

**RHE 328: Magazine Writing & Publishing #82125**  
**Summer 2020 (M-F 8:30 a.m. — via Zoom)**

Tom Buckley  
Office: CAL 201  
Phone: 471-8368

Office Hours  
Tues. 10–11:30 a.m.  
Friday 1–2:30 p.m.

**Texts/Applications**

Adobe InDesign (desktop publishing software application)  
*Writer's Market* (2020 edition) or a website subscription (optional)  
*The Associated Press Stylebook 2020* (optional)

**Objective**

This course is designed to give students an understanding of the magazine industry from the perspective of both writers and editors. The course offers a broad core of practical knowledge while also exploring issues related to the field.

Each year countless writers send articles off to national magazines, receive form-letter rejections, and give up. This discouraging experience convinces most of them that the field is dominated by writers who are already widely known, or that there's some secret to success that only a few privileged souls know. The errors made by those unsuccessful writers are easy to identify and easier still to avoid. The real trick to getting your work published is understanding how the system works — and having a willingness to work hard enough to produce quality work.

In this course, then, we'll talk about the practical matters successful writers attend to: generating story ideas; researching appropriate markets; conducting interviews; selling articles; developing the best format for presenting your information; and, finally, organizing the material, writing the article itself, and sending it off for publication. We'll also talk about the process of publishing a magazine. You'll learn how magazines identify a niche audience; formulate an editorial vision; produce content — devising departments, assigning stories, gathering art; and attend to the practical matters of writing headlines and captions, cropping pictures, fitting copy, and designing layouts.

And while all of this is occurring, magazine representatives are consistently selling advertising space and recruiting subscriptions to keep the publication afloat — a tricky process to navigate given that the size of an issue is entirely dependent on the amount of ad space generated. Inherent in everything we discuss this semester will be a consideration of the ethical choices faced when presenting information to a public audience. We'll begin by trying to decide what constitutes “truth” in journalism, then wrestle with all of the practical — and sometimes profound — considerations that influence the collection and presentation of information.

## Requirements

Four major assignments, including a Q&A with an Austin-area figure (and revision); a proofreading exercise; and a query letter (submitted to a publication you identify in *Writer's Market*). These assignments will help you acquire the skills necessary to ultimately craft a marketable article. For your query letter — the final assignment in the course — you'll conduct research (using, among other tools, the UT library database system), interview sources, and identify potential markets.

## Policies

*Attendance:* I'll begin taking attendance on Monday, June 8. You're allowed two absences. If you miss a third class, I won't be able to pass you in the course. Also, arriving to class after 8:40 a.m. or leaving before class ends (even though you're logged into Zoom) will also count as an absence.

**IMPORTANT:** When you're absent, you need to find out what's due the following class meeting. *You aren't excused from turning in an assignment or completing a reading assignment because of absence.* You can request a recording of the class from me, or you can get together with someone else in the class so that when you're absent, they can fill you in on what you've missed. On Monday, I'll supply you with a list of class email addresses. If you'd prefer that your email not be shared with the class, let me know on or before Sunday, June 7.

*Papers:* All assignments must follow the prescribed formatting instructions (detailed on the assignment sheet) and be handed in on time for you to receive credit. *Assignments that don't adhere to the formatting criteria or are turned in late will be critiqued, but they won't be graded, and you won't receive credit for them.*

*Submitting Papers:* Unless otherwise noted, all major papers should be double-spaced and typed in Times New Roman 12-point font using one-inch margins. You don't need to use a title page. Simply type, in the top right-hand corner of the first page, "Your Name/RHE 328//[word count]."

Be sure to stick to the word count identified on the assignment sheet. Papers that exceed the word count will be returned unread.

*Exams:* The midterm exam will be on Thursday, June 18, and will cover all class discussions, readings, and handouts to that point in the semester. The second exam will be on Wednesday, July 8, and will be based on what's covered after the midterm.

*Email:* Obviously, I'll be communicating with the class via email. I'll also send you materials for class almost daily, so please have access to your email both before and during class

*InDesign:* As I noted in my previous email to you, this course requires that you learn and use Adobe InDesign. I emailed you a sheet with instructions for downloading the application and for viewing training videos. I've included that sheet here as well — it's the last page.

