

Spring 2013
Journalism 19:120
Books: Fiction & Non-Fiction
Class – Monday 2-5:30pm
venise-berry@uiowa.edu

Dr. Venise Berry 335-3361/335-2765
J-School Office –E340 Adler Bldg
Off Hrs: Mon 12:30-1:30pm or by appt.
AAS Office – 514 Jefferson Bldg
Off Hrs: Wed 2-3pm or by appt.

J-School Director: Dr. David Perlmutter

Office: W305 Adler Bldg 335-3486

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

The course will cover the basic elements involved in writing a fiction or a non-fiction book. The class will explore fiction and non-fiction structures such as memoir, historical, essay, autobiography, anthology, resource, self-help, how to, humor and the novel. Each student will be expected to complete all readings and assignments, along with participating fully in class activities. Student work will be constructively synthesized and discussed through individual workshop sessions. Students will complete two major projects either a non-fiction book proposal or a novel proposal and a sample chapter. The non-fiction proposal will include specific areas like title, hook, market, promotion and a chapter outline. The fiction proposal will include a synopsis that covers the catalyst, first and second transformations, climax, resolution and close.

TEXTS:

The following book will be available in paperback at the University Bookstore in the IMU. Every student is required to read all assigned readings. This material will be synthesized, evaluated and debated in discussion sections, lectures and presentations. Additional readings will be assigned on ICON during the semester.

-Jeff Herman & Deborah Herman, *Write the Perfect Book Proposal* (Wiley & Sons 2001)

THE IOWA DOZEN is a pledge from the School of Journalism to help you:

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| Learn: | -to write correctly and clearly
-to conduct research and gather information responsibly
-to edit and evaluate carefully
-to use media technologies thoughtfully
-to apply statistical concepts appropriately |
| Value: | -First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups
-a diverse global community
-creativity and independence
-truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity |
| Explore: | -mass communication theories and concepts
-media institutions and practices
-the role of media in shaping cultures |

NOTES:

DISABILITY - I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may need some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

EMAIL - Make sure your email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly. University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, **III.15.2**. Scroll to k.11.)

DEADLINES - Deadlines in this class are firm. Late assignments must be pre-approved. NO assignment will be extended more than one week past the deadline – NO exceptions. It is your responsibility to turn in your assignments directly to the professor when they are due. If you turn in an assignment in some other way (under office door or in box), at some other time (before or after due date), I am not responsible if it is lost or misplaced. It is always a good idea to keep a copy in case there is a problem.

ATTENDANCE - Attendance is mandatory. Every class is important so please don't ask my permission to miss a class. If you must miss a class you will need to provide a written explanation and adequate documentation for me to consider suspending the penalty because missing one class is the same as missing three classes.

CHANGES - It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus according to how readings, videos, and assignments flow throughout the semester. A number of new videos have been ordered. A currently listed video in the syllabus may be replaced by a new one depending on arrival date.

UNIVERSITY EXAM POLICY - Final Examinations. An undergraduate student who has two final examinations scheduled for the same period or more than three examinations scheduled for the same day may file a request for a change of schedule before the published deadline at the Registrar's Service Center, 17 Calvin Hall, 8-4:30 M-F, (384-4300). **Missed exam policy.** University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are required and are available at the Registrar web site:

<http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf>

WARNING - If any of the videos shown in class are offensive to the professor. You are not required to stay and view them. However, each video has been selected because of its appropriateness to the particular section studied. And all are available on television or from video stores.

SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS - Student complaints concerning problems with the professor - first attempt to resolve the matter with the professor, if you are still not able to settle it go to department executive officer, Dr. David Perlmutter, The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.
www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

SEVERE WEATHER – The University Operations Manual section 16.14 outlines appropriate responses <<http://www.uiowa.edu/%7Eour/opmanual/v/16.htm#1614d>> to a tornado or similar crisis. If there is a crisis as indicated by the UI Outdoor Warning System members of the class should seek shelter in the innermost part of the building at the lowest level and stay until the crisis is over. In the case of really bad weather, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT - Student Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether in writing or speaking. Cheating includes copying someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions - the professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. Each situation is handled individually but if found guilty you will receive an F on the assignment or an F in the entire course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

ADMINISTRATIVE HOME - The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS *Student Academic Handbook*

SEXUAL HARASSMENT - The University has a policy on sexual harassment and consensual relationships in the instructional environment. You may obtain the full text of this policy in the Office of Affirmative Action, 202 Jessup Hall.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Student Rights and Responsibilities include your right to expect a classroom environment that enables all to learn comfortably, plus you have a responsibility to this class and your own education to help create a classroom environment where the same is possible. At the most basic level, this means that you will respect the other members of the class, including the professor, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF COMPUTER- Once class starts you may not use the computer to check your email, go on Facebook or any other computer activity outside of class work. You will lose 5 points each time the professor discovers an inappropriate use of the computer. It is rude and unacceptable to work on the computer while the professor or fellow students are presenting to the class. Please be respectful at all times.

GRADING:

You must earn 60% of the available points in order to pass this class. This means that I have rigorous expectations and grade accordingly. *Assignments will be graded with these guidelines in mind: A = Exceptional work, B = Very good work, C = Average work, D = Poor work, F = Unacceptable work. Grades for each assignment will be determined within the range of that particular assignment. Grades are not based on percentages, but on points. The final grade will be based on the total points earned for all class assignments and activities (see grade scale below). You should plan to put sufficient time and attention into this class. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences suggests that students work at least two hours outside class per week for each semester hour of course credit.

Attendance (3pts per session)	40pts.	Final Grade Scale:
Participation	30pts.	200- 185 = A
Model Book Analysis	10pts.	184-165 = B
Book Proposal	60pts.	164-135 = C
Book Chapter	50pts.	134-120 = D
Presentation	<u>10pts.</u>	Below 120 = F
Total	200pts.	

