

1Narrative journalism
Tuesdays, 5-7 pm

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will focus on narrative styles of writing for print and online media, emphasizing how story-telling techniques can be used to engage new readers and maintain old ones. It will include discussion of the components of good story-telling (character, plot, and scene), as well as tips on how to do scene-by-scene construction, how to listen for "the revealing quote," and when to use first-person narration.

Each participant will be actively involved in offering constructive criticism of one another's work, and working on developing his or her own individual voice and style. One of the goals of our three days together is to explore alternative ways of telling your story -- ideally in ways that can be applied to your work in other courses.

The language of instruction will be English. There will be short recommended readings assigned for each class meeting, and the format will be discussion, not lecture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize and apply some of the key rhetorical principles and stylistic conventions that prevail in narrative journalism.
2. Apply critical analytic and evaluative thinking to your own writing, through drafting, revising, and editing.
3. Apply critical analytic and evaluative thinking to the work of your classmates through peer review of their assignments.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: April 12 -- Defining narrative journalism -- explore the different attempts to categorize and set rules for a genre dedicated to innovation and rule breaking.

Reading to be discussed: "The Girl of the Year" by Tom Wolfe; "A Boy Who Was Like a Flower" by Anthony Shadid; "It's an Honor" by Jimmy Breslin; and "Bearing Witness in Syria: A Reporter's Last Days," by Tyler Hicks.

Assignment for April 19: Write a short narrative that describes a scene or an

event, using “A Boy who was like a Flower” as a model. Be prepared to present in class. Maximum length: 500 words, double spaced.

Week 2: April 19 – Discussion of assignment

Week 3: April 26 -- History and elements of narrative reporting; Ethical issues that arise in narrative journalism.

Reading to be discussed: “The New Journalism” by Tom Wolfe; and “Breakable Rules for Literary Journalists,” by Tyler Hicks.

Assignment for May 4: Write a short narrative that either is based on an interview and utilizes a source’s own words and point of view. Use “The Lonely Road of Staying Clean” as a model. Be prepared to present in class. Maximum length: 500 words, double-spaced.

Week 4: May 4 – discussion of interview assignment

Week 5: May 11-- Elements of narrative: use of first-person and other points of view.

Reading to be discussed: Joan Didion, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem,” “Writing Personal Essays: On the Necessity of Turning Oneself into a Character,” Phillip Lopate.

Assignment for week 6: Write a first-person narrative. 500 words, double-spaced.

Week 6: May 17 -- Discussion of assignment, final thoughts, wrapping up.