GA-1019 Editor’s Vision 2022

New York University
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
Syllabus JOUR-GA-1019-001
THE EDITOR’S VISION
Spring 2022
Professor: Alexis L Gelber
Thursday, 4:00 PM - 7:40 PM

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Office hours: Thursday, 3-4 p.m., or by appointment
By phone or Zoom

Course Description
How do editors create a distinctive identity for their publications? This course will look at iconic print magazines and new digital platforms, exploring how writing, design, photography, graphics and audio/visual features convey the editor’s ambitions and the personality of a publication. In class discussions and written assignments, students will think as editors, rather than just as reporters and writers, as they do in other classes. As a semester-long project, students will apply the lessons they have learned by creating a new Editor’s Vision digital publication. Throughout the term, the students will spend class time developing ideas and design concepts for the publication, as well as writing, workshopping, designing and editing stories for the site, which will debut toward the end of the semester.

Learning Objectives
In this course, students will:
• Demonstrate an analytical understanding of the elements of a successful publication and develop their skills as conceptual thinkers and text editors.
• Work individually on essays and research projects and collaboratively on a creative team project.
• Write clear, accurate and engaging prose in an audience-appropriate manner
• Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information
• Use technological tools and apply quantitative concepts as appropriate

Course Structure
The course will include class discussions; talks by guest speakers (prominent editors, writers, reporters and designers); assigned readings; case studies; and work developing a themed class website, in conjunction with NYU digital staff.
Readings
Required reading for the course:

Book excerpts to be distributed to class: *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century*, by Alan Brinkley; *The Years with Ross*, by James Thurber (New Introduction by Adam Gopnik); *New York Stories: Landmark Writing from Four Decades of New York Magazine*, Foreward by Tom Wolfe
Required viewing: *The September Issue* – A Film by R.J. Cutler
Other excerpts and articles will be listed on this syllabus or assigned in class.

Suggested readings: Brian Stelter’s Reliable Sources/CNN; media columns in New York Magazine, Politico, New York Post, Vanity Fair
Email newsletters: Axios; The Cut; The Hive; Nieman Lab

Course Requirements
Class participation is vital to this course and will be factored into the final grade. Students are expected to keep up with assigned readings; bring in articles to analyze in class; maintain a high attendance record; workshop written assignments and articles for the class website; work collaboratively with classmates; submit assignments that uphold the highest level of academic and journalistic integrity.

Grading
Final grades will be calculated as follows:

**Personal Essay** about a magazine that influenced you. First draft due Tuesday, 2/1/21 by noon; 20 percent of final grade.
Students will write an 850-word essay about a publication or series of publications that affected their decision to pursue journalism or otherwise affected their lives.

**Midterm research paper.** First draft due Tuesday, 3/1/21 by noon; 30 percent of final grade.
Paper will focus on a publication that started in the 20th century or earlier and trace its evolution to the present day, with particular emphasis on a key editor.

**Final project: Class website.** Final presentation to faculty on 5/5/21. Work on this project throughout the semester will account for 50 percent of final grade.
Students will create, write, edit and design their own digital publication for editorsvision.com. Grades will be determined by the level of conceptual work, writing, participation, editing ability and leadership skills.

1/27/2021 Introduction: How to Think Like an Editor
• Discussion of the following articles to be read before start of class:

The Imperial Editor Goes the Way of the Dodo

Pandemic spurs journalists to go it alone via email

Ben Smith Can’t Say What his New Media Venture Is

ASSIGNMENT: First draft of personal essay, DUE Tues., Feb. 1 at noon

2/3/2021 From Pitching to Editing

GUEST SPEAKER: David Noonan, author and former Deputy Editor, Straus News Manhattan

• In this class we will workshop your personal essays and have an extended brainstorming session for the class website.

We will also speak with NYU’s Web Developer/Administrator Garrett Gardner

• Readings for next week:

• Jill Lepore on Henry Luce and Harold Ross
• New York Stories: Landmark Writing from Four Decades of New York Magazine, Foreward by Tom Wolfe (AG will email a PDF)

• Final draft of personal essay DUE Tues., Feb. 8

2/10/2021 Magazines Then and Now

GUEST SPEAKER: Claire Stern, Managing Editor, elle.com

• Readings for next week:

• Tina Brown: “Vanity Fair Diaries”
• As Men Are Canceled, So Too Their Magazine Subscriptions
• The Cut Finds Its New Top Editor at Teen Vogue
• Bon Appetit’s New Editor in Chief is Ready for the Challenge
• Fifty Years of Rolling Stone
• The Transformation of Conde Nast

• ASSIGNMENT for next week: Select a published piece you find badly edited or written and email to me for future in-class editing session.

2/17/2021 The Revolving Door: Changes in the Magazine World

GUEST SPEAKER: Diamond Naga Siu, Senior Reporter, Insider

• Assignment for next week: Put together story list for class publication
• Develop ideas for midterm research project
• Reading for next week:
  • The new Brooklyn Magazine – check out podcasts
  • Audie Cornish leaves NPR for CNN
  • Some Podcasts are Killing Us – by Sree Sreenivasan (@sree)
  • The Best Podcasts of 2020

2/24/2021 The Age of Podcasts

GUEST SPEAKER: Megan Marcus, Executive Producer, CNN Audio

• Readings for next week:
  • Could The Teen Magazine Rise Again?
The New Rolling Stone: ‘More immediate, more visceral’

Welcome to the New Wired

Inside Bloomberg Businessweek

First draft of Midterm Essay is due 3/8/21

3/3/2021  The Digital Evolution

GUEST SPEAKER: Bret Begun, Senior Editor, Bloomberg Businessweek

- For next week, Watch: The September Issue
- Readings:

  Condé Nast Knows Faded Glory Is Not in Style

  The White Issue: Has Anna Wintour’s Diversity Push Come Too Late?

Edward Enninful interview on British Vogue, Race and Fashion

3/10/2021  The Personality of the Publication vs. the Personality of the Editor

GUEST SPEAKER: Alison Overholt, General Manager, Oprah Daily

- In class: we will workshop your Midterm Research papers
- Reading for next week:

  The Cover that Made Adam Moss Want to Make Magazines

  A New Look for The Atlantic

Headlines from The Hive
The Shoes of Our Lost Icons Are Still Full of Life

Final draft of Midterm paper is due by 3/22/21

3/17/2021 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

3/24/2021 Design, Covers and Headlines: How Will it Look on a Phone?

GUEST SPEAKER: Pranav Dixit, Nieman Fellow, Harvard; Reporter, BuzzFeed News

• In class: writing headlines for class publication stories
• Reading for next week:

