

IALJS-14 Literary Journalism 101: Teaching Toolkit Panel—Successful Assignments

Syllabi and more assignments: <http://ialjs.org/ialjs-links>

Responses to “What has been your most successful assignment in teaching literary/long form/narrative journalism? Please include your name if you would your name shared. If it is easier or if you prefer, you could send the assignment to... .”

[Note: these assignments have minimal formatting as no formatting is preserved with the survey platform we used and we did not want to introduce an unintended message with incorrect formatting choices.]

In teaching the idea that we as humans have the need to narrate stories embedded in our DNA, I find useful and eye-opening to students Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel's “An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior” [<https://www.all-about-psychology.com/fritz-heider.html>] that employs some lines, two triangles, and a circle silently moving around the screen from which the viewers then construct a story on their own or from prompts such as: What kind of a person is the big triangle? What kind of a person is the little triangle? What kind of a person is the circle (disc)? Why did the two triangles fight? Why did the circle go into the house? In one part of the movie the big triangle and the circle were in the house together. What did the big triangle do then? Why? What did the circle do when it was in the house with the big triangle? Why? In one part of the movie the big triangle was shut up in the house and tried to get out. What did the little triangle and the circle do then? Why did the big triangle break the house? Tell the story of the movie in a few sentences. Slides for the activity are available at <http://bit.ly/2tPdjsy>

--Ronald R. Rodgers, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator, Department of Journalism, University of Florida

1. I have students go out for half an hour during class and closely observe human, animal (cats, birds) natural (trees, wind), and architectural dynamics in the university's large green grass oval area, using all their senses. They then come back to class and write 150-word mini stories on either a single dynamic they observed in detail or a panorama of the whole thing that identifies some recurring themes.
 2. When they finish this and we review it, I have them rewrite it without adjectives or adverbs, so they are compelled to write with verbs and other great things...
 3. Then I have them compress the text into a 20-word sentence that captures the main idea that should also be compelling for a universal audience.
 4. Finally, I ask them to identify the central dynamic, theme, or emotion that the story is all about, using only abstract nouns (courage, love, fear, caution, etc.).
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"Neighborhood" stories -- with "neighborhood" defined as any community of people, not confined to geographic neighborhoods. The story requirement is to explore a community of people and how their relationships define the neighborhood.

(For a class that is primarily about reading journalism, not writing it. The following assignment goes out just before spring break, so that students can use the time for their "reporting"):

You have two options for this assignment. Choose ONE of the following to explore your talents with creative non-fiction:

Option A: The Travel Study

Though it would be lovely if each of you had the time, energy, and financial ability to travel somewhere fabulous for this assignment, it is truly not necessary. This assignment does not require any travel out of town. In fact, travel in town will actually work just as well.

I want you to write a piece about a travel experience. This must be something recent, if not something done specifically for this assignment. In other words -- no last summer's vacation, no last year's semester abroad. You need to be able to concentrate on your surroundings, do fresh reporting, and experience things anew, now that you have begun to view the world as a literary journalist might.

For those of you who will travel over spring break, you could use that experience for this assignment.

Travel writing focuses on the symbolic qualities of observed experience. Travel writers, then, can open doors to a culture for a reader by concentrating on one or more details.

This assignment may contain three or four parts, depending on what you decide to write about.

-First, you have to observe from the point-of-view of a traveler.

-Second, you may need to do some research about the details you have observed. For instance, if you are writing about the Millbrook wineries, you may need to find out when the first grapevine was planted. If you are doing a story about The Hudson Valley Explorer, you will want to do research on the history of the Pullman train dining cars.

-Third, you'll need to think about the personal feelings or memories that your observations trigger.

-Last, you might look for the symbolism of observed detail. Does something you have observed say something about the world? Look for those things that, as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz put it, say something to someone about something.

Option B: The Bar Study (or for the under 21, the Coffeehouse Study)

Now, I'm hoping that most of you having spent the bulk of your time in college doing nothing but spending time in bars, but let's say you've been in a few. Ever notice how no two bars are the same?

That's what this writing assignment is all about -- distinctiveness, difference, culture.

