

Journalism 417, Magazines and Magazine Editing

Fall 2011

10 a.m. to 12 p.m. TR

2111 Vilas Hall

Office Hours: 12 to 1 p.m. M and by appointment

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Introduction

J417 takes an integrated, in-depth approach to magazine management, writing, editing and design. It covers the magazine industry from both the editorial and business ends, bringing together journalism and strategic communication students. Participants in the course should be prepared to take an open-minded approach, as they are expected to understand all facets of the industry while also applying extra focus and effort in their particular areas of interest.

Goals

Through your work in this course, you should develop:

- knowledge of magazine history, operations and effects
- finesse in working in small and large groups to produce superior work
- comfort with intense deadline pressure
- time management skills and the ability to analyze and complete multiple tasks
- ability to develop clean, clear and engaging magazine articles, designs and support pieces
- research skills
- familiarity with print layout and Web editing software, ranging from minimal to extensive depending upon your interests
- finely tuned critical thinking skills

Expectations

J417 is unlike most other courses on campus. You are asked not only to master conceptual materials, but also to conquer a dizzying array of tasks. You should expect to go beyond the benchmarks of four hours of work inside class and eight hours of work outside class that would normally accompany a four-credit course. I predict your time commitments will exceed those benchmarks in many weeks and could tax your dedication at critical points, such as the two weeks before the magazine deadline.

I write this not to scare you but to give you a realistic working vision before you commit to this course. If you have other heavy demands on your time this semester, it might not be the right time for this course. If you're able to give it multiple hours and your full attention, by all means set sail with the rest of us.

The number of hours and the higher stress levels are the downside to our approach to the course. The upside is far more important. As conceived, this course should give you a depth and breadth of the field that will seriously prepare you for professional work. We will operate with high expectations and these will translate into useful, sellable skills for you. I hope they'll also translate into a well-rounded critical eye applicable not only to magazine work but also across all fields.

In short, this is going to be an exciting ride. Sometimes thrilling, sometimes scary but always unfolding in anticipation. I'm as much a passenger on this ride as you are. I hope to serve as the kind of guide that will help make this the capstone experience you deserve. My door is always open to you for additional

help or questions. I'm happy to respond to phone calls, IMs and e-mail. Please understand, however, that I'm in the business of balancing teaching and other commitments, including other work and home life. I'll do my best to help you whenever I can, but at some points other obligations will have to take priority. You can count on e-mail responses between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., but if you send a message after that, I might not get to it until the following morning. Also, please don't give my cell number out to other journalism students.

Components

This course breaks down into the following weighted elements that constitute your final grade:

- magazine position: 30%
- group research project: 10%
- individual story: 20%
- multimedia piece(s): 10%
- alternative form: 5%
- quizzes: 5%
- professionalism: 20%

Assignments

Because of the integrated nature of this class, the range of assignments will vary greatly from student to student. Each student will produce stories for the magazine, contribute to a group research project and take quizzes. Beyond that, however, everyone's tasks and pieces will vary based on how you choose to specialize. See the handout on magazine positions for more information on the specific tasks expected of each contributor to the class.

All assignments must be turned in by the deadline announced in class. Some positions will carry earlier deadlines than others. For instance, the public relations director will be required to turn in his or her plan weeks before the magazine, while the art director's work cannot be judged in full until the magazine is completed.

Please turn in typed, double-spaced pages for any piece of writing. I give length limits and observe them closely.

Grades

Your grade in the course will be virtually impossible to gauge before the first week of December, when the bulk of your work is due in final form. I can give you thoughts on your professionalism grade at any time, but that's just one facet of your final grade.

You'll find your work graded in a range of 0 to 100. I work "up" and "down" from a starting average grade. In other words, you start with a 70 by virtue of doing the work and turning in the assignment. You can earn a higher grade by demonstrating strong effort, creativity, thoroughness, etc. You can earn a lower grade with poor strategy, spelling mistakes, factual inaccuracies, missed opportunities, etc.

