

Food Writing/Reporting

JOUR 4160/6160-001

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 11:20 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Room: 208 MJ

Fall 2018

Pamela Denney

Office: Meeman Journalism Building (Room 330)

Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 3:30 to 5 p.m. and by appointment

Phone: (901) 678-3095 (office)

E-mail: padenney@memphis.edu

Twitter and Instagram: memphis_stew

COURSE REQUIREMENTS**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Addresses the specialized niche of food writing by producing stories and reviews, both long and short form, and developing new media content for print and online publications.

PREREQUISITE:

JOUR 3120 and 3526

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- “Eat, Memory: Great Writers at the Table,” edited by Amanda Hesser. Published by Norton & Co., 2009. ISBN: 978-0-393-06763-7 (hard cover). Also, available in paperback.
- Gravy, Summer 2018 issue, No. 66. Published by Southern Foodways Alliance.
- Tuesday food section of The Commercial Appeal and Wednesday food section of The New York Times (Both are available on campus.)
- “The Associated Press Stylebook 2017” ISBN 046 509 3043.

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

- “The Food Lovers’ Guide to Memphis” by Pamela Denney. Globe Pequot Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-7627-8261-1 (paperback).
- “The Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South” by John T. Edge. Penguin Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1594206559 (hardback). Also available on Kindle.
- “Best Food Writing 2014” or (2015, 2016, 2017) edited by Holly Hughes. Published by Da Capo Life Long Books; 2014 edition. ISBN: 978-0-7382-1791-8 (paperback) ISBN: 978-0-7382-1792-5 (ebook).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Popularly referred to as the new rock and roll, food these days encompasses much more than what we put on our plates. For writers, the new bounty of consumer interest encourages story telling through the lenses of food culture, food history and the health of our planet. In this class, students will use descriptive narratives and new media to cover a range of topics, including restaurant reviews, food trends and the politics of what America eats. Field trips also will be on the menu, as students discover for themselves why Memphis is quickly becoming the South's most popular food destination.
- Assignments will be completed both in and outside the classroom, so attendance and participation in class are vital. Class time is also valuable for discussions, so please be on time. If you are late, it is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet.
- Here's how attendance works: I'm not interested in hearing excuses. You get **three free passes** during the semester. After you cash in your passes, missed classes are reflected in your final grade. For example, if you miss one additional class, your final grade drops a letter grade. If you miss two more classes, your grade drops again. So, if you miss six classes, your final grade drops two letters.
- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out missed assignments and/or deadlines for assignments. Do not count on me to answer texts, emails or Facebook posts about missed work. If you are unsure about deadlines, ask classmates or check the ecourseware drop box dates. Do not rely on assignment dates printed on the syllabus.
- Be sure to join the class Facebook page.
- To be a good writer, you need to be a good reader. Reading outside of class will be required regularly and will be basis of class discussions and possible quizzes.
- All assignments must be filed to the ecourseware drop box by midnight (11:59 p.m.) on the day they are due. **Late assignments will NOT be accepted.**
- All written assignments will be graded on content, story structure, word count, grammar, punctuation and AP style. **One point may be deducted from story grades for every mistake in AP style, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so edit your work carefully.**
- Assignments for food writing also may involve several components. You must complete all parts of the assignment to receive a grade. **Assignments that are incomplete will not be graded, and students will receive a zero.**
- And finally, rewrites will be required as needed. Rewrites that do not include the additional reporting discussed in editing notes will receive lower grades than the original stories.

OTHER ISSUES:

- Please remember that food writing is a vehicle for becoming better writers, reporters, story tellers and problem solvers. Yes, food writing is fun, but it is not frivolous. While food writing does not conform to strict rules of traditional newspaper journalism, it is at its heart narrative storytelling based on fact, accuracy, opinion, voice, observation and description. In other words, don't cut corners with research and reporting and remember this: **Opinion needs justification.**

- A class project will be group coverage of the Overton Square neighborhood in Midtown. Class members will work individually and together as a team to conceive and produce the neighborhood package with both print and multi-media components. The package will be published in an upcoming issue of Memphis magazine.
- All class writing assignments must be accompanied by one of the following multi-media components: Infographic, photograph, photo slideshow, video, audio or podcast.

GRADING:

- Course assignments, including an updated portfolio, will constitute 75 percent of semester grades. Students will sometimes work individually, in pairs and as a team, so peer grading may be used to help decide final grades for some assignments.
- In-class work, homework, quizzes and participation will constitute 25 percent of semester grades.

