

COM4204: NEWS FEATURE WRITING

Effective Term

Semester A 2024/25

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

News Feature Writing

Subject Code

COM - Media and Communication

Course Number

4204

Academic Unit

Media and Communication (COM)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

EN4562 News Feature Writing

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

The best journalism engages as it informs. When articles succeed at this, they are often cast as feature articles. This course, the COM4204, aims to expand the skills acquired by students in News Writing and Reporting. It will teach students how to

write compelling features that look to the essence of news and illuminate it, by ways like embedding or interweaving facts with scenes and small stories that show rather than simply tell the information that is conveyed. Students are expected to gain knowledge of the structure and craftsmanship that make feature articles, such as profiles, seasonal, and critical features, a pleasure to read.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Discuss various kinds of journalistic practices, and critically analyze advantages and disadvantages of feature writing	x	x	
2	Understand good (and sometimes not that good) features		x	
3	Conduct interviews and research according to professional standards and write features which are accurate, unbiased, objective, and interesting		x	x
4	Write articles in good narrative structure, tone, style, and characterization		x	x
5	Use language properly in terms of accuracy, organization, precision, and style		x	

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures	Students will engage in lectures on the formats, story composition, and writing skills of different feature articles	1, 2, 5
2	Sharing	Students will engage in sharing of personal experiences in pitching, information gathering, idea formation, and feature story write-up	3, 4

3	Exercises	Students will apply principles and skills demonstrated in the classroom and develop feasible feature ideas and story development structure	2, 3	
4	Discussion	Students will compare and discuss pros and cons of feature approaches	2, 3, 4	
5	Presentation	Students will conduct a case study of a specific feature type	1, 2, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)
1	A profile feature	3, 4, 5	25	
2	An op-ed	3, 4, 5	15	
3	A current affairs feature	3, 4, 5	35	
4	A group presentation	1, 2, 4, 5	20	
5	In-class participation and performance	1, 2	5	

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Writing assignments (profile, op-ed and current affairs feature)

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The feature is well written and free of errors. The lead is clear, concise and interesting. The story is well organized and contains effective transitions, quotations, descriptions and anecdotes. It can be published by newspapers and magazines.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The feature contains only a few minor errors of style. The lead is enticing, and the body presents all the information for a comprehensive news story. The story is written in a cohesive, well-organized manner. The story is not as detailed, descriptive or interesting as an "A" story. A newspaper/magazine could publish the story after minimal editing.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The feature is superficial. The lead is too wordy and fails to clearly emphasize the latest, most interesting or most important aspects of the story. The story tends to be disorganized and contains many minor errors. Some parts have to be rewritten because they are repetitious, awkward or confusing. It could be published only after extensive editing.

Marginal (D)

The feature contains all the necessary facts, but those facts are presented so ineffectively that they would have to be rewritten before the story could be published. The story also may contain an unacceptable number of stylistic, spelling or grammatical errors.

Failure (F)

The feature could not be published by any publication and is so incomplete, confusing or erroneous that the facts in the story could not be rewritten and published.

Assessment Task

2. Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The presentation is well planned and analysed the given feature article(s) in a comprehensive and critical way. Presenters have conducted quality research, articulated clearly and actively interacted with other students in the classroom. They also share provoking personal observation and suggestions to improve the given feature. Summary is well written, original, has a focus, and reflects effort made by the whole team.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The presentation is well planned and analysed the given feature articles in a proper manner. Presenters make an effort to deliver their major points, but overall performance (such as presenting style and interaction with classmates) can be further improved. Summary is carefully written, but its analysis on feature's structure and content can be improved.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The presentation produces major points, but far from analytical. Presenters can only copy and rephrase what's already been covered in the features. Summary lacks substances to support the main theme.

Marginal (D)

The presentation produces minor findings regarding the given feature articles. Substantial rework needs to be done to deepen discussions and thoughts on feature idea, structure. No critical analysis in the summary.

Failure (F)

The presentation is poorly organized and fails to analyse the given feature article(s). The team has no findings at all.

Assessment Task

3. In-class participation and performance

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The student proactively participates in class activities and share provoking thoughts almost every week. The person can even lead class activities such as discussions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The student engages in the classes and contributes to class by offering ideas and questions, though some remarks can be improved.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The student participates in activities but can hardly reflect critical thinking.

Marginal (D)

The student participates in activities but replies and comments cannot respond to activity theme.

Failure (F)

The student rarely pays attention and never participate in any class activity.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

News, features, profile, human interest, structure and organization, writing skills.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	The Art and Craft of Feature Writing
2	Writing Feature Articles
3	Professional Feature Writing
4	On Writing Well

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Steps to Writing Well
2	The Art and Craft of Short Stories
3	The Year's Best Sports Writing
4	The best business writing
5	Keywords in News and Journalism Studies
6	The elements of style
7	The New Yorker
8	South China Morning Post
9	The New York Times