

Semester at Sea Course Syllabus
Colorado State University, Academic Partner

Voyage: Fall 2017
Discipline: Journalism and Media Communication
Course Number and Title: JTC 328 Feature Writing
Division: Upper
Faculty Name: Pamela G. Hollie
Semester Credit Hours: 3

Meeting: B Days 0800-0920, Adlon

Prerequisites: One (1) newswriting or equivalent course in reporting

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In journalism, the feature story teaches and teases, explores, explains and entertains. Students in this reporting and writing course will select a topic such as education or entertainment to research, report and to write about in a final three-part series using reportage from at least three countries. The course will cover national and cross-border topics such as global warming and trade and will encourage knowledge of the impact of international organizations and institutions such as Save the Children or the Red Cross. The course will begin with the basic elements of reporting and writing, which will include examples of quotes, nut graphs and other journalistic elements. And since the key to good journalism is sources, class exercises will encourage students to identify and research sources as well as to formulate a sophisticated inquiry that leads to informative, intelligent and fair reportage. Students will write features on a range of topics including religion, sports, the environment and charity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A global perspective and the ability to write about a wide range of issues.
- An appreciation of the responsibility and role of journalism and journalists.
- A basic understanding of the role of foreign correspondents.
- A mastery of the feature story form.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: William E. Blundell
TITLE: *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing: Based on The Wall Street Journal*
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group (USA), PLUME
ISBN #: 978-0-452-26158-7

DATE/EDITION: 1988
AUTHOR: Bill Kovach & Tom Rosenstiel
TITLE: *The Elements of Journalism, What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*
PUBLISHER: Three Rivers Press
ISBN#: 978-0-8041-3678-5
DATE/EDITION: 2014/ 3rd edition

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Bremerhaven, Germany — September 9

B1—September 12: Introduction to the course: Discussion of the syllabus, grading, in-class and in-country participation. It is expected that students will follow the international press and local press in English. Outline the expectation for the final three-part series that is 300 points of the 1000 points possible for this course. Reading assignment: *The Elements of Journalism*, the introduction and Chapter 2. *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing*, Chapter 6 & 7. For the next class: Develop a “pitch” and three questions that could result in a story to be reported in Spain.

B2—September 14: Truth: A discussion of the principles of journalism and how they apply to feature writing. Discussion of *Elements*: Introduction and Chapter 2. Due: Turn in the “pitch” and questions. Some may be discussed. How difficult is it to develop a story idea without first hand information?

Barcelona & Valencia, Spain — September 15-18

B3—September 20: The Pitch: The idea for a story comes first. But in the reporting the focus may change. Did you find a better story in Barcelona than the one you proposed? What was it? Can you turn a local story into an international one? This class will explore how a story is reworked to appeal to different constituencies. For the next session: *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing*, introduction, Chapter 1 and 2. Also, from *The Elements of Journalism*, Chapter 1 and 3.

B4—September 22: Sources -1: The difference between a good journalist and a great one is sources. While it will be difficult to get to primary sources during this voyage, it will be important to read widely and intelligently and devise approaches that will sustain a story without key interviews. In the context of a profile, discuss the range of sources that might be sought out. For the next class: Select an international civil society organization, such as The Red Cross, for a profile that may focus on its influence, reputation, structure, purpose and/or work. Create a pitch outline for the next class. Your profile outline (the structure of the piece and questions to be asked) is due B-8.

No Class — September 23

B5—September 25: Sources-2: How to develop sources. Why would sources trust you? We will discuss “on the record” and “off the record” and other rules of engagement. Due: International civil society organization pitch. Read: “Journalism is Verification”, from *Elements*.

Tema & Takoradi, Ghana — September 27-30

B6—October 1: “What is Journalism For” from *Elements*, pages 13-45 (assignment B-3). A review of all the readings. A discussion of how to re-imagine historical stories such as Spain’s colonies or Ghana’s slave trade and how to approach old stories anew. Read: *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing*, Appendix 2, pages 230-259.

B7—October 4: Writing a feature: A review of the examples from international publications, analyzing what makes a story work. A discussion of ideas for the three-part, multi-country assignment. How do you develop a series? How do you develop a theme that will sustain a number of articles? Read: Chapter 3 and 4 from *The Art and Craft*.

B8—October 6: International Civil Society Organization profile pitch due. What were the challenges of this assignment? Discuss the reading assignment. Prepare for Cape Town like a journalist would. Read: Chapter 5, *The Art and Craft* “Organization”.

Cape Town, South Africa — October 7-12

B9—October 14: Cape Town visit: What were your expectations? What stories did you discover that hadn’t occurred to you before your arrival? How should a journalist prepare? Assignment: Based on what you discovered, pitch the best story you found in Cape Town. Due: B10.

B10—October 17: Cape Town story pitch due. A short discussion of the story ideas. Acting as an editorial board, develop a special issues magazine using the stories. How would you rework some of the stories to create a cohesive publication? Discussion of the Final Project. Read: *Elements of Journalism*, Chapter 6 “Monitor Power and Offer Voice to the Voiceless”.

Port Louis, Mauritius — October 19

B11—October 20: Mauritius lecture. A tiny island nation, Mauritius is the most prosperous of Africa’s countries. Why? Discussion of the impact of population management and national planning.

B12—October 23: India Lecture. Read Chapter 8, *Art and Craft of Feature Writing*. A review of themes such as population, food, water, pollution and disease. Consider topics for future writing assignments, such as the topic for your final project.

