

Honors Journalism midterm, Part 3

Please address the following questions and either share your response with me as a Google Doc.

What to include

What piece of writing (your news article or your feature article) do you feel best represents your work this semester and/or showed the most growth in you as a writer? Tell me which piece this is and write about it.

Think of where you were at the beginning of the semester as a journalistic writer and where you are now and consider your growth as a writer throughout the semester as well.

1. Reflect on the piece.

Explain why you chose the piece you did. **Write a brief reflection on it. (Approximately 5-10 sentences).** For instance, even if the article isn't as good as you wanted it to be, explain to me what techniques you were trying to use, how you approached problems you had when writing it. What you would do differently if you could do it over again. Etc. If you think the article is particularly good, explain your technique or how you made it so good. If you learned something more recently and there is evidence you've incorporated that skill into your repertoire and gotten better as a writer, tell me about it.

Here is an example that I would consider "A" work:

- The piece I choose to write about was my feature article on people who are addicted to shopping. I don't think it's my best piece this semester, but I included it to show my improvement from the beginning of the year to now. At the time that I wrote this, I didn't really know how to write a feature article. The quotes in this article were weak because my interviewing skills were weak. I asked a lot of yes/no (close-ended) questions. I also think that I could have picked a more unique topic than shopping, which is a pretty general. But there were a couple of positive aspects about this story. I liked the word choice that I had used and liked the ending quote. Since then, I have improved a lot in my interviewing skills by learning how to get a good interview from older staff members. I learned that I should ask concise questions to get the answers that I want and ask more open-ended questions. I also learned that a feature article needs an interesting lead and should be focused on fewer people with better quotes as opposed to using a lot of people and getting dumb quotes from them.

2. Consider your goals.

What do you want to get better at as a writer next semester? What are your strengths and weaknesses as a journalistic writer, and how will you address them? What do you like and not like about what you do? **Write a purpose statement (again, about a paragraph) in which you state your plans for the short-term.**

Here's an example that I would consider "A" work:

- For next semester one of my main goals is to get longer, better more interesting quotes in my stories. Part of my weakness as a journalist is that I'm kind of shy and uncomfortable talking to

people I don't know. I've gotten better at that this semester since you forced me to do it, but I still don't like it. However, I'm going to do my best to come up with better questions when I interview people and do more research ahead of time, so that when I do go interview people, I'm better prepared. I think this will help me be more comfortable when interviewing strangers. As far as getting better quotes, I'm going to try to focus on asking more open-ended questions and follow-up questions when I interview people. This should help make the quotes I use more interesting and less clichéd and make my articles more interesting to read.

3. Offer advice

What did you like and not like about this class. What do you like and not like about my teaching style. Be honest. Be constructive. Be fair. Think of this as a way to make the class better and to help me be a better teacher. **Make this at least a paragraph.**

Here is an example that I would consider "A" work:

- I don't really like this class that much. It's not personal. You're a good teacher. But the amount of work we have to do is too much. I know it's an honors class, but I feel like there are more assignments in this class than in my other honors English classes. You should make a policy to only have one quiz per week. Sometimes we have a style quiz and a current event quiz or a chapter quiz in the same week, but if you only had one, that would be easier for me. I took the class because I thought it would be easy to get a good grade, and it's not, and that's frustrating to me. Like I said, I think you do a good job, but you're kind of intense about journalism, which really isn't my thing. The suggestion I would give to you personally is to get grades back sooner on articles. Everything else comes back pretty fast, but articles seem to take a long time to get back sometimes. I know you have 60 to grade, but if you graded 10 per night, you could have them back in a week.