Bars are not simply places; they are cultural arenas. Typically, a group of people frequents a set of bars, and by their presence give a particular atmosphere to a place. Owners sometimes decorate their bars to attract certain people. For example, a pool table and a television turned to the baseball game draws one crowd. Exposed brick walls, hanging ferns, and quiet music in the background will attract a different crowd. Within that cultural arena, meaningful action takes place. People meet at the end of the day to further their friendships. Some arenas are intended to attract strangers, such as bars where serious pool is played for money, or singles bars.

Your job is to discover the key elements that make your chosen bar special. How is it decorated? What's on the jukebox or played over the speakers? What kinds of drinks get consumed? Why are people there? Then take a look at the cultural group that frequents the place. What makes a "regular" different from someone who just walked in? How are regulars identified, or how do they identify themselves, say, to a new bartender? Listen to conversations. Interview people. Watch what happens. Your research may require that you spend several hours in the place on more than one occasion.

Finally, write a profile of this bar. The bar has a social life, a business life, a culture. It will give you good stories -- stories of fights, changes in ownership, changes in the drinking crowd, bouncers, bartenders. Don't be a sociologist, but try to convey what a sociologist might

know about this place in terms that we can all understand. Tell stories. Use characters, action, and dialogue. Know the background and the facts about the owners and the business. Bring the place to life.

Now: if you are not 21, or if you do not like bars, no worries -- this activity can just as easily be done in a coffeehouse, a bowling alley, or another gathering place that offers similar activities for observation. Just choose your location and have at it.

- Choose (at least) two narratological notions/authors from two different parts of the course (i.e. narratology, media narratology, narrative journalism, other forms of narrative in journalism).
 - Present these two notions/authors and contextualize them in the field of narratology.
 - Show how they apply to journalism through one concrete and detailed example. The example must be a journalistic production that we did not discuss in class.
 - Explain why it is pertinent to use the two notions/authors you chose together.
 - Reflect on how these notions/authors are interesting for journalism practitioners.
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1. Narrative nonfiction focusing on a problem, unsolved crime, unresolved issue or exploration
 2. Essay about a place in the Metropolitan area (Mpls./St. Paul, MN) with significant natural elements
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A biographical profile of a literary journalist.

Actually having them produce writing

An assignment dealing with family journalism/personal journalism.

Combing in class prompts designed to teach narrative writing with an outside class reporting prompt (plus examples of good writing)

Creative Writing Exercises

Deconstructing excellent articles.

For Advanced Feature Writing, it is simply a 2, 500+ feature, to be completed after I've approved the pitch.

For the MFA in Creative Nonfiction program, it isn't one assignment. The students are working on their book proposals & chapters throughout their two years in the program. Depending on when they're with me, they might be starting their proposal or finishing their final chapters (or anything in between).

For the senior project class, the students spend all semester working on a multimedia package, including a long written piece, on a topic of their own choosing.

The solutions journalism class is also one assignment for the whole semester.

GUIRADO, Maria Cecília

Having students write memoir pieces.

I can tell you the most successful class, I've had (will be third year teaching it, this Fall): I was really fortunate to be able to do this: As part of this New Journalism of the Sixties seminar, we talk about the Sixties, and the big issues that roiled the decade. I assign them some readings from Michael Herr's "Dispatches," we watch some of the scenes adapted from that book, for the film "Apocalypse Now," I talk about Mark Bowden's outstanding recent work of narrative nonfiction, writing "Hue: 1968", on one of the largest battles of the Vietnam War. And then, the next class, I bring in a real-life Vietnam vet. My friend Jim Ferris, originally from upstate New York, who enlisted and spent a couple of years with the Air Cavalry. Flew all over Vietnam in a helicopter, went on a lot of missions, got shot at, has some medals. He brags about none of that, talks about the war honestly with my students (many of who often tell me, after meeting Jim, "now I know what my grandfather went through"), And even though Jim is not a journalist, does recognize the focus of the class, and tells a good story about how he actually had dinner with Truman Capote one night.

I did (using past tense because our dean eliminated several journalism courses, including literary journalism, without our consultation or approval several years ago) do a number of assignments involving literary journalism, such as writing a narrative story on a common community problem like mental health counseling, gun abuse, homelessness, etc. but the assignment students consistently enjoyed the most was writing a narrative story based on an oral history they did with an older relative (on wars, Detroit race riots of 1968 and white flight, relative in prison, etc.) and some online research. The assignment actually helped build better relationships for the students with relatives as it gave them an opportunity to learn the longer writing style.

