

Professor Sarah Mesle

Writ 340: Writing for Editors and Publishers

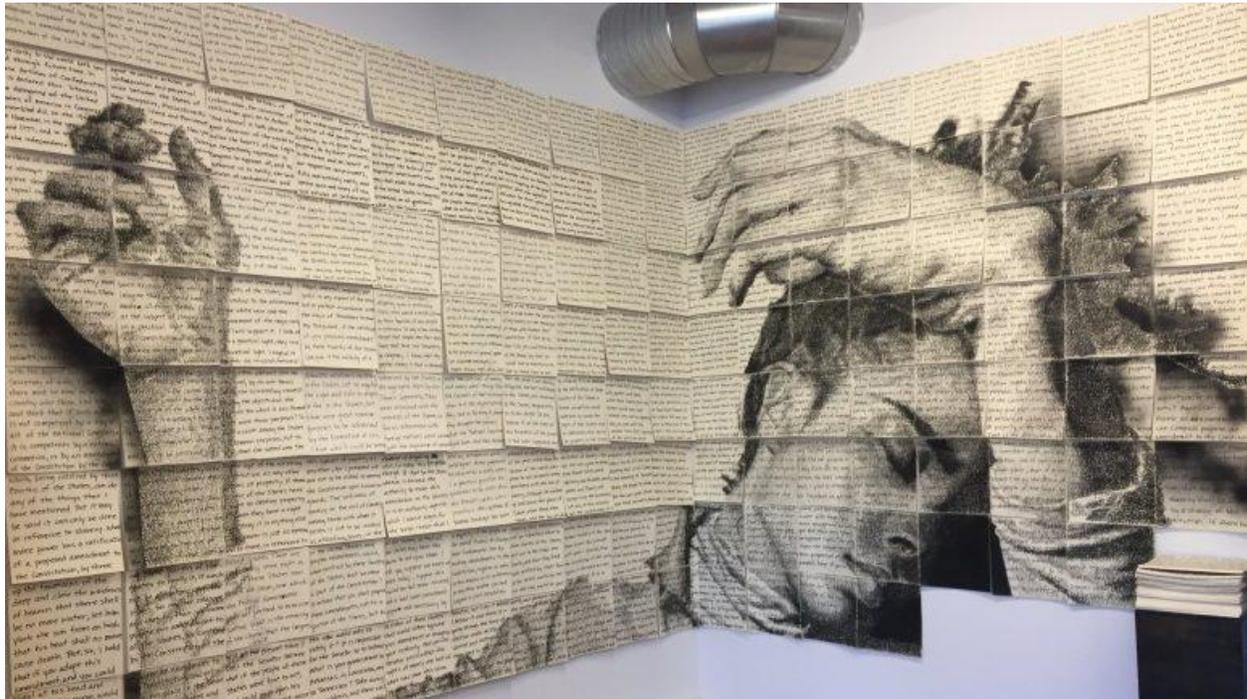


Image: [Kenturah Davis](#)

Course description:

Designed for students who imagine careers in writing, editing, and publishing, these sections approach the craft of writing through the real-world questions that emerge when moving an author's ideas into successful publication. While students taking this class will develop the writing skills that all Writ 340 courses foster — awareness of audience, genre, revision, and evidence — these sections will develop these skills through situations faced by editors. Students will produce their own critical writing, and they will also produce writing unique to editors: solicitations, readers reports, publishing memos, etc. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate real pitches and questions as well as to produce their own.

This class is framed for all students hoping to increase their practical knowledge of writing in the world. Students from all disciplines are welcome in the class, and should expect a classroom experience that focuses on rigorous and fine-grained attention to the aesthetics of language, rhetoric, and audience. Thus this class will be of help for both students in editorial programs as well as those in non-humanities majors who hope to write for broader audiences.

Readings for the course will primarily be drawn from long-form journalism published during the semester in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Economist*, as well as from special interest

short-form venues (*The Root*, etc.). This course will devote approximately a quarter of its assignments to editorially specific writing: header notes, readers reports, etc. The remainder of the writing assignments will run parallel to assignments conventionally assigned in Writ 340 Arts and Humanities or Social Science Classes: deeply researched and conceptually rich argumentative engagements. The writing, revising, and peer-review process will be framed, through ancillary assignments that focus on real world contexts — we'll learn about research, prose style, audience address, and argumentation by examining how specific different publications employ those skills.

Students who would like to enroll should write a couple of sentences explaining why — interest matters more than experience! — and email them, along with your student ID number, to Professor Mesle at smesle@usc.edu