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

- Graduate students enrolled in JOUR6160 will be required to complete an additional assignment to be determined by the instructor and the student. This assignment will be included in the category of grades worth 75 percent of the total.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

“First we eat. Then we do everything else.” - M.F.K. Fisher, food writer

Part One: Writing for the senses with the senses

Week One: Course Introduction

- Aug. 28 What is food and food writing?
 Homework: Reading on ecourseware
- Aug. 30 How to become an expert? Explore, eat and read.
 In-class assignment: Wakelet on American chefs

Week Two: Description

- Sept. 4 Labor Day holiday. No class.
- Sept. 6 **Assignment 1 Due: Wakelets (Chefs and Neighborhoods)**
- Sept. 8 **Field Trip:** Downtown Memphis Farmers Market and Tasting at Carolina Watershed

Week Three: Photography & Premiere

- Sept. 11
- Sept. 13 Guest lecturer: Photographer Justin Fox Burks
 Homework: Read “Eat, Memory,” Chapters 1 (Illusions) and 2 (Discoveries)

Week Four: Photography & Premiere

Sept. 18

Sept. 20

Assignment 2 Due: Farmers Market slideshow

Week Five: Voice

Sept. 25

Sept. 27

Film: "City of Gold"

Homework: Read "Eat, Memory," Chapters 3 (Struggles) and 5 (Coming Home)

Week 6: Memory
Oct. 2 Film: "Cooked" Episode 1
Oct. 4 Homework: Read "Eat, Memory," Chapter 4 (Loss)
Assignment 3 Due: Food Memory

Week 7: Story Ideas
Oct. 9 **Field trip:** Overton Square
Oct. 11
Oct. 12 **Field trip (tentative):** Memphis Food and Wine Festival

Part Two: Eat the Street: Overton Square

Week 8: Restaurant Reviews
Oct. 16 Fall Break (Oct. 13-16). No class.
Oct. 18 **Field Trip: L'ecole Culinaire**
Homework: Watch "Cooked," episode 2 (Water) and 3 (Air)

Week 9: Restaurant Reviews
Oct. 23 In-class assignment: Food vocabulary
Homework: Watch "Cooked," episode 4 (Earth)
Oct. 25 **Assignment 4 Due: Chef Question and Answer or Top Dish**

Week 10: Restaurant Reviews
Oct. 30
Nov. 1 **Assignment 5 Due: Overton Square Projects**

Part Three: Food culture: A way to connect issues, people and communities.

Week 11: Food Communities
Nov. 6 **Field Trip:** Carnitas Village in Binghampton
Nov. 8 Guest lecturer: Emily Robinson (Edible Memphis/AMIK)
Homework: Watch "Cooked," episode 4: Earth

Week 12: Food Issues
Nov. 13 Film: "Soul Food Junkies"
Nov. 15

Week 13: Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 20
Nov. 22 No class.
Assignment 6 Due: Issue Story

Week 14: Portfolios: Update with stories
Nov. 2
Nov. 29 Critique portfolios in class.

Week 15:
Dec. 4 **Field Trip:** Pasta making class at Whole Foods
Dec. 6 Study Day

FIVE PILLARS FOR JOUR4160

- *Professionalism:* Students address publishing and promoting work on established blogs and publications and working directly with professional art directors and editors to publish a final project.
- *Writing:* Students write both complex stories for print, learning to integrate national sources, descriptive writing, and statistical information into their work, along with formats more appropriate for blogs and the web. Students also learn to write with humor, opinion, and a developed voice and to better understand how these writing and reporting techniques differ from more traditional journalism practices.
- *Multimedia:* Students use photography, slideshows, smartphone apps, podcasts and social media to reach the many different kinds of audiences interested in food.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students work independently, in pairs, and as an integrated staff for both print and multimedia projects, pitching ideas to editors and developing story packages with multiple components.
- *Media Literacy:* Students learn how to become experts in unfamiliar areas by immersing themselves in a specialized media and learning from guest lecturers working as writers, editors, and photographers in a specialized field. Food writing is a growing and popular news niche that demands writers who are informed about regional and cultural history, food politics and policies, specialized vocabulary, and tastemakers who set the trends.

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR4160:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically):

- Develop expertise in a specialized niche of news reporting by reading and analyzing books, newspapers, magazines and online formats.
- Develop a better understanding of how food writing represents both lifestyle and entertainment reporting and cultural and political trends.
- Continue to improve information-gathering techniques, including interviewing and research, through classroom exercises and story assignments.
- Be familiar with the journalism ethics governing food writing through classroom discussion and assignments.
- Learn to work as a team to develop an in-depth project for publication in a local magazine.
- Learn to separate fact from opinion by writing restaurant reviews and memoirs.
- Use multi-platform reporting tools, including digital photography, podcasts, social media and blogs.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies):

- Students take occasional quizzes on textbook content and other required readings.
- Students learn how to become experts in a specialized news niche.
- Students learn to develop, write, and edit multi-source stories for print and online both individually and as part of a team.
- Students complete assignments that require them to utilize multiple media, including podcasts, photography, and social media.
- Students monitor events, news and developments in food, both locally and nationally.
- Students produce a final project for publication in a local magazine, along with additional components for the publication's web format.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET:

Awareness:

- Students learn the importance of verification, attribution and accuracy in all completed projects.
- Students venture into new forms of narrative non-fiction, such as essays, memoirs, first-person experiences, and recipe development.

Understanding:

- Students learn the difference between traditional and new media by writing and posting stories and photographs in print and online publications.
- Students write assignments by identifying and developing individual voices (funny, confessional, relaxed, self-deprecating, approachable, etc.).

Application:

- Students produce content using digital cameras, phones, social media and other technologies vital to today's journalism.
- Students work together to produce a final project for print and online that meets professional standards.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DEADLINES:

Remember there’s a reason “DEAD” makes up half the word “deadline.” All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact your instructor privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

DIVERSITY:

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY:

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.