Cochin, India — October 25-30.

B13 – November 1. India .. the discoveries and challenges. For upcoming feature writing assignments, choose topics from a list of topics or from your own ideas for writing assignments in the ports visited. Assignment: You will choose three countries from those

visited — India, Burma, Vietnam, China or Japan. Make your choices by the next class meeting and submit your decision to the professor.

B14—November 3: Introduction to Burma lecture. Due: India feature, if you chose to write about India. Assignment: Chapter 9, *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing*.

Yangon, Myanmar — November 4-8

B15—November 10: Burma visit discussion. Functioning as an editorial board, what did you observe that you might report and write about?

No class — November 11

B16—November 13: Vietnam introduction. Many of the countries visited have been influenced by their history of war, conquest, exploration, immigration. Frustrated by Chinese influence, the Vietnamese guarded their identity and fiercely fought to preserve it. Due: Burma feature, if you chose to write about Burma.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam — November 14-18

B17—November 20: Vietnam discussion. Due: Vietnam feature, if you chose to write about Vietnam. Introduction to China. Review progress on final projects. Read for the next class: “Engagement and Relevance”, *Elements of Journalism*.

No Class — November 21

B18—November 23: Shanghai introduction. Once a wilderness of swamps, Shanghai became China’s “Sin City”, a reputation of many novels and films. It is now a headquarters for China’s economic boom. The class will review recent journalism about China.

Shanghai, China — November 24-29

B19—December 1: Japan introduction. Due: China feature due, if you chose to write about China. Read: “Journalism of Verification”, *Elements of Journalism*.

Kobe, Japan — December 2-6

B20—December 8: Discussion of Japan. Due: Japan feature, if you chose to write about Japan. Read: “Independence from Faction”, *Elements of Journalism*.

B21—December 10: Editorial Board Meeting: A story conference about regional priorities for international coverage. A review of themes and conclusions.

B22—December 12: FINAL PROJECT DUE. The three-part series is due. Topic: Breaking News. Throughout the sessions, the class is encouraged to follow breaking news in the countries visited and to key off of those stories to explain and advance the discussion of important topics. Read: “Make the News Comprehensive and Proportional”, *The Elements of Journalism*.

B23—December 14: Final Project Presentations. Read: "Journalists Have a Responsibility to Conscience" and "The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens" *Elements of Journalism*.

Honolulu, Hawaii – December 16: Ethnic Diversity in Honolulu – The growth of the sugar-based economy in the kingdom of Hawaii during the mid-nineteenth century was contingent upon the availability of a large labor force. But a declining population threatened Hawaii's success. King Kamehameha IV told the 1855 Hawaii legislature that he supported bringing immigrants from Polynesia. But in time, workers came from everywhere. In 1897, the Portuguese arrived, followed by the Prussians in 1880, American Blacks from Tennessee and Mississippi in 1907 and Puerto Ricans in 1917. The Scots and Greeks, Austrians and Italians came to work the sugar plantations after WWI. Then the Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Samoans, Micronesians, Vietnamese and Pacific Islanders arrived. **The Field Experience:** Students will go to Chinatown, which is near the port, to investigate the food markets, restaurants and stores that serve Honolulu's increasingly diverse population.

B24 – December 17: Final Project Presentations.

Study Day – December 19

B25—December 20: Final Project Presentations.

San Diego, California — December 23

FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete independent field assignments that span multiple countries.

Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course.

Field Class and Assignment

The Field Class for this course will take place on Saturday, 16 December, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Class Title: Ethnic Diversity in Honolulu

For a journalist, there is no better experience than on-the-ground reporting and the opportunity to put issues into a physical and cultural context. While in-person interviews may be limited, it will be instructive for potential journalists and those who wish to understand the role of the media to experience what it takes to adequately explore and explain life and the issues of

people in countries where the economic system, the social structure and the aspirations of the population are shaped by their national identity. At the very least, it is important that students come to understand that the principles of government and the aspirations of citizens vary from country to country and are often non-Western. To see first-hand how people live and how institutions function is crucial to the education of a global citizen.

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Field Class Learning Objectives:

1. To appreciate the diversity and cultural richness.
2. To engage in the journalistic process of story development.
3. To demonstrate reporting skills and editing capability.

Independent Field Assignments

Final Assignment: Students have a three-part newspaper length series due toward the end of the semester. This multi-country series, worth 300 points (including 50 points for the class presentation), will be discussed in detail immediately after Ghana. These final projects will be presented to the class toward the end of the voyage.

Field Assignments: In addition to the one class field exercise, the course requires students to report throughout the voyage and to take full advantage of their on-shore opportunities.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING SCALE

GRADING SCALE

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Grading: 1000 points

The Final Assignment, 3-part, multi-country series:	300
The Pitch Assignment:	100
Field Assignment, four features:	200

Quizzes:	200
Class Participation/editorial board session:	100
International Civil Society Organization profile:	100

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
97-100%: A+	87-89%: B+	77-79%: C+	Less than 60%:
93-96%: A	83-86%: B	70-76%: C	
90-92%: A-	80-82%: B-	60-69%: D	

ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea classes, including the Field Class, is mandatory. Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.

A memo from the student's home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations to academic@isevoyages.org as soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the voyage.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

RESERVE BOOKS AND FILMS FOR THE LIBRARY

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES