

Narrative Journalism



Narrative journalism is a genre of feature writing that combines rigorous reporting with fiction-writing techniques and eschews dramatic, news-making events to focus on everyday life and ordinary people. The genre is not new – some scholars trace its beginnings to the days before mass-circulation newspapers. It flourished spectacularly in the 1960s and 1970s when the so-called “new journalists” deployed literary techniques to counter the staid reporting of the establishment press. Also known as literary journalism, immersion journalism, creative nonfiction, and even the new, new journalism, narrative journalism has continued to prosper as an alternative to the news industry’s glut of dumbed-down and formulaic news.

The narrative journalism course was developed by the late Deb Kaplan, who joined the UW Communication Department after a notable career as a narrative journalist at the Detroit Free Press, and died in 2006. Deb – who was inspired to “give voice to the voiceless” – believed in the use of immersion style reporting, and she worked in the fields with migrant workers and slept in a tent in homeless camps while researching her own stories. The class has continued to be taught by UW faculty in Deb’s spirit. It is open to majors in Communication and the Comparative History of Ideas (CHID) program.

CHID 459A