

Magazine Editing & Production
Journalism 61-325, Section A01/Clow 128
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:40 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.
Fall 2006

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11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Required Texts:

“The Magazine From Cover to Cover,” Johnson & Prijatel, NTC Publishing Group.

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.

Two magazines—one that you like and one that you don’t. (Bring to every class).

Course Content

The premise of this course is that the key to success for a magazine is its ability to make connections: between authors and readers, between verbal and visual content, between advertisers and audience. While connections are important in any kind of human enterprise or journalistic endeavor, magazines are a special case, and the people who work for magazines must be able to negotiate across multiple and simultaneous boundaries. For example, magazine readers often expect a publication to provide both an easy browsing experience and greater depth than they would find in a newspaper. This means that magazine editors need to be expert in the use of both graphic and linguistic elements. Similarly magazines typically have a smaller universe of advertisers to draw on than do newspapers, and so magazine editors and other staffers have special challenges they must mediate to maintain objectivity for the sake of readers while developing successful commercial opportunities for their other paying customers.

Because of the unique challenges of this field, magazine editors need an unusual combination of skills across a variety of journalistic disciplines. One of the most important skills an editor needs is the ability to work as a part of team, to compensate for the fact that no one is equally adept in all areas.

In this class, we will explore the world of magazine journalism by developing a publication from concept to prototype and—if possible—to finished product. This will give you the chance to participate in the creation of a magazine and learn and apply the skills that are used in this exciting medium.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will have been given the chance to learn how to:

- Analyze the market environment for a magazine.
- Plan and develop content through the prepress stages of production.
- Assign and critique work from others.
- Contribute your skills to the successful publication of a magazine.

Grades

Your final grade will be based upon your performance on:

- A proposal and prototype for a new magazine based on market research and developed as part of a team (400 points).
- Participation, including lab exercises, quizzes, recitations and class preps (200 points).
- An editing project, in which you make an assignment, provide feedback and produce finished pages (200 points).
- A creative contribution, most likely based on an editor assignment, (100 points).
- A final exam in which you assess the work of the class (100 points).

Total possible points are shown in parentheses, and your final grade will be based on the following 1,000 point scale.

A	930 to 1,000	C	700 to 759
AB	890 to 929	CD	650 to 699
B	810 to 889	D	600 to 649
BC	760 to 809	F	000 to 599

You must complete each of the graded assignments. Even if you have enough points that you could receive a passing grade for the course without turning in a particular assignment, you must still complete that assignment. Otherwise you will receive a grade of incomplete for the course.

The cutoff points for grades are not negotiable. In other words, an 889 will translate into a B and will not be rounded up to an AB. It is possible that you will come within a handful of points for a higher grade, but if you wish to receive that higher grade, you must earn it, which you can do by putting maximum effort into each assignment.

Because of the importance of careful writing, grades will be reduced for any and all manner of errors, including spelling, grammar, style and factual inaccuracy. Missed deadlines will also lead to reduced scores.

There is a certain amount of subjectivity involved in grading written work. The following guidelines will give you some indication of what is expected of you.

A—Your writing is marked by clarity and originality. It highlights key points in a manner appropriate to the subject. Assignment is written in idiomatic English with no factual errors, no or few AP style errors and no or few grammatical errors.

B—Your writing is complete and clear. Major points are addressed. Assignment is written in idiomatic English with no factual errors, no more than minor AP style errors and no more than minor grammatical errors.

C—Your writing is rough, with problems such as unclear focus, inappropriate word choice, choppy phrasing, multiple AP style errors or significant grammatical errors. One or more key facts are left out, and unfair or libelous connotations are suggested.

D—Your writing does not meet the minimum standards for the course for one or more of the following reasons: major or multiple factual errors, significant mistakes in AP style or grammar, misleading implications, sloppy presentation.

F—Your writing is of extremely poor quality with problems such as misspelled words, repeated grammatical mistakes and extensive factual errors.

Dealing With Uncertainty

We will be starting from scratch in our attempt to create new publications, and we won't really know what the destination is until we get there. In other words, we will be dealing with a great deal of uncertainty throughout the semester. This experience will be useful for you because it will simulate the workplace. On the other hand, it may create an uncomfortable amount of stress.

Here's how to deal: Be patient but be persistent.

You will need to be patient with yourself and with others throughout the semester. At times it will feel like we are trying to hit a moving target, and in the face of that kind of challenge you cannot afford to waste energy getting upset at your shortcomings or those of your classmates (or of your instructor). At the time, it's important not to get discouraged when we encounter setbacks or delays. A clever magazine editor can always find shortcuts or workarounds to get a project back on track. Some of the best innovations are the result of desperate attempts to improvise through potential disaster. You will be surprised at the solutions that you can come up with when you really have to pull something out of your hat.

