

M/W 11-12:15, CAC 315

Professor Liz Fakazis, CAC 327, [lfakazis@uwsp.edu](mailto:lfakazis@uwsp.edu)

Office Hours: M/W 2-3 p.m. and by appointment

### **About this course**

This course will introduce you to a genre of nonfiction writing known as literary or narrative journalism. This genre, which has flourished in both print and digital forms, has roots in the New Journalism of the 1960s. Over the course of the semester, you will learn about the pioneers of the New Journalism and how the genre changed over time and in response to changing distribution technologies. You will learn about the innovations and ethical controversies surrounding this form, and how writers have responded. You will have the opportunity to read and analyze some of the best-known and critically acclaimed examples of literary journalism, and to practice developing some of the basic research, writing and interviewing skills needed to produce this kind of work.

### **Course objectives**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Explain what is meant by literary or narrative journalism
- Explain how and why the genre developed in the 1960s
- Explain major changes in the genre from the 1960s to the present
- Identify and be familiar with the writers who have made significant contributions to the genre, their writings, the challenges they faced, and how they responded to them
- Develop skills needed to appreciate and critically analyze works of literary journalism
- Show improvement in the technical research, interviewing, and writing skills needed to produce works in this form

### **Division of Communication Learning Objectives**

This class will help you achieve the Division's objectives for Communication majors, especially objectives numbers 1 and 5.

1. Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences
2. Plan, evaluate and conduct basic quantitative and qualitative communication research
3. Use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems
4. Apply historical communication perspectives to contemporary issues and practices
5. Apply principles of ethical decision making in communication contexts

### **Readings**

- Kramer, Mark and Wendy Call (eds). *Telling True Stories*. New York: Plume, 2007.
- Conover, Ted. *NewJack: Guarding Sing Sing*. New York: Vintage, 2001.

Additional readings will be distributed each week in class or through electronic reserve. You will also be generating your own list of required readings for your research and writing projects.

### **Assignments & Grading**

Each week, you will be given a set of readings to complete. Some of these readings will be books and articles that represent the genre of literary journalism, others will be interviews with writers or critical analyses of their work. These readings will be accompanied by written assignments. Some of these assignments will ask you to answer questions about the readings designed to deepen your understanding of the material; others

will be creative writing assignments (often requiring research and interviewing) designed to develop your creative nonfiction skills. You will also be asked to research a significant writer known for his or her work in this genre, and to write a report and give a class presentation based on your research.

Mid-term Exam	25 percent of final grade
Final Exam	25 percent of final grade
Weekly Assignments	50 percent of final grade

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

94-100% = A	90-93% = A-	87-89% = B+	84-86% = B	80-83% = B-
77-79% = C+	74-76% = C	70-73% = C-	67-69% = D+	64-66% = D
60-63% = D-				

## Policies

- I ask that you conduct yourself in a professional, respectful manner at all times, both in class and while working on course-related business outside of the classroom. Unprofessional conduct may result in dismissal from the course.
- All work must be yours and must be produced for this class. Any work that is not yours, including material taken from digital sources, must be appropriately used and properly cited. Plagiarism is grounds for a grade of "F" for the assignment; multiple instances is grounds for dismissal from the course. See University policy for more information on academic misconduct and its consequences.
- If you have a documented medical or family emergency, I will work with you on possible deadline extensions for assignments. Otherwise, ALL late work will be docked 10 points for every 24 hours past deadline. This includes work turned in late because of outside work obligations, family obligations, university-sponsored events, sources cancelling interviews at the last minute, computers or printers crashing, car trouble, or other circumstances.
- I will do everything I can to accommodate students who need assistance. Please see me at the beginning of the semester to set up appropriate accommodations.
- No technology is permitted to be used in class, including cell phones, laptops, or tablets, unless it is part of required assistive technology or its use is necessary for us to complete our day's work.

## Working Schedule

This schedule includes due dates for the exams and required readings for the foundation week and from the required books. Each week, I will distribute additional readings and guidelines for writing assignments, as well as due dates, through D2L, and will review these in class. I may need to alter this schedule to meet the needs of the class.

### **Weeks 1-4 Foundations: The New Journalism of the 1960s**

Important Date: Wed. Feb. 15: Personal Essay Due

- Gay Talese, "Origins of a Nonfiction Writers" (Weeks 1, 2)
- Tom Wolfe, "Intro to the New Journalism," "Kandy-Kolored, Tangerine Flaked, Streamlined Baby" (Week 3)
- Truman Capote, "Interview" and Chapter One "In Cold Blood" (Week 4)
- *Telling True Stories*: "Stories Matter," "The Narrative Idea" and "Difficult Journalism," "Beginning in Narrative," "Brief History of Narrative in Newspaper," "A storyteller's Lexicon," "Narrative As Daily Habit," (Weeks 3 and 4)
  
- Writing Assignment: The Personal Essay

### **Weeks 5-8 Finding, Researching and Reporting Stories**

Important Dates: Mon., March 6, *Guarding Sing Sing* due

Wed., March 15, Mid-Term Exam

- Sherrie Simpson, "Killing Wolves" (Weeks 5/6)
- *Telling True Stories*, chapters on interviewing from p. 19-35; "Participatory Reporting," "Reporting Across Cultures," "Reporting on Your Own," J School for People Who Never Went (Weeks 5/6)
- Ted Conover, *Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing* (Week 7)
  
- Writing Assignments: TBA

### **Week 9 SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK**

### **Weeks 10-14 Building Blocks**

- *Telling True Stories*, "What narrative Writers Can Learn from Screenwriters," "Hearing Our Subjects' Voices," "A Story Structure," "Summary vs. Dramatic Narrative," "Endings," "Character," "Handling Time," "Writing Complicated Stories," "Telling the Story," "On Voice," "The Line Between Fact and Fiction," "Toward an Ethical Code," "Playing Fair With Subjects," "Securing Consent," "Truth and Consequences," "Dealing With Danger," "A Dilemma of Immersion Journalism," "Ethics of Attribution," "Transforming 100 Notebooks"
- Jon Franklin, "Mrs. Kelly's Monster"
- Sonja Nazario, "Enrique's Journey"
- Isabel Wilkerson, "The Manful Life of Nicholas, 10"
  
- Writing Assignments: TBA

### **Weeks 15-17 Wrapping Up**

- Important Date: Wed., May 17, 12:30-2:30, Final Exam
- Readings and Writing Assignments TBA