of a story
- 4). Creating a sense of place
- 5). The elements of characterization
- 6). Understanding story structure: leads, nut graphs, scope and moving parts comprising a clearly defined beginning, middle and end
- 7). Getting focused: spotting themes, planning and execution
- 8). Pacing, progression, descriptiveness, specificity, rhythm
- 9). How and when to use quotes vs. dialogue in features

- 10). Providing historical context that sheds light on current developments and the characters who are influenced by the past
- 11). How revision can transform writing
- 12). The business of researching and writing whimsical, offbeat features called "brights"
- 13). The art of the personal essay: Turning the spotlight inward

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

Classes of this nature are not set in stone. For the first few weeks, until we get rolling, there will be two lectures a week. Once you start producing work toward your feature stories, we will use the Wednesday class as our workshop. For the most part, we will adhere to the following schedule and I expect you to read the scheduled chapters, essays and stories *before* you come to class. Some may be assigned to individual students for in-class presentations.

**Please bring laptops to class on all non-workshop days so we can do in-class exercises.**

### **WEEK 1 Jan. 14, 16**

- **M:** Introduction—Course Overview/ Why Storytelling Matters/ Feature vs. Hard News Stories.

Read: The Writer's Coach- Introduction

Words' Worth- The Health of Nonfiction pp. 1-10

Telling True Stories; pp. 227-230

- **W:** The News Feature/Finding Story Ideas/ Shaping Them into Theme Statements/ Narrowing Focus.

Read: A Writer's Coach, Chapter 1, "Method"

Telling True Stories, "Finding Good Topics: by Jan Winburn, pp. 22-24

Telling True Stories, "From Story Idea to Published Story, Cynthia Gorney, pp. 54-59.

- **F:** *Please submit three news feature story ideas Dropbox by noon Friday*

### **WEEK 2: Jan, 21, 23**

- **M:** NO CLASS (MLK Day)
- **TU:** Assignments approved for News Story Feature. Students notified in Dropbox
- **W:** The Pitchman Cometh: Writing the story proposal. Selling your idea and yourself

Read: Word's Worth, Writing the Query Letter p. 187-194

Sample Query Letters (Handouts)

### **WEEK 3: Jan. 28, 30**

- **M:** Lecture on reporting/interviewing techniques for feature stories.

Read: Writer's Coach, Chapter 2, "Process" pp. 27-32

Telling True Stories, "Being There," by Annie Hull pp. 39-45,

"The Psychological Interview" by Jon Franklin, pp. 34-35

Interviewing: Accelerated Intimacy by Isabel Wilkerson pp. 30-33

- **W:** Workshop Story Proposals for News Feature Story

#### **WEEK 4: Feb. 4, 6**

- **M:** Lecture on story structure: writing leads

Read: A Writer's Coach, Chapter 3, "Structure" (leads only) pp.43-59

Telling True Stories: To Begin the Beginning by Deneen Brown pp. 100-103

Words Worth, Lead Exercise 1 (I will provide the story)

- **W:** Workshop First Draft, News Feature Story

#### **WEEK 5: Feb. 11, 13**

- **M:** Lecture on story structure continued: writing nut graphs, middles, and ends.

Read: Writer's Coach—pp. 43-47, 59-73

Telling True Stories—Endings by Bruce Desilva pp. 116-121

Handout: News Feature v. Narrative: What's the Difference? by Rebecca Allen

- **W:** Workshop Second Draft, News Feature Story

#### **WEEK 6: Feb. 18, 20**

- **M:** Lecture on Profile Writing

Read: A Writer's Coach, Chapter 8, "Humanity" pp. 149-155

Telling True Stories, "Profiles," by Jacqui Banaszynski, pp. 66-69

Telling True Stories, "Every Profile is an Epic" by Tomas Tizon pp. 71-73

- **W:** *Final Draft of News Feature Due at the start of class both in Dropbox and hard copy*  
Workshop Story Ideas for Profile

#### **WEEK 7: Feb. 25, 27**

- **M:** Developing and Revealing Character/ Color/Details/Description

Read: A Writer's Coach Chapter 9 "Color" pp. 167-184

Words' Worth, Chapter 4, "Description," pp.62-78

Telling True Stories, "Character," by Jon Franklin, pp. 126-128

- **W:** Workshop Story Proposal, Profile

### **WEEK 8: March 4, 6**

- **M:** Writing with a Sense of Place (possible trip to Denton County Courthouse for place profile exercise)

Handouts: Fulton Fish Market by Dan Barry (NYT)

Crumbling Hive of Humanity by Dave Ferrell LA Times)

- **W:** Workshop First Draft, Profile

### **WEEK 9: March 11, 13— SPRING BREAK**

- **M:** No Class
- **W:** No Class

### **WEEK 10: March 18, 20**

- **M:** Lecture: Scene Setting/Dialogue vs. quotes

Read: A Writer's Coach, Chapter 9, Quotes and Dialogue pp. 156-166.

Telling True Stories, Setting the Scene, pp. 132-145 (5 short essays)

Telling True Stories, "Hearing our Subjects Voices," pp.104-107

- **W:** Workshop Second Draft Profile

### **WEEK 11: March 25, 27**

- **M** Guest Lecture on writing light, offbeat features (A-heds in *Wall Street Journal* parlance).
- **W:** *Final Draft of Profile Due at Start of Class in Hard Copy and in Dropbox*  
Workshop Story Ideas/or Proposal for A-Heds

### **WEEK 12: April 1, 3**

- **M:** Writing with Force, Clarity, Brevity and Rhythm—(all in the same sentence)

Read: Word's Worth, Chapter 3, "Verbs" pp. 40-58

A Writer's Coach, Chapter 4, "Force," pp. 74-76, 91

A Writer's Coach, Chapter 5, "Brevity," p. 108

A Writer's Coach, Chapter 6, "Clarity," p.130

A Writer's Coach, Chapter 7, "Rhythm," pp.131-132, 147-148

A Writer's Coach, Chapter 9, "Color," pp. 183-193

- **W:** Workshop First Draft A-hed

**WEEK 13: April 8, 10**

- **M:** Lecture on the art and craft of writing the personal essay—turning your spotlight on you.  
Read: Telling True Stories, The Personal Essay, First Person, pp. 78-83 (2 essays).
- **W:** Workshop Second Draft A-hed

**WEEK 14: April 15, 17**

- **M:** Lecture: Finding your voice  
Read: Words' Worth, Chapter 6, "Voice," pp. 106-137.  
Telling True Stories, "On Voice." by Susan Orleans pp. 158-159
- **W:** *Final Draft of A-hed due at start of class in hard copy and in Dropbox*  
Workshop Story Ideas /Proposal for Personal Essay

**WEEK 15: April 22, 24**

- **M:** Bits and Pieces/the art of revision/t point of view/ the life of a freelancer/ OR Guest Speaker  
Read: Telling True Stories—All About Revision: pp. 202-212  
Words' Worth, Chapter 8, Editing and Rewriting, pp. 174-177
- **W:** Workshop First Draft of Personal Essay

**WEEK 16: April 29, May 1**

- **M:** Ethical Questions raised by feature writing  
Read: Telling True Stories, "The Line Between Fact and Fiction," by Roy Peter Clark pp. 164-169; "Toward an Ethical Code for Narrative Journalists" by Walt Harrington pp. 170-172; "The Ethics of Attribution" by Roy Peter Clark, pp. 189-192
- **W:** Workshop Second Draft of Personal Essay Due
- **TU: May 8- Final Draft of Personal Essay due in Dropbox at noon**

**FINAL: May 10 (Friday @ 8-10 a.m.)**