Magazine Proposal & Prototype (400 points)

Student teams will develop an idea for a new magazine. This proposal will be supplemented by an audience analysis and market assessment based on tools and techniques that we work on in class. There will be a written report that includes an abbreviated business plan with budget, an editorial plan, a letter from the editor, audience analysis, competitor analysis, advertiser analysis, circulation analysis and a staffing plan.

You will be graded according both to the success of your group and your individual contributions to the project, which you will be expected to document. Students who do not contribute their fair share to the project may see points reassigned from them to others in the group.

Class Participation (200 points)

You should plan to be in class every day because 20 percent of your final grade will be based on things such as class preps (homework), lab exercises, quizzes and discussion. Do not expect to be able to make up assignments that you miss or to get credit for those that you do not hand in on time.

Please do not be shy about expressing your doubts or concerns about how the course is going or where your group project is headed. We will have a lot of leeway about where we take this course, but it's vital that all students contribute their thoughts and ideas.

Editing Assignment (200 points)

Once we have some ideas for magazines, each student will make an assignment to be carried out by another student. The "editor" will follow through on this assignment, providing feedback and creating finished pages in InDesign.

Creative Contribution (100 points)

Based on an assignment from another student (as described above), each member of the class will develop either a verbal or visual contribution to the magazine. Possibilities include articles, photos, cartoons and infographics.

Final Exam (100 points)

There will be a final exam, in which each student will assess the work of the class by commenting on the magazine prototypes that have been developed.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat. The university has rules and procedures that could lead to severe disciplinary action, including expulsion, for passing off someone else's work as your own, which is sometimes called "plagiarism" and sometimes called "copying."

The Difference Between College and TV

College courses are not television programs. In other words, you should not switch your attention on and off when you pass through the doors of the classroom. A course can engage your mind for the entire semester, and much of your learning will occur outside of class meeting times. Some of this will occur on your own, but you should also interact with your instructor, either during breaks, after class or during his office hours.

In the classroom, don't assume the role of a passive consumer of information. Class time will be more enjoyable, and will pass more quickly, if you engage with the material by, for example, taking notes, entering into class discussion or challenging points that you don't agree with.

Remember, the only dumb question is the one you don't ask.

Special University Services

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to students with special needs. Contact the Dean of Students at 424-3100 (voice) or 424-1319 (TTY).

The Web site is <http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm>. Information related to requests for special accommodations or arrangements will be confidential and shared with relevant University personnel on a "need to know" basis.

Course Calendar

The following schedule is intended as a guide and may be subject to change. Any revised due dates will be announced in class with ample warning.

DATE	TOPIC	READING	SKILLS/METHODS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
9/7	<i>Course introduction</i>	<i>None.</i>	<i>Assembling the team.</i>	<i>LAB: magazine about me.</i>
9/12	The magazine industry.	MPA Handbook06, from URL A.		HW: Sample mags and a fact. LAB: concepts & launches.
9/14	<i>Magazine startups.</i> <i>Guest speaker.</i>	<i>MPA Handbook06, from URL A.</i>		HW: Questions.
9/19	Audience research	URL B		LAB: market analysis: RAC.
9/21	<i>Competitor research.</i>	<i>Chapters 1 & 2.</i>		<i>LAB: magazine profile.</i>
9/26	Guest editor lecture.	Chapters 3 & 4.		HW: Questions.
9/28	<i>Magazine concepts & magazine content.</i>	<i>Chapters 5 & 8.</i>	Editorial matrix.	<i>Team magazine proposal: concept draft.</i> <i>Lab: making the assignment.</i>
10/3	Guest editor lecture.			HW: Questions.
10/5	<i>Advertiser research</i>			
10/12	Magazine staffing.	Chapter 7.		LAB: direct mail.
10/17	<i>Media kits.</i>			<i>LAB: media kit.</i>
10/19	Business planning.	Chapter 6.		
10/24	<i>Editing & coaching.</i>			
10/26	Magazine design.	Chapter 9.		
10/31	<i>Covers.</i>			<i>Creative contribution.</i>
11/2	Tables of content.			Editor feedback.
11/7	<i>Typography.</i>			<i>LAB: Heads & type.</i>
11/9	Magazine production.	Chapter 10.	InDesign.	
11/14	<i>Imposition.</i>			
11/21	Layouts & grids.			
11/23	<i>Magazines & the law</i>	<i>Chapter 11.</i>		
11/21	The future of the medium.	Chapter 12.		Finished pages.
11/28	<i>Promotion.</i>			
11/30	Prototype.			
12/5	<i>Prototype.</i>			
12/7	Prototype.			Personal evaluation.
12/12	<i>Presentations.</i>			Prototypes.
12/14	Feedback (final)			

URL A: <http://www.magazine.org/>

URL B: <http://www.mrmagazine.com/30notable.html>