*Peer Critique Sessions:* Before a major assignment is due, we'll have a peer critique session at which time at least one of your peers will read and evaluate your paper using a list of criteria I'll provide. You're expected to have a completed draft of your assignment for the session.

Missing a peer critique session — or arriving late — will result in an F for the peer critique assignment (reducing your overall grade in the course by one full grade) and will prohibit you from handing in a revision of that paper.

### **Course Organization**

Unit I: Principles of Magazine Writing (weeks 1-2)

Paper #1: Q&A, due Thursday, June 18

Unit II: Interviewing/Q&A (week 3)

Paper #2: Design Project, due Thursday, June 25

Unit III: Publishing Process (week 4)

Paper #3: Style/Proofreading due Thursday, July 2

Unit IV: Query Letter (weeks 5)

Paper #4: Query Letter, due Thursday, July 9

### **Grading Formula**

Your four major assignments — and both exams — will count for 15 percent of your final grade, though I'll consider improvement over the course of the semester. The remaining 10 percent of your grade will be a participation grade based on your attendance, promptness, and performance on shorter exercises and during peer critique sessions. A plus-minus grade system will be used in the course — for papers and for the final course grade.

You may apply the grading formula above to get an idea of where you stand.

In determining your final grade, I'll look at your entire body of work over the course of the semester, noting improvement you've made.

### **Writing Flag**

This course carries the Writing Flag. You will write regularly during the semester, and you will receive feedback from your instructor and your peers. Based on this feedback, you will have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments. A substantial portion of your grade to comes from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

### **Religious Days**

You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holy days. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor, in writing, well in advance of the absence, so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. If you know you will have to miss class(es) for this reason, provide your instructor with the date(s) as early as possible. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g., jury duty). You are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate for any day you miss.

### **Scholastic Honesty**

Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, will result in a major course penalty, possibly failure of the course. This standard applies to *all* drafts and assignments, and a report of the incident will be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students and filed in your permanent UT record. Under certain circumstances, the Dean of Students will initiate proceedings to expel you from the University. So, take care to read and understand the *Statement on Scholastic Responsibility*, which can be found online at <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/rhetoric/RHE%20306/plagiarismcollusion.php>. If you have any doubts about your use of sources, ask your instructor for help *before* handing in the assignment.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (video phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. More information is available online at <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/instructional-tips-for-working-with-students-with-disabilities/>

### **Emergency Information**

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050.

## Adobe InDesign

As a UT student, you're eligible to receive free training for a number of programs, including Adobe InDesign, the most popular design program in the magazine industry.

InDesign is a powerful design tool, and understanding its complexities can take years. But you can learn the basics of InDesign rather quickly, which will allow you to create documents that are attractive and sophisticated.

Knowing how to use InDesign — even the basics — will benefit you in the marketplace.

This course requires you to use InDesign for most major assignments, which means you'll need some training, which, as I mentioned above, the university provides.

You can view training videos anywhere, but it won't make much sense to do so without access to InDesign. To that end the Department of Rhetoric & Writing allows students in Rhetoric classes to have access to the program — across the hall in PAR 104 during regular hours. (This assumes you don't already have a copy of your own, of course.) You can also purchase a subscription to InDesign, which, for students, should cost about \$20 per month.

The InDesign training videos can be found at [lynda.com](http://lynda.com). Follow these instructions to access the videos using your UT EID.

Go to [lynda.com](http://lynda.com)

At the top, click on the "Sign In" button (not the "Sign Up" button).

On the next page, click on "Sign in with your organization portal" at the bottom of the window.

Type "[utexas.edu](http://utexas.edu)" in the text window, then press "Continue."

From here, the UT EID system will take over.

Once on the [lynda.com](http://lynda.com) page, click on "Library" at the top left, then pull down to "Design." You'll see three columns appear; scroll over to the second column and click "InDesign."

Assuming you haven't had previous training on InDesign, go to "Skill Level" in the left column and choose "Beginner."

From here, you should choose a training video from among the following:

- **InDesign Quick Start with David Blatner** (for those who want just enough of the basics to fulfill the course)
- **InDesign CC Essential Training with David Blatner** (for those interested in a more developed course — note that the video is almost 7 hours long)
- **Magazine Design: Getting Started with John McWade** (it's best you watch this video after you've watched either of the above videos)