JOUR 340.01: Feature Writing

Sheri Venema
University of Montana - Missoula
Feature Writing

JOURNALISM 340
Spring Semester 2004
J-211
3 credits

INSTRUCTOR
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TEXTBOOK
Friedlander & Lee: “Feature Writing for Newspapers and Magazines” 5th edition

OFFICE HOURS
Monday: 3-4 p.m.
Tuesday: 10 a.m.-noon
Wednesday: 3-4 p.m.

EXPECTATIONS
- Be curious.
- Be willing to explore and to take risks.
- Attend all classes. Participate. Speak up.
- Meet all deadlines (Assignments that miss deadline get an F).
- Spell correctly, use proper grammar and AP style.
- Use proper copy format

DETAILS
Choose seven types of stories from the following list and turn one in every two weeks. Make sure a trend story is on your list; other choices are up to you.

- News features: Second-day spins, people & places behind the news
- Business Feature: The unusual and timely business idea.
- Commemorative stories: Anniversaries, the final day.
- Explainer: How something works
- Historical feature: everything old is new
- Hobby stories: Unusual hobbies/collections
- How-to story: Time-tested recipe for readership
- Numbers as news: The quirky number story (4-4-04) or the best/worst 10.
- Odd jobs: Who does them and why?
- Color stories: What’s going on behind/around/during the main event
- Personality profiles: Getting to the heart and soul of your subject
- Brites: quirky and quick
- Trends: How to personalize what the whole world is doing.

TECHNIQUES WE'LL USE:

- Setting tone, creating mood
- Narrative storytelling
- Finding the telling detail
- People in action
- Use of dialogue
- Character sketches
- Lively verbs
- Lists
- Metaphors and similes
- Show; don't tell
- Precision, clarity, pacing
- Magic 3
- Repetition
- And more...

GRADING

Exercises & Assignments: 30 %
Writing assignments 50%
Book report: 10 %
Attendance & participation 10%

PLAGIARISM:
Have enough pride in your work that you wouldn't even think about turning in something written by someone else. Penalties range from flunking this class to expulsion from school.