

MODULE: Reporting and Feature Writing (course code BAJH-RFW)

Griffith College Dublin – Journalism and Visual Media

Fall Semester

This module has no pre-requisites.

Introduction

This module develops and nurtures students' news report and feature article writing skills. It is designed to boost student's confidence in their report and feature researching, interviewing, self-expression and editing skills. Additionally it covers the areas of personal safety and freelance journalistic careers. The module also affords students the opportunity to explore contemporary media theory and practice related to the threats and opportunities afforded by online journalism.

Module Aims

This module aims to enable the student to:

- Produce high quality news reports and equip them with a practical and theoretical understanding of online and print based news reporting.
- Produce high quality feature articles and equip them with a practical and theoretical understanding of online and print based feature writing.
- Attain the skills required for successful journalistic interviewing.
- Take advantage of theoretical grasp of how the internet has and is changing journalistic content, presentation, audience and revenue streams.
- Pursue a career as a staff or freelance journalist conscious of issues of personal conduct and safety

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate the skills required to conceive of, research, write, edit and critically analyse their own high quality news reports.
- Demonstrate the skills required to conceive of, research, write, edit and critically analyse their own high quality feature articles.
- Understand the process of successful journalistic interviewing.
- Understand how to pursue a career as a freelance journalist and to understand the key points around journalistic health and safety issues.
- Critically analyse online journalistic content and online media trends, displaying an understanding of the opportunities for the practical application of theoretical analysis.

Indicative Module Content

News Report Writing:

The art of thinking and acting prior to writing draft one: primary and secondary sources; difference between features and news reports; learning to think before you write; finding the focus; good writing is good thinking; follow-ups; clustering; outlines; outlining trend stories; anecdotal leads. The perils of a 'News Values' approach. Types: fires, accidents, politics, science, finance, health, etc).

Feature Article Writing:

Difference between features and news reports; feature structures, planning, writing and sub-editing; style: target readers; types (home and international politics, opinion pieces, reviews, arts and culture, travel, fashion, health, motors, etc); principles and professionalism; freedom and responsibility.

Writing Well:

The 5 W's & H; the inverted pyramid; lead, impact, reaction and response, background, explication; how to fine-tune one's writing from draft one: show don't tell; basic rules on writing well; active V's passive; say what you mean; clear writing reflects clear thinking; journalistic style; self-editing.

Successful Interviewing:

Learning the steps as to what to do before, during and after an interview so as to ensure its success: research; preparation; thinking on your feet; question phrasing; note taking / recording; stalling; problems; pauses; procrastination; critical thinking.

Health & Safety:

"You are more important than the story". Moral issues, self-protection; the limits of reporting. How to report on public demonstrations: research-research-research; who are they in their own words; classic errors; being fair and balanced; health and safety guidelines.

Freelancing:

Analysis; pitching; time-management; contacts; widening the beat; getting paid. Soft/hard news; tabloid/broadsheet.

Creative Spaces:

The impact of online technologies on staff and freelance news and feature writers. Outdated and promising business models and revenue streams. Who pays what for what, when and how?

Citizen Journalism:

Conglomeration and the public sphere; online news reporting in flux; the phenomena of 'citizen journalism: opportunity or threat.

Assessment

This module will be assessed by two news reports and two feature articles (Continuous Assessment: 60%) and by a written exam (Exam: 40%).