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

Writing Assignments – In many of the classes you will complete a number of short writing assignments dealing with specific topics like narrative, point of view, voice, transitions, word choice, flow, framing, connections and others. The professor may have you turn in those assignments at the end of the class period. You should always be prepared to read your writing in front of the class when called on or asked to volunteer.

Proposal/Chapter Workshops - The two primary writing assignments: a Book Proposal and sample chapter must be completed and copies distributed to classmates one week before your scheduled workshop session. Everyone must read all classmates assignments before their scheduled workshop and prepare a one page typed assessment page and also be prepared to participate in a constructive discussion/critique session. Your participation is crucial because as you are all potential readers for your fellow classmates work and your comments can help them to develop the best book possible.

Book Proposal (60 pts.) Choose a topic for your non-fiction book or novel. Research that topic and develop a book proposal including specific elements such as: title, hook, market, promotion, chapter outline, etc. Total 5 pages (double-spaced with one-inch margins – average typeface Time 12/14). Synopsis/Chapter Outline will be included in book proposal.

Synopsis For fiction you will explain story elements like: catalyst, first and second transformation, climax, resolution, close. For non-fiction you will explain topic elements like: significance, timeliness, structural overview/approach and key points or issues to be covered.

Chapter Outline You will need to estimate the number of chapters for your book (at least 15) write a paragraph explaining what will be included in each chapter.

Sample Chapter (50 pts.) You will write one chapter from your novel or non-fiction book. The chapter will be a minimum of ten pages, double-spaced with one-inch margins. Evaluation will cover Focus/Clarity/Logic, Structure/Organization, Narration/Style/Flow, Substance/Content, Grammar/Language/Mechanics.

Model Book Analysis (10 pts.) You will complete a book analysis based on a model book chosen in your genre. For the fictional novel, explain the six major structural elements of the novel premise in that book, also look at key issues like characterization, conflict and motivation and how it relates to your story. For the non-fiction book summarize the effectiveness of major concepts like: the title, structure, style, audience, approach, along with substance. (Total 3 pages) Make sure that you document your analysis by including examples of the issues discussed. Evaluation will cover Depth of Analysis, Documentation/Examples, Grammar/Language/Mechanics.

Author's Pavillion Presentation (10 pts.) You will participate in an Author's Pavilion at the end of class. You will select a three-minute reading from your sample chapter (approximately 4 pages). Evaluation will include: eye contact, voice tone, flow and clarity.

Participation (30 pts.) participation in class discussion is a very important component. Points will be distributed based on your contribution to workshops and other class discussions. Minimum contribution/rarely speak 10pts. –average contribution/sometimes speak 20pts. – exceptional contribution/always speak 30pts.. All members of the class must be respectful to each other when speaking or commenting. **No exceptions!!!!**

Extra-Credit – Identify three possible agents to send your proposal to. Write a paragraph explaining why you chose each agents, then write a query letter for those agents about your book project and yourself. (two pages maximum).

COURSE OUTLINE:

January 28 - Introduction/Syllabus Overview

Video Interview – History and Future of Books/J.K. Rowling/Young Adult

Discussion/Exercises Fiction/ Non-Fiction premise exercises

February 4 – Concept, Title, Overview, Markets, Competition

Video Interview – Malcolm Gladwell, Non-Fiction/Human Subconscious

READING: *Write the Perfect Book Proposal*/pages 7-24

Discussion/Exercises

February 11 – Promotion, Background, Outline, Sample Chapter, Fiction

Video Interview – Toni Morrison, Fiction

READING– *Write the Perfect Book Proposal*/pages 25-41

Discussion/Exercises

****Project Synopsis Due**

February 18 – Memoir, Narrative, Queries, Submission, Sample Proposals

Video Interview – Louise Erdrich, Memoir/Children Books

READING – *Write the Perfect Book Proposal*/pages 42-56

Discussion/Exercises

February 25 – Writing Tools and Other Important Tips

Video Interview – Isaac Asimov, Science Fiction/ Non-Fiction

READING: *On Writing*/pages 103-131/136-166

Discussion/Exercises

****Model Book Analysis Due!**

March 4 – New Journalism & Essays

Model Book Analysis Presentations

Video Interview – Jeffrey Toobin, Non-Fiction/Politics

READING: *The Writer's Reader*/ pages 38-54 & pages 125-129/144-146

Discussion/Exercises

COURSE OUTLINE CONTINUED

March 11 – Memoir & Travel

Video Interview – Bharati Mukherjee, Fiction

READING: *The Writer's Reader*/ pages 148-152/167-171 & pages 198-201/202-214

Discussion/Exercises

March 18 - SPRING BREAK

March 25 – Final Research and Writing Day

April 1 – Proposal Workshops

Discussion – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

****Selected Proposals Due!**

April 8 - Proposal Workshops

Discussion – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

****Selected Proposals Due!**

April 15 - Chapter Workshops

Discussion – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

****Selected Chapters Due!**

April 22 - Chapter Workshops

Discussion – Ten students will receive 10-15 minute individual constructive sessions

****Selected Chapters Due!**

April 29 – Wrap Up Proposal/Chapter Workshops

May 6 – Author's Pavilion/Evaluations

****EC – Agents Query Due!**

May 13 – FINALS WEEK

Bibliography

Eisenhuth, Susie and Willa McDonald, 2007, *The Writer's Reader: Understanding Journalism and Non-Fiction*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Herman, Jeff & Deborah Herman, 2001, *Write the Perfect Book Proposal*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons Publishing.

King, Stephen, 2000, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, NY: Pocket Books Publishing.