

**English 360**  
**Creative Non-Fiction: Literary Journalism**

**Instructor: Steven Cooper**  
407-361-5678

**Office Hours: By Appointment**

Course Description: The craft of the journalist meets the art of the novelist. This course will emphasize the practice of immersion reporting. You will learn not only how to immerse yourself in your subject but to emerge with an understanding that is uniquely yours: your challenge will be to make that understanding universal. How will you do that? We will practice sophisticated storytelling that employs passion, irony, wit, emotion, humility, audacity, and other tools in your writer's toolbox that give your writing not only a voice but a personality as well. As such, you will bring creativity to the truth (hence Creative Non-Fiction); you will find the facts as a journalist must, but you will layer in a keen sense of the human condition, as a novelist should. Ultimately, the hearty blend will make your stories relevant.

We will also study the documentary as a visual form of literary journalism. We will examine its ability to merge intimacy and research, to tell a story that has a beginning, middle, and an end, and a narrative voice throughout that is both authoritative and conversational. The documentary may serve as a model for how you approach the subjects you write about.

Our class will take on the feel of a workshop and, to some extent, a newsroom. You will be expected to discuss current events and their relevance (i.e. why stories matter, what people are talking about, under-reported issues, over-reported issues). You will also be expected to share your written work with other members of the class. There will be frequent in-class writing and critiques.

Text: Throughout our text, Intimate Journalism (ed. Harrington) and other examples, we will work toward your understanding of the definition of literary journalism. Readings are required. Careful, detailed reading of each assignment should be completed prior to each class and is essential to your successful class participation and vital to your grade. In fact, if your class participation (or lack thereof) suggests you've been skimming on the readings, I may deduct points from your grade individually. **Ultimately, I reserve the right to adjust your grade to reflect your level of class participation.** And there's always the possibility I might give a pop quiz on the reading at any time if I suspect the class of not preparing adequately for discussion. Keep in mind that you will draw from the readings to complete the assigned writings.

## Grading:

Writing Assignments 50%

Final Project 50%

Although your grade is a rather simple equation of two percentages, the final number can be significantly lowered by the following:

Late class work: If you miss a workshop deadline (this means having enough clear copies for the class workshop group on the appointed day), you lose 5 points from your overall average. The second deadline problem will result in ten more points. The third, 20 points, but by then it won't matter. No exceptions.

Late papers: I don't accept late papers under any circumstances. Papers must always be turned in at the beginning of class on the day assigned and in the assigned format. I accept hard copy only (no email attachments) in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1" margins.

Attendance: Since we only meet once a week, attendance is crucial. You are allowed one free absence. It is your responsibility to contact a classmate to find out what material you missed, so I suggest you swap contact info with at least one person in the class sooner than later. Your second absence reduces your final grade by an entire letter. Your third absence, no matter what the reason, means absolute failure of the course.

Tardiness: **Tardiness is unacceptable because it is disruptive.** If you are tardy please see me after class. If you are over 20 minutes late, please don't enter my classroom. Two tardies will equal an absence. After two, your over-all grade will be lowered.

Cell phones: Turn off your cell phones when you come to class. There is zero tolerance for cell phones going off in class. Points will be taken off your final grade if your phone does go off. And I will look upon you with serious chagrin if you choose to answer the call.

## Weekly Schedule

Aug 25 Introduction to course. Interview/Profile. Writing exercise.

Sept 1 Holiday/No Class

Sept 8 **Assignment Due: Interview/Profile**  
Read/Discuss

Readings for discussion (to be read before class): Orleans p. 45, Finkel p. 61.

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- Sept 15      Documentary
- Sept 22      **Assignment Due: Documentary Analysis**  
Reading: “The Road is Very Unfair” (E-RESERVE)  
Immersion Discussion  
Final Project Preview
- Sept 29      Off Schedule/No Class
- Oct 6        **Assignment Due: Immersion**  
Read/Discuss  
Final Project Pitching
- Oct 13      Readings: Blais p. 125, p.141  
The social/political observer. In class writing.
- Oct 20      **Assignment Due: Social/Political Observations**  
Read/Discuss  
Reading: “The Ga Ga Years” (E-RESERVE)
- Oct 27      Documentary
- Nov 3        **Assignment Due: Documentary Analysis**  
Readings: Franklin p. 97, Early p. 111  
In Memoriam Discussion
- Nov 10      **Assignment Due: In Memoriam**  
Read/Discuss
- Nov 17      Reading: “Apocalypse There” (E-RESERVE)  
Workshop For Final Project
- Nov 24      Documentary
- Dec 1        **Assignment Due: Documentary Analysis**  
Readings: Finkel p. 77, Ellerbee (E-RESERVE)  
In class writing: TV
- Dec 8        **Assignment Due: Final Project**  
Read/Discuss

## **Academic Honor Code**

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and is the heart of the academic life of Rollins College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

The following pledge is a binding commitment by the students of Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to all papers, quizzes, tests, lab reports, etc., the following handwritten abbreviated pledge followed by their signature:

**“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”**

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.