I grade based on whether your work is professional quality for your current level. Given that, you should consider these guides:

93 – 100:	professional quality in current form with few or no revisions
88 – 92:	professional quality with minor work
80 – 87:	solid elements; professional quality with some rehabbing
75 – 79:	some serious flaws but other strengths; professional quality with reasonable work
67 – 74:	major problems; needs overhaul before being professional quality
59 – 66:	critical errors; couldn't be considered professional quality without dramatic change
0 – 58:	work not completed or lacks merit overall

You earn no points by failing to turn in an assignment, turning work in past the deadline or missing a class during which an assignment is given, critiqued or submitted. **In other words, never miss this class or the deadlines given. No makeups are offered, except in the event that:**

1. you have an excused absence (e.g., serious illness documented by a health care provider or a death in the family) **and**
2. you notify me of the absence in advance

If you engage in anything aptly labeled “academic misconduct,” including plagiarism, stealing ideas or fabricating sources, you automatically will earn an “F” as your final course grade. Communicators have nothing if they do not have integrity. (<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>)

Your final course grade is determined by the percentage you earn of the total points available for the course. Although we will remain flexible to account for unforeseen issues, the final grade scale should roughly be:

93% - 100%	=	A
88% - 92%	=	AB
80% - 87%	=	B
75% - 79%	=	BC
67% - 74%	=	C
59% - 66%	=	D
0% - 58%	=	F

Tools

To successfully complete this course and get everything you should from it, you need to acquire and use the following (books available at the University Book Store):

Required Readings

- Johnson, S., and Prijatel, P., *The Magazine from Cover to Cover*. (Oxford University Press).
- ASME, *Best American Magazine Writing of 2010*. (Columbia University Press).
- bookmarked readings at <http://delicious.com/kbculver/417>
- MPA, *The Magazine Factbook*. (MPA, 2011-12). (Download PDF bookmarked on Delicious; iPad app version available but incomplete)

Highly Recommended for All

- Clark, RP. *Writing Tools*. (Little Brown).

Highly Recommended for Design Team

- Cohen, S. *The Non-Designer's Scan and Print Book*. (Peach Pit Press).

Media

- daily local and national newspaper
- daily local and national newscasts
- information-based Web sites
- weekly and monthly magazines (as many as you possibly can)

Technical

- flash drive, 4 GB minimum

Schedule

Note: You must have reading assignments *completed* by the class date for which they are listed.

	Topic Covered	Reading Assignment Due	Assignment Due
Week 1 9/6 T	Course intro Discussion of magazine positions and focus Group project discussion and assignments Position assignments Editorial philosophy discussion	Johnson, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 delicious.com/kbculver/417	Curb review Editorial philosophy ideas
R	Decision day: What we will be Lecture: Magazine industry	Johnson, Chapter 8, 11 ASME: Theocracy and Its Discontents; The Last Abortion Doctor	
Week 2: 9/13 T	Lecture: Reporting, interviewing & writing	ASME: The Cost Conundrum delicious.com/kbculver/417	Quiz 1
R		Magazine Handbook Johnson, Chapters 2, 6, 12	
Week 3: 9/20 T	Lecture: Marketing magazines	ASME: Still Life delicious.com/kbculver/417	
R	Proposal reviews	ASME: A Death in Texas	Deadline calendar Individual story and multimedia proposals
Week 4: 9/27 T	Story Analysis (all 4)	delicious.com/kbculver/417 ASME: Top Ten State Fair Joys	Quiz 2

R	Madison Magazine visit	Johnson, Chapters 9, 10 ASME: Vanish	
Week 5: 10/4 T	Lecture: Verifying accuracy	ASME: The Deadly Choices at Memorial delicious.com/kbculver/417	Companion multimedia plan
R	Lecture: Digital and mobile		Quiz 3 Individual stories: lead plus outline of <i>completed</i> reporting (bring 3 copies)
Week 6: 10/11 T	Story meetings (half meets, half has release for reporting)		
R	Story meetings (half meets, half has release for reporting)		
Week 7: 10/18 T	No class – writing time		
R	Training: Final Cut Pro		Individual stories: first full draft
Week 8: 10/25 T	Working session		
R	No class – reporting time		
Week 9: 11/1 T	Working session		Individual stories: final draft
R	Guest speaker		Multimedia content for review
Week 10: 11/8 T	Working session		Alternative story form completed
R	Working session		
Week 11: 11/15 T	Working session		Multimedia completed
R	Working session		
Weekend 11/19 or 11/20 (class decides date)	Mandatory full-magazine proof session		
Week 12: 11/22 T	Magazine Deadline Day		The whole shebang

R	No class – Stuff your turkey		
Week 13: 11/29 T	No class – final research time		
R	Guest speaker: breaking into magazine jobs		
Week 14: 11/6 T	iPad Project findings: Business and Editorial		
R	iPad Project findings: Design and Online		
Last class: 12/14 T	Final class meeting		