COM 3210 (Copy Editing)

**Supplemental Notes: Editing: Feature Stories**

Below are some basic guidelines for editing feature articles.

1. **Know the assignment.** Make sure you know what the story is about and the news questions that need to be answered. *Scan the story.*

2. **Check the opening of the story.** If it is weak, mark it and indicate the problem. Have the writer start with a soft lead that is an anecdote, a narrative or description.

3. **Check the nut graph (lead).** This should be the “lead,” stating why the subject is being profiled. It should be written almost like a standard news lead.

4. **Body.** In the body of the story, the writer should present additional anecdotes, examples, quotes and details that give the reader a sense of the subject.

5. **Support and Transitions.** Make sure examples are supported with a balance of *quotes* and *attributions* from both the subject (if a person) and people connected to the subject. Make sure quotes are meaningful. Attribute properly. For features, you may use *says* or *said* for attributions.

6. **Conclusion of Story.** End the story in one of the following ways:
   - Try to frame the story by repeating an image or phrase from the beginning or by completing an action begun earlier in the story
   - Find a way of restating the theme
   - End with a compelling quote, bit of description or anecdote

7. **Statements of opinion.** Anything that looks like reporter’s opinion needs to be deleted.

8. **Names, positions and titles.** Make sure that they are correct.

9. **Direct quotes and attributions.** Put the quote first, then who said it. Introduce attribution at the first natural break in the quote, usually at the end of the first sentence:
   - “Yadda, yadda, yadda,” said Jane Doe, a junior English major. “More yadda, yadda.”
   - “Blab, blab, blab,” Jones said. “More blab, blab.”

10. **Indirect quotations.** You will build articles with a combination of direct and indirect quotes that summarizes some information from sources. The best way to write indirect quotations is to *present the attribution first,* then report what the source said.

11. **Second references.** Full name and title the first time a person is mentioned. Last name for the rest of the story.

12. **Facts and numbers, dates and times.** Make sure that all are correct according to AP style.

13. **Short Sentences.** Sentences should average 20 words.

14. **Spelling and Punctuation.** Use the proper copyediting mark for misspelled words.