What is “literary reportage”? Sometimes called “literary journalism” or the “literature of fact,” it might best be thought of as the practice of weaving characters, reporting, research and stories together, in a work with scenes and dialogue, which appeals to the general reader. To my mind, literary reportage is less a subject one studies than it is a toolkit—a collection of practices, insights, techniques and formulas, embodied in wonderful literature, to help a writer explore what he/she cares about, and then share it in the most aesthetically pleasing way possible. Literary reportage is valuable to the extent that you can use it, and it is in this spirit that this course operates. It has several goals.

First, we will read some significant works of literary reportage and discuss how you might use their strategies to become better writers.

Second, we will discuss the context in which these works were published, with special attention to the role particular editors and publications played. Anyone who has worked in the industry knows that editors are at least as important as writers, and many of you will at some point in your careers have editorial roles. We’ll explore how editors have navigated 20th century American culture at magazines like The New Yorker, Esquire, The Village Voice, New York, and Harper’s.

Third, every week you will write short responses (3-4 paragraphs) to that week’s readings. Show me you have read and thought about them carefully, whether in relation to your project, that week’s readings, or the course in general (or all three!). The goal is to appropriate, not regurgitate. Like the tradition of literary reportage, these readings belong to you. Read them like bandits searching for strategies, ideas, inspiration. All responses must be posted by 11 pm Wednesday night.

Fourth, you will explore your projects-in-progress. Each week, 2-3 of you will make a short (15 minute), informal presentation whose goal is to spark a discussion and acquaint your colleagues with your ideas.

Fifth, you will conclude the course with a memo in which you evaluate your first semester, assesses the state of your thesis project, looks forward to your second semester, summer and third semester, and set out a reading and research plan.
Assignments/Grades
1. Weekly reading response – 30%
2. Class participation – 20%
3. Project presentation - 20%
4. Final Memo - 30%

Attendance
More than two absences will lower your grade; more than three will make it difficult to pass the course. Absence on a presentation day is particularly heinous. Email me in advance if you can't make a class.

Books
Joan Didion, *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*
Joseph Mitchell, *Up in the Old Hotel*
Gay Talese, *Fame and Obscurity*
Lillian Ross, *Reporting Always*

Schedule
Week 1 – What Is Literary Reportage?
- DUE: One page list of project ideas. Max three sentences per project. Make 15 copies.
- Daniel Boorstin, “Introduction” to *The Image: An Introduction to Pseudo Events*, 1961
- Nora Ephron, “Introduction” to *Wallflower at the Orgy*, 1970
- Lee Gutkind, "The Five Rs of Creative Nonfiction,” 1996
- Calvin Trillin, “Introduction” to *Killings*, 1984
- George Orwell, "Why I Write," 1946

Week 2 – Early American Literary Reportage
- R.H. Dana, “Departure,” “First Impressions,” “Flogging,” *Two Years Before the Mast*, 1840
- Louisa May Alcott, *Hospital Sketches*, 1863
- Walt Whitman, *Memoranda During the War*, 1875
- Jacob Riis, “Genesis of the Tenement,” *How the Other Half Lives*, 1890
- Stephen Crane, “The Men in the Storm,” “When a Man Falls, a Crowd Gathers,” 1894

Week 3 - What is a “Process” Piece?
- Susan Sheehan, “Ain’t No Middle Class,” The New Yorker, December 11, 1995
Week 4 - The New Yorker
- New Yorker Prospectus, 1925
- “Church and State,” memo from Harold Ross to Raul Fleischmann (April 17, 1926)

Week 5 – Lillian Ross
- Introduction to Reporting, 1981
- “How Do You Like It Now, Gentlemen?”, 1950
- “The Yellow Bus,” 1960

Week 6 – Profiles
- Gay Talese, “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold” Esquire, April 1966 [annotated version]

Week 7 - Covering the City
The Village Voice
- Dan Wolf, “Forward,” The Village Voice Reader
- Geoffrey Stokes, “Forward,” The Village Voice Anthology
- Norman Mailer, “Quickly,” “The Hip and the Square”
- Howard Smith, “Full Moon over the Stonewall,” July 3, 1969

New York Magazine
- Adam Moss interview
- Pete Hamill, “The Revolt of the White Lower Middle Class,” 1969
- Barbara Goldsmith, “La Dolce Vita,” 1968

Week 8 - Harold Hayes and Esquire
- George Lois, “Not Like Us: George Lois on Esquire’s Glory Days,” 2006 (Daily Beast TV)
- Norman Mailer, “Superman Comes to the Supermarket,” November 1960 (Esquire Podcast)
- James Baldwin, “Fifth Avenue, Uptown,” July, 1960
- Gina Berriault, “The Naked Luncheon,” March 1966
- James Baldwin, “How to Cool It,” 1968
- Jean Genet, “The Members of the Assembly,” 1968
- Gary Wills, “Martin Luther King is Still on the Case,” August 1968 (Esquire podcast)
- Nora Ephron, "A Few Words on Breasts," 1972 (Esquire podcast)

**Week 9 – Joan Didion**
- Joan Didion, “Why I Write,” 1976
- “Preface” to Slouching Towards Bethlehem
- "Goodbye to All That,"1967
- "Slouching Towards Bethlehem,"1967
- “On Keeping a Notebook,” 1966
- “The White Album,” 1968
- “Holy Water,” 1977

**Week 10 – Gay Talese**
- The Bridge (“Part Two” in Fame and Obscurity), 1964

**Week 11 - Tom Wolfe and the New Journalism**
- Gay Talese, “Joe Louis: The King as a Middle-Aged Man,” 1962
- Breslin, Digging JFK Grave Was His Honor. 1963
- Breslin, “A Death in Emergency Room One,” 1963
- Tom Wolfe
  - “The Kandy-Klored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby,” 1963

**Week 12 - Harper’s and Submersion Journalism**
- Henry J. Raymond, “A Word At The Start,” June 1850
- Lewis Lapham, “Unveiling a New Magazine in an Old Tradition,” Feb 1984
- Adam Davidson, “Out of Iraq,” Harper’s, February 2005
- Barbara Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed,” Harper’s, January 1999

**Week 13 - Multimedia Literary Reportage**
- Lawrence Wright, “My Trip to Al-Qaeda”
- David Hare, “Via Dolorosa”
- Robert S. Boynton, “Abduction”

**Week 14 - December 15**
- Viewing of the movie version of Joe Gould’s Secret (2000)
- Final Memo Due

**Presentation Schedule**
September 14 - Alexander, Jerad & Brandstein, Benjamin
September 21 - Cashmere, Daniel & Dhanesha, Neel
September 28 - Gates, Tracy & Green, Spencer
October 5 - Hasan, Maham & Jakobsen, Søren Steensig
October 12 - Norman, Charlotte & Nwangwa, Ngozi
October 19 - Sims, Karen
October 26 - Stauffer, Rainesford & Madyson Luebke

November 2 - Alexander, Jerad & Brandstein, Benjamin
November 9 - Cashmere, Daniel & Dhanesha, Neel
November 16 - Gates, Tracy & Green, Spencer
November 30 - Hasan, Maham & Jakobsen, Søren Steensig
December 7 - Norman, Charlotte & Nwangwa, Ngozi & Madyson Luebke
December 14 - Sims, Karen & Stauffer, Rainesford