**JRN 160 Intro to Media Writing**

**Observation piece**

**Purpose of the assignment:** Honing your observation and note-taking skills and learning to use descriptive language to tell a story in a feature article.

**Outcome:** A 450-word feature article about an individual at work.

**Guidelines:** You will identify a subject for your story and accompany them as they do their job. Choose someone whose job requires physical movement. (Hint: Avoid situations where your subject would be sitting in front of a computer terminal.)

Reporting:

* Closely observe what they are doing, take copious notes of everything you see, hear and smell.
* If you own a tape recorder or smart phone with recording capabilities, bring it along to record sounds and conversations.
* Ask questions about the work. If there’s something you don’t understand, make sure you ask for an explanation (if you can’t understand it, neither will your readers).
* Ask questions about your subject’s background (hometown, upbringing, education).
* Ask questions to help you understand what your subject does at work and their motivations. What do they love/hate about their work? How many hours a day do they work? What would be their ideal job? Is their job challenging? How?

Writing:

* Your article should incorporate the information you gather by observing and by interviewing.
* Include a maximum of two quotes by your subject. Focus instead on using description to tell the story.
* Use a variety of sentence lengths. Short sentences suggest fear, anxiety, excitement. Longer sentences evoke thoughtfulness and quiet.
* Any good story will have a pivotal moment, emphasize this.
* Reinforce what you see by using specific examples. SHOW, DON’T TELL. Describe what you see and be as specific as you can.
* Your audience is the people of Hamden, Conn.
* Revise your article carefully and review it for AP Style.