I find that teaching students to immerse themselves in world's of the "other," worlds that are not their own - even for just a short time - is most effective in getting them to 1) go outside their comfort zone 2) develop and hone actual reporting skills and 3) use a distanced first-person perspective to write about another world. To that end, I use an assignment called "The Immersion Assignment" in which they are required to spend several days in a subculture of their choosing and then write a short piece about it.

I have been using profiles as an introduction to narrative journalism with students. They can exercise close observation since I ask them to make a profile from another colleague. The results have been great in observation exercises and it results in high interest in their colleagues' stories and that causes an approximation between them.

I have my students write both a short (1200-word) work of immersion reporting, and a memoir that employs narrative techniques. But the most successful assignment is a little task the gets them ready to do an immersion. I ask them to eavesdrop on a conversation between strangers and tape it if possible (acknowledging that it's totally illegal to do so in Pennsylvania). I call it The Blab of the Pave, after a Walt Whitman line. It's easy, it's fun, and the result are very often hilarious.

--Laurence Roy Stains, Assoc. Professor, Temple U

I have students read primary texts and write response papers about the style, the methods and the topics. You can see the readings and assignments at <https://www.mollyyanity.com/jrn343543-literary-journalism--the-60s.html>

I have students write profiles and incorporate techniques of literary journalism such as description and research.

I have two assignments that work incredibly well. First off, I have my students interview a leading literary or narrative journalist and write a piece that describes how that person does what they do. I like this assignment because it forces the student to consider the work of the reporter so they can come up with appropriate questions, but also it allows students to make connections in the industry. My most successful assignment, though, is the final project, in which students are expected to produce a substantial piece of literary or narrative journalism, one they have been working on for approximately 10 to 12 weeks of the semester. I structure check-in points throughout the semester, and in this assignment, students are expected to write a successful pitch for the story, give regular updates on their reporting and writing, and turn in a first draft that is then followed by an editing session (with either myself or classmates or both). And then finally they must turn in a final draft. The work is almost always remarkable.

I make them write both a personal experience piece and a feature piece, both with 2000-4000 word limits. Short end of literary journalism, I know, but there's a lot of work that goes into both. The goal of the class is to sell stories. Any longer than that and the market is incredibly small.

I taught this about 6 years ago. I will dig around for assignments. I had them do a feature, profile, slice of life profile and public interest piece. I think kids love writing profiles but they don't have so much time do spend on shadowing for a slice of life/day in the life of types of pieces.

I'm doing a series of scene-writing exercises right now where one student interviews another student and a third student records the information somehow (on blackboard; in our class GoogleDrive file). Then students write up a 200- to 300-word scene. I tried putting the students in groups of two and three for one of the early sessions. That was a nice variation because one student would filter out the other student's more outre ideas (adding more facts that can possibly inferred from information available, for instance).

As we proceed with these writing exercises I'm trying to achieve three goals:

1. Make students aware of where the truth boundary is. Usually some few students take advantage of the newfound freedom and cross the line into fiction — sometimes to the point of writing soap opera-ish material. I think it's good for them to get that tendency out of their system. In further exercises, students naturally begin to report in scene form only what they have heard or seen.
2. From the interviewer's point of view I'm trying get them to establish rapport and develop a conversational tone. But I'm also wanting them to learn how to keep their antennae up for scene material in the conversation. I want them to be looking for action in time and space. And then, once they hear something that sounds promising, I want them to exploit it without breaking the rhythm and rapport of the interview, meaning, swing back to get more details of an event in order to build a scene but don't interrupt an interviewee in the middle of telling you something else.

3. The third goal is to try and understand how to write from different perspectives, so I might actually say, after the interview has been conducted and the board is filled with facts, let's write this up from John's PoV, or Mary's PoV. That's good practice, too. I get them to read their work out loud to the group and I make comments (constructive!) if warranted. I usually write up a version scene and I'll read it out loud if they want me to. (It helps me, too!)

I've been running the module for 15+ years so too many successful examples to list. The student who re-wrote George Orwell's 'Shooting and Elephant' in the style of Hunter S. Thompson's 'Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved' probably comes closest?

I'm a bit unclear on this question. I think you mean which student's work has been most successful in which case I would say my students who were developing investigation pieces. Otherwise I would say the most successful assignments we set are our workshop assignments. Students write a draft feature and we workshop it in class. It is a really dynamic learning tool and they seem to get a lot out of it.

In my classes, we build up to a 2,500-word feature story that either addresses a significant social issue, pursues an investigation, or has a powerful human-interest focus. The grade is balanced between the art of writing and the craft of reporting and research. On the writing side, I evaluate the strength of the lede, the story structure, the originality of the prose style, the skillful use of quotes, and so on. In terms of reporting and research, I pay close attention to the sources of information, textual as well as interview-based. Are the sources credible and authoritative? Did the student make an effort to locate a variety of relevant perspectives that illuminated various aspects of the story?

In my experience, students like to share their work during oral presentations = presentation of an author, his or her major reportage, group discussion about an abstract...

In prep for narrative style writing, I have students do a short as-told-to story, basically a rip off of Esquire's What It Feels Like series. These are very successful in getting students to transition of from news style writing, which they have done in previous classes and for the student newspaper, to writing narratively and anecdotally. Students find a person with a singular experience--getting racially profiled while out on a run, for example--interview the persona and write their story from first person. I also have students write a first-person narrative about an experience that taught them a lesson or was a turning point in their lives. This also helps with narrative writing.

In this course fourth-year students complete a 3,000-word narrative in six weeks. The first week they read a great deal, attend daily lectures about the form, and have a story idea pitched and approved. The first assignment, on the Friday ending the second week, is to write a scene. This is important because it gives the students an early experience of writing one of the basic building blocks of literary journalism. The first draft is due at the end of week 4. (Use my name if you wish.)
--David Swick

In this course, students have to write a weekly journalistic narrative to be posted on the university website.

Make people believe that hard journalism is a narrative discourse as much as any other non-fictional or even fictional narratives. It is a social construction. Make people to understand that narrative journalism is a social construction submitted to social pressures. Make people to comprehend that narration is constructed in hard journalism as a meaningful kaleidoscope with partial senses, whose complete stories have to be put together and deduced by the reader in the act of reception (theory of aesthetic reception). It is the reader who configures the stories, putting together fragmented partial meanings printed out every day or even every minute (in the case of digital media).

My courses are run as workshops for upper-level students.

Throughout the term, students turn in short pieces of writing as well as response papers that discuss some technique they have noticed in the assigned reading. In week four, I ask for them to prepare three 1-2 page pitches, each describing a different topic for their long paper. As a class, we critique these, and each student selects one of the three to work on.

Their final papers always require scholarly research and fieldwork (always interviews and, in most cases, observations), and weekly assignments ensure that they stay on track and don't leave everything till the last minute. It's in these final pieces of prose that student writers can shine, and every time I teach one of these courses I learn something from my students. Maybe it's about a lady in a city 50 miles away who loves the color purple so much that she drives a purple cadillac, lives in a purple house with purple drapes, purple sofa, table and chairs, and a purple frig, a woman who for years was invited to elementary classes to talk about her favorite subject--purple. Maybe it's about the discipline and cohesion of one local roller derby group that made them champions in a sport that rewards young women for their aggression and their teamwork. Maybe it's a profile of a twenty-six year old who has never been to college but who gets up early every morning to write poetry for at least two hours before heading up the highway to begin work in a pizza restaurant.

--Carol Burke, Professor, Program in Literary Journalism, Department of English, Faculty Associate, Anthropology, University of California, Irvine

My courses workshop long pieces over a period of weeks. Students bring in work in progress for classroom critique. Along the way I have them:

- * Outline their story in 3 acts
- * Storyboard their story in 3 acts
- * Screen their story to a live audience at the end of the semester.

I have writers read selections from their written stories.

My first significant writing assignment in "Writing with Voice" is a short (1,000 word) first-person essay. Everybody wants to write about themselves, it frees students from having to do the laborious reporting that goes into a longform piece, and it also gives them a chance to write with a sense of authority that they might not feel on any other subject. It also fosters camaraderie and trust in a class where students will be workshopping each other's pieces.

I wrote about my rationale at length for EdShift a couple years ago: <http://mediashift.org/2016/03/why-students-should-write-memoirs/>

--Vanessa Gregory

My most successful assignment is my third one for students. It requires them to bring together all aspects of narrative journalism and multimedia elements into one 5-minute social justice focused story. My students' work can be found on this website: <https://com301mmstorycreation.wordpress.com/>. Look under Macro/Micro - Social Justice Narratives for examples of students' work.

My research on environmental book reportage.
--Simão Farias Almeida

My students visit a bowling alley, another class session (with permission), a coffee shop, a restaurant, or a bar (if they are old enough)--or even ride a bus through a neighborhood unknown to them-- and then write a piece that evokes what their research suggests is the distinctive culture there. I first got the idea for this assignment from Norm Sims, who had developed a successful "bar study" that challenged his University of Massachusetts students to capture the culture in a tavern of their choice. (I think the drinking age there was then 18, by the way.)

Narrative nonfiction: Essay about or profile of a place in Mpls/StPaul area with significant natural elements

One of our librarians came across handouts from an old Prohibition-era murder case at Dartmouth College at a conference he went to. The handouts include news stories and historic letters. Students are given these and told to find more information on the case online and in historic records then write a non-fiction narrative based solely on what they find. No interviews allowed.

Another assignment was the day JFK was killed. Using historic documents, TV footage and interviews with someone (it is one of the rare times I allow a family member to be interviewed), students craft a narrative of the day from that person's perspective. The stories are then posted on a class blogger blog.

Some examples from years past: <http://stonehillnarrativefall2011.blogspot.com/2011/10/memorable-mourning.html>

I expanded the assignment last year because students were finding it difficult finding people to interview for the JFK assignment. Some people were too young and couldn't remember enough details. I expanded it to include Sept. 11:

<https://stonehillnarrative2017.blogspot.com/>

Not only does the assignments provide students the opportunity to weave historic research with interviews, it gives them an insight into a family member's history.

--Maureen Boyle, Stonehill college, Easton, Mass. mboyle@stonehill.edu

One quite useful assignment shows students how they can write a dramatic beginning by finding a turning point in the story and starting with it. I use little fictional examples to illustrate this, for instance:

- 1) Describe the actual moment when Michael realized that his wife was cheating on him.
- 2) Describe the moment when Sammy realized that he was about to get fired.
- 3) Describe the moment when the foreign minister realized that war was ahead.

This tends to be an amusing but also effective exercise; it helps the students understand the idea behind the phrase "show, don't tell."
--Maria Lassila-Merisalo

Personality profiles

How often do you catch yourself or others engaging in gossip? Why do viewers flock to reality shows? There's no denying it. People are interested in people. A personality profile thrives on this idea. A profile gives the reader a peek into another person's life. You are not writing someone's biography or a resume; the profile is more than a list of facts. As the interviewer and writer it's your job to find a reason to write a profile about your subject.

According to University of Oklahoma journalism professor, Dr. Peter Gade, in a personality profile you should try to find the person's "unique whatness." The goal is to find what sets the person aside from others. Often that can be a hobby, a career, a lifestyle, etc. It can be something the person does a little different from most everyone else. It can be an idiosyncrasy (for example someone who is obsessed with health and fitness, but who is also a McDonald's junkie). This uniqueness or special quality becomes a theme that becomes the main focus of your story. A person doesn't have to be a reality TV star or tame lions for a living to be interesting. Most of us have ordinary jobs, careers and lives, but maybe we have a unique approach. The unique whatness is only discovered by asking questions and really listening to the answers.

The Interview Process

It helps to know a little bit about your subject before you set down for an in-depth interview. If you have a chance, see if you can do a mini-interview first by phone or e-mail (or in person if available) Get to know him/her. Ask basic questions about background, interests, family life, etc. (take notes). Keep your ears open for interesting statements/answers. After you have collected the initial information, take it home, think about it, and make a list of more in-depth questions to ask during the second interview (best if this one can be in person). Be sure to ask as many open-ended questions as possible. You can't write a paper with "yes" and "no" answers. Ask questions that get your subject to tell a story. When you review the answers to those questions look for a theme, something that can be woven into the profile as a link between information.

Essentials for any profile:

- 1) Basic information -- full name, age, professional title, occupation, and usually marital status and children.
- 2) What the subject says -- use lots of quotes and paraphrases so the subject can talk directly to the reader.
- 3) How the subject looks -- not only routine facts about height, build and color of eyes and hair, but also the details that make the subject come to life: how he or she walks, talks, gestures, and uses body language or facial expressions.
- 4) Background or history of the subject -- although this is a story of who the subject is now, often a subject's background tells a lot about how the subject has become who he or she is. This might include education, upbringing, hobbies and interests. Note: it is usually a mistake to begin your profile with history -- use it as background.
- 5) Details - anecdotes, quotes, real-life examples or events that reveal the person's personality or "unique whatness."

Getting Started

Profiles do not have to focus on only the happy or good side of a person. They can be funny, uplifting, eccentric or light-hearted, but often profiles tell a sad or serious story. A personality profile is a creative work that attempts to bring a person to life on paper. To capture your audience right away try opening with a unique quote (from the source or elsewhere), some vivid description or an anecdote. The example

sheet shows the first paragraph of two profiles, one using a quote, the other using description, to grab the reader's attention. The paragraphs also contain the themes. The final draft of this assignment should be 2-4 pages typed, doubled spaced, in 12 point font. Pick a theme or maybe two and concentrate on that idea(s). If you have too many themes you will lose your focus. You will not be able to sum up everything about this person, but you can give the reader a good starting point within your chosen theme(s). Don't be afraid to entertain—that's what a good profile does. Personality profile assignment requirements
You must have a minimum of two interviewed sources (the one being profiled and another source who knows the one being profiled). You can have more sources.

You will work on a draft Sept. 5 in a lab session I may deduct points from your final grade if you don't go through the drafting process. A second draft is due for peer critique Sept. 7. Bring a typed draft with you to class. I will deduct a letter grade for each day your draft is late. We will be engaging in peer critique for which you will receive participation points.

The final draft is due in class Tuesday Sept. 12. In addition I may have you e-mail your story as an attachment for use in the Northwestern News (more on this later). The final draft should be a minimum of two maximum of four double-spaced pages. Please include your name and a title on the first page. Keep all drafts and your notes from the interview. Turn in all drafts and notes paper-clipped behind your final draft.

I will be looking for the personality profile format we discussed in class including a creative lead, nut graf, theme(s), body paragraphs and kicker. Additionally, I use the following criteria to grade your stories.

Criteria for Grading Feature Stories

1. Mechanics Spelling Punctuation Grammar -- This includes sentence structure, appropriate voice, tense, parallel construction, pronoun agreement, etc. Usage -- Did you choose the right words? Did you use the words correctly? Style -- Did you employ Associated Press and other appropriate style? Quotes and attribution
2. Reporting Accuracy -- Are your facts straight, details and information accurate, names spelled correctly? Do your numbers add up and/or make sense? Is the story logical? Sources -- Have you spoken to the best possible sources? If not, do you inform the reader why? Taste, ethics and sensitivity -- Does your story exhibit proper ethical conduct on your part in terms of news gathering, interviewing and choice of content? Are you sensitive to ethnic and cultural diversity, and the views of your sources which may differ from your own? Quality of information -- Can you get your sources to talk candidly with you, and does your story include interesting, relevant and provocative information from your sources?
3. Writing Organization/Structure -- Is your story well organized? Did you use the appropriate structure for the content? Focus -- Is the main idea placed early in the story? Is the lead strong? Does the story maintain its focus? Clarity -- Is the writing clear? Is the story clearly told? Conciseness -- Do you use the language efficiently, or is the writing wordy? Fluency -- Does the story flow? Are transitions clear and well used? Storytelling -- How well do you write the story? Can you tell an interesting story? Audience awareness -- Does your story show an awareness of audience, its interests and needs?

Some students made audiovisual products or documentaries

Students struggle to create compelling scenes that make readers feel as though they are immersed in a story. So I show a short video -- some of the New York Times' Op Docs are great for this -- and have them write a scene from that. We share aloud and identify what is working well in each. It's real-time storytelling coaching.

Taking my students into a nearby cave is one successful strategy I use in teaching literary journalism. I assign them one of the six senses for them to track on our walk in the woods that leads into a cave. Sometime I put little strips of paper into a paper grocery bag, with the different sense on each slip. Then they draw out one slip of paper before we start our walk. At a certain point inside the cave, which has a rocky stream at its base, we stop. And we turn off our headlamps and stand or sit on the rocks in the dark and experience the cave and the darkness. The students write about that overall experience. I reference that trip throughout the semester asking to track the use of senses and incorporate that into their reporting and into their narratives and weave senses, when appropriate, into character, dialogue, action, sense of place, conflict, problem/solution, significant telling details and voice.

--Berkley Hudson

Term paper.

That's a difficult question to answer. Students pitch their own story ideas.

The final project which is an audio feature/documentary. The Audio Diary has also received positive feedback from the students. My name is Kim Fox. Feel free to include my name.

The Immersive I/Final Assignment

The Literature of Journalism Lisa Phillips (yes on sharing!)

For this assignment, you will spend time immersing yourself in a campus or community subculture, and you'll write an article about it.

We'll define subculture broadly (e.g., smokers, a soup kitchen, the early morning regulars at the Plaza Diner).

The article should employ several of the essentials of literary journalism: • Character • Setting • Plot • Theme • Voice • Structure

This assignment, in other words, is not mere observation. You'll need to find an interesting subject, something with a heartbeat and dramatic potential. You'll need to hang out long enough and often enough to get the raw material for a powerful, worthwhile article. You'll make choices about the extent to which you—the reporter—will get involved as a character/narrator in your account. Your presence may be, as Tracy Kidder and Richard Todd put it in *Good Prose*, “first person minor”: minimal, utilitarian, entering the narrative only as necessary to facilitate the reporting. It may be “first person major”: You become a central protagonist in the narrative. It may land somewhere in between.

- Length: 2,000-2,500 words. You may petition in advance of the deadline for a higher word count, but be prepared to make a strong argument.
- Sources: At least four. The normal “avoid conflict of interest” rules about friends and family don't have to apply, as long as you get out of your comfort zone and immerse yourself in a subculture that you're not a member of.
- This assignment will be done in two stages. You'll workshop the first version of your article, then you'll revise it according to workshop and instructor feedback.

**Please make sure your copy in the revision is sparkling clean. Because this is the final assignment for class, there will not be the opportunity to earn back points off for copy editing. Due Dates:

- Tuesday, 2/7: Pitches due. Submit to Blackboard and bring a printout to class.

- Tuesday, 4/10: Submit your article to Blackboard and print out the first page for class.
 - Revision: Rolling deadline depending on when your workshop takes place. See workshop schedule for your workshop day and due date.
 - Friday, 5/11 (final exam date): Bring a print out of a 500-word highlight from your article—a moment you're proud of—to class.
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The main assignment in the course is the two book chapter deadlines for students. These deadlines involve either in-depth reporting (narrative) or documentary photojournalism. Every student turns in her own work, but students work in teams (writer with a photographer). And there are students also working on podcasts or video projects in connection with what becomes a four-color book published through an imprint of our department and sold on Amazon.

The most successful assignment is a 5,000-word writing project on a topic of the students' choice.

The task most students like is to write profiles.

This year I've been experimenting with the in-class scene-writing exercises, especially this semester in the graduate class. We've been trying different variations of scene writing. The usual model is: 1 student is the interviewer, 1 student is the interviewee, 1 student writes information gleaned from the interview on the blackboard (or posts it to the class GoogleDrive folder). In the first exercise I had students work in pairs to write up scenes (200–300 words), post-interview. That tended to filter out some temptations to embellish beyond facts. The next time, students wrote scenes on their own. This led to some blatant leaps over the truth boundary, which I found fascinating to smoke out. These transgressions come out because I have students read their work out loud.

Anyway, by the time we get to the third exercise, students who previously indulged in embellishment have realized they can write perfectly good scenes using just the material they were given and nothing more.

I do have certain goals in mind. For the interviewer, I want her to establish a conversational tone with the subject. I want her to establish a good rapport, if possible. And I want her to be on the lookout for scene material. If the subject is talking about something that sounds like it might make for a good scene, I want the interviewer to burrow in and get more details. But I also don't want the interviewer to cut off the subject in mid-thought, because this could derail the interview in some way, and this stuff could be valuable too. So there's a bit of an art to swinging the subject back to the potential scene material without disturbing the flow of the interview.

Another goal is wanting students to be writing more. I have them write responses to the readings every week and send them to me the night before class. So that's eleven 250- to 300-word responses. And I want them to be writing scenes in class, quickly, on the spot, in order to get them writing, and thinking about writing, as if it were the most normal thing, rather than freezing up and worrying all the time. (Which, alas, despite my efforts to vaporize this fear, does not entirely go away.)

Turning an 6,000-word litjourn feature into a 4,000-word script for a documentary. The former tended to bore students somewhat and they would end up filling the word count with fluffy aimless descriptions. The script really got them motivated and made their descriptions much more targeted, focused and concise.

Two different assignments.

1) A Five Senses Essay that involves interviewing two people.

2) A narrative profile/feature story

Typically have students tackle a personality profile of an alumnus that can be used in a special publication for future students

Unclear what is required here. Students in this course submit a 5,000 word literary journalistic narrative. An example of a high distinction submission (original submission, unedited) has been forwarded to Mitzi.

Writing a crónica during the whole semester.

Algum trabalho que orientei? Se sim, indico o livro-reportagem "Perpétua", de autoria de uma ex-aluna, Maggie Paiva (que venceu os prêmios Expocom Regional e Nacional no Brasil, em 2017) / Some work I've led? If so, I indicate the "Perpétua" report book by a former student, Maggie Paiva (who won the Expocom Regional and National Awards in Brazil in 2017)

Book report: "O que o câncer não destrói" [<https://issuu.com/oqueocancernaodestroi/docs/livroreportagem>]

Comic: "(D)elas - Realmente como são" [<https://hqdelas.wixsite.com/realmentecomosao>]

A partir da leitura de uma entrevista de Eliane Brum, peço para os alunos encontrarem pessoas na rua - que nunca viram - e perguntarem apenas: "Me conte o que quiser sobre sua vida". O resultado é bem surpreendente. Thaís Furtado

Como se trata de uma disciplina específica do curso de Jornalismo, trabalhamos com aula teórica e práticas em sala de aula.

El más exitoso ha sido la asignación de un perfil periodístico. Las siguientes son las instrucciones de la asignación. Taller de Periodismo Interpretativo Objetivo: Elaborar un perfil periodístico con el propósito de retratar a un personaje relevante de la crisis ambiental de Quintero. El certamen 2 de Taller de Periodismo Interpretativo contribuye a la formación de la competencia genérica de la Universidad del Desarrollo Visión Analítica y al desarrollo de tres competencias específicas de la carrera de Periodismo: Búsqueda, selección e integración de información, Elaboración de productos periodísticos para diversos formatos y plataformas y Adaptación al entorno. Instrucciones -Pautear un personaje relevante en la crisis medioambiental que afecta a Quintero para ser retratado por medio de entrevistas al protagonista, fuentes cercanas y fuentes documentales. -El alumno debe seguir todas las etapas propias de la elaboración de un perfil periodístico: documentación, elección de fuentes, reporteo, escritura y edición final. -Fuentes: El texto debe contener como mínimo cinco fuentes personales y dos fuentes documentales (libros, recortes de prensa, estudios, etc). -Estructura narrativa: Deductiva (de lo general a lo particular), cronológica, bloques de escenas o combinación entre ellas. -Extensión del reportaje: Diez mil caracteres con espacios aproximadamente.

Produção de um livro reportagem.
--Daiany Ferreira Dantas

Textos atuais

Três coletâneas de perfis jornalísticos, uma, "Perfis do Semiárido", sobre pessoas comuns moradoras do semiárido baiano, publicada pela Editora da UNEB (Universidade do Estado da Bahia), onde trabalho como professora assistente desde 2006. As duas outras estão até hoje no prelo: uma foi realizada por alunos de uma faculdade privada, no curso de Jornalismo, em Salvador, sobre pessoas da região onde estava localizada a faculdade, "Perfis da Cidade Baixa", e a outra foi feita também na própria UNEB, após a primeira experiência, mas a respeito de lugares, em um projeto inspirado no filme de Eduardo Coutinho, "Edifício Master". O livro tem como título "Paisagens do Semiárido".

Uma prática de reportagem com alunos com temas que eles mesmos sugeriram.

Syllabi and more assignments:
<http://ialjs.org/ialjs-links/>

Lewis, Hanc, & Martinez, page 14
May 10, 2019