COJO F311, Magazine Article Writing
Fall 2017

PROFESSOR: LISA W. DREW

- Office hours (106C Bunnell): 12:45-3:45 Wed, or by appointment.
- Email: ldrew@alaska.edu Please use informative subject lines in email. If your message is about this course, please start the subject line with “311,” as in “311 question on Friday assignment.” I strive to respond within 24 hours, but don’t count on me checking email during holidays or between 5 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. Monday.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to help enable you to write and publish magazine articles, in all their many forms, online and in print. We will study types of stories, markets, pitches to editors, idea development, story structure, narrative devices, principles of good writing, revision and more. We will not dwell at length on reporting skills, but we will touch on key elements of reporting for magazine stories, such as interviews, fairness and accuracy.

Your assignments will include exercises, queries and three articles of varying lengths (about 700, 900, and 1,200 words). You will revise all three of your articles. You will make a concerted attempt to publish your work, researching the needs of at least three publications and querying editors (also known as pitching).

Much of the in-class work will take the form of a workshop. You will receive comments from the instructor and/or your peers on drafts of written work. Revisions of your work are so important for this course that they are included in your schedule of assignments. Students will meet individually with the instructor at least once during the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS
1. The Elements of Style, Strunk and White (entire text available free online at http://www.bartleby.com/141/)
2. AP Stylebook (available online when you are on eduroam)

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED
- Good dictionary (www.dictionary.com qualifies)
- Subscriptions to at least two magazines. You can find deep discounts. For example, I have seen some $5 and $7 deals at http://bit.ly/2vyKi3H (but beware of auto-renewal subscriptions).
- Magazines of all kinds

CHANGES
Please note: Some of the criteria and course plans described here may shift as the semester unfolds. My aim is to be clear about course requirements and content while remaining flexible enough to respond to the needs of this class.

ABOUT GRADES
Revised 9/14/2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>700-word article, first draft</td>
<td>graded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700-word article, revision</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-word article, first draft</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-word article, revision</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,200-word article, first draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,200-word article, revision</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queries (aka pitches) to editors</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading assignments and class participation, including exercises and discussions/workshops | 25 %

Articles will be graded on their structure, logic, content, style, accuracy and other elements that will be made clear in class and in individual conferences.

Attendance is not graded, but I do give points for your participation in class exercises and discussion, and if you’re not there, you will receive no points.

⇒ Reporting requirement: All students must include a significant amount of original reporting in their articles.
⇒ About the first person: You may use the first person in only one of your articles unless the instructor approves its use in other articles.

Alternative assignments:
Students may propose articles of different lengths than those listed above. The deadline for such proposals is your conference with the instructor that will take place between Oct. 2 and Oct. 6, if not sooner.

Grading Guidelines
A: An honor grade that indicates originality and independent work, mastery of the subject and the satisfactory completion of more work than is regularly required: 90-100 percent.
B: Indicates outstanding ability above the average level of performance: 80-89 percent.
C: Indicates a satisfactory or average level of performance: 70-79 percent.
D: The lowest passing grade. Indicates work of below-average quality and performance: 60-69 percent.
F: Indicates failure to meet lowest standards: below 60 percent.

*Please note that inaccuracy will lower your grades. Accuracy includes spelling, especially of names of people, places, businesses, government agencies and other entities. Misspelling of names of people is particularly egregious.*

Deadlines: Because deadlines are critical in journalism, all assignments handed in late will receive an F grade. If a true emergency prevents you from finishing an assignment, I expect adequate documentation of your coma, airplane crash, kidnapping or other serious calamity.

Basic Writing Skills: We will not focus in this class on grammar, punctuation and other basic skills. If I notice that you are challenged in those areas, I may refer you to the Writing Center for tutoring. I will give you ample opportunity to improve the skills in question, and if I see no improvement in them, I will mark down your work. You will have so much feedback from me at that point that the lowered grades should not be a surprise.

Please note that my evaluation of accuracy in your articles includes spelling, especially of names of people, places, businesses, government agencies and other entities. Misspelling of names of people is particularly egregious.

I expect you to follow AP style, although for this course the conventions of social media (such as a conversational, informal tone and acronyms or abbreviations) may trump AP style.

Plagiarism or Fabrication: Evidence of plagiarism or fabrication in any assignment will result in a minimal penalty of an F for the course. Further action, such as expulsion from the department and additional academic penalties, may also be taken. Plagiarism is appropriating other people’s words or ideas and using them as your own. Fabrication
includes making up quotes, sources or events – in other words, writing fiction. To protect yourself from false accusations of plagiarism or fabrication, keep all interview notes, research material and rough drafts until you receive your grade for the semester. Failure to do so may result in an F grade.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- **Candor and informality** are encouraged – but not mean-spirited jabs, profanity or off-topic tangents. *Anyone uncomfortable with the nature of class discussions should contact the professor privately.*
- **Food**: You don’t learn well if you’re hungry. Please eat. Please be discreet about it. *(Do not eat in the computer lab, but you may bring food and eat in the hall.)*
- **Your Devices in Class**: Turn off phones and other messaging or wifi devices during class unless we are using them for class purposes. No texting or web surfing unless for class purposes. No kidding.

ETHICS

Follow the [Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics](http://www.spj.org/).

SELECTED SUPPORT SERVICES

**Disability Services**

http://www.uaf.edu/disability/

907-474-5655

UAF Student Wellness Services

298 Whitaker Bldg.

uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu

**Writing Center**

https://www.uaf.edu/english/writing-center/

907-474-5314

English Dept.

801 Gruening Bldg.

uaf-writing-center@alaska.edu

The Writing Center, a student-staffed, student-oriented service of the English Department, assists with any phase of the writing process. Discover ways of improving grammar, mechanics and punctuation.

**Speaking Center**

http://www.uaf.edu/speak/

507 Gruening Bldg.

Communication & Journalism Dept.

uaf-speakingcenter@alaska.edu

The Speaking Center is a student-oriented service that helps with preparation of public presentations. Assistance areas include refining topics, organizing material and practicing presentations. The center enables students to digitally record and watch practice presentations, with constructive feedback from a coach.

TITLE IX AND NONDISCRIMINATION

If, for any reason, you feel you are a victim of sex discrimination on campus or wish to make other inquiries concerning the application of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator or the Assistant Secretary in the U.S. Dept. of Education Office of Civil Rights:

UAF Title IX Coordinator

739 Columbia Cr., Fairbanks, AK 99775

Phone: 907-474-7300

E-Mail: uaf-tix@alaska.edu

http://www.uaf.edu/titleix/

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applicants for admission and employment. Contact information, applicable laws, and complaint procedures are included on UA's statement of nondiscrimination available at [www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination).

**ABOUT THE PROFESSOR**

Lisa W. Drew's journalism experience has primarily been with magazines. She was a staff reporter and stringer for Newsweek, a senior editor at National Wildlife and managing editor of Harvard Medical School's alumni magazine. Her other jobs have included working as a writer and editor for the Alaska Satellite Facility, including editing the website and contributing to the Twitter feed, and as a grant-proposal writer for the nonprofit organization Health Leads. As a freelancer, in addition to magazine-article writing, she has worked as an editorial consultant for websites; an assistant editor, script person and researcher on documentary films; and a writer and editor on various other projects. She has an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and a B.A. from Reed College.