

Stiletto Boot Camp

This is a sample syllabus. Actual course topics and assignments may vary by instructor and class.

Week 1

Short service article. How to narrow your focus and choose your topic. Finding actionable information. Interviewing tips. How to write a short article.

Assignment: Write a 150-300-word short service article.

Week 2

Quiz. Testing your reader's knowledge. The structure and tone of a various types of quizzes.

Assignment: Write a 150-300-word quiz.

Week 3

The personal essay. How to mine moments in your life for content. Using global and political issues in your essay. Markets for personal essays.

Assignment: Write a 500-650-word personal essay.

Week 4

Full-length service feature and the cover letter. Incorporating practical information, resources, and advice into your article. How to look at the service columns of magazines as a model. The importance of providing several solutions to one problem. Writing for your target audience. Pitching vs. writing on spec.

Assignment: Write an 800-1200-word full-length service feature and cover letter.

Week 5

Human interest feature. Types of stories that make good human-interest features. Reporting and fact-checking. Structuring a human-interest feature.

Assignment: Write an 800-1200-word human-interest feature and cover letter.

Week 6

Q&A and pitch letter basics. The two kinds of Q&As: personal and professional. Formatting and editing your interview into a Q&A piece. The essential elements to a successful pitch letter. Pitch letter examples.

Assignment: Write an 800-1200-word Q&A and pitch letter.

Week 7

Writing and rewriting. The importance of self-editing. Strategies for rewriting.

Assignment: Rewrite and make-up assignments.

Week 8

Reading mastheads, contacting editors, etc. Sending out your pitch letter. Following up after your pitch. Getting an assignment. Turning in your work. Revising your work. Providing background material. Getting paid.

