

Las Positas College
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**Course Outline for MSCM 3
MAGAZINE & FEATURE WRITING
Effective: Fall 2003**

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MSCM 3 — MAGAZINE & FEATURE WRITING — 3.00 units

Feature writing, freelance journalism, and how to get published in newspapers and magazines.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition
or

-

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

A. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. write high-quality features for newspaper and magazines:
- B. demonstrate mastery of journalistic writing skills necessary for publication:
- C. recognize story ideas and opportunities for selected writing markets;
- D. write professional and appropriate query letters to sell pieces to magazines and newspapers.

V. CONTENT:

- A. The feature story
 - 1. The newspaper feature story
 - a. News
 - b. Other (Specialized, Timeless, Critical Review)
 - c. Finding stories
 - d. Researching stories
 - e. Interviews
 - f. Writing the story and revising the story
 - 2. The magazine article
 - a. Contrast with the newspaper feature story
 - b. Finding stories
 - c. Researching stories
 - d. Interviews
 - e. Writing the story and revising the story
 - f. Marketing the story
- B. Analysis of current writers' market by geographic area and subject matter
- C. Develop research and interviewing skills
- D. Write standard feature articles totaling 6,000 words, including profiles, service features, news features, lifestyle features, timeless features, and critical reviews
- E. Complete a major feature article suitable for publication
- F. Write an accompanying query letter for marketing
- G. Review of basic U.S. libel and privacy laws and journalistic ethics

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Small group and whole class discussion
- C. Films, video tapes, and recordings
- D. Guest presentations
- E. Possible field trips to different media companies
- F. Written work, including summaries, papers, and exams
- G. Development of writing skills with diagnostic testing and appropriate practice in word use, grammar, and journalistic standards.
- H. Individual/group evaluation of student and professional prose
 - I. Evaluation of student work and professional pieces by peer discussion
- J. Deadline writing situations
- K. Instructor conferences
- L. **Guest Lecturers** -
- M. Reporting simulations
- N. "Live" interview and note-taking situations

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading and Writing: 1. Read Chapter 8 in *Feature Writing for Newspapers and Magazines: The Pursuit of Excellence* (4th Edition). "Marketing and Writing the Magazine Article" and prepare a draft query letter. B. Writing: 1. Complete a 1,200-word feature piece on a campus-based issue under deadline and finalize query letter for marketing the article.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

B. **Frequency**

- 1. Weekly writing assignment and quizzes
- 2. Monthly examinations
- 3. Semester-long preparation of portfolio

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Brooks, Brian S., James L. Pinson, and Jean Gaddy Wilson *Working with Words: A Handbook for Media Writers and Editors*. 5th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.
- 2. Bunton, Kristie, et al. *Writing Across the Media*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999.
- 3. Lee, John and Edward Jay Friedlander *Feature Writing for Newspapers and Magazines: The Pursuit of Excellence*. 4th ed., Longman, 1999.
- 4. Wilber, Richard A. *Magazine Feature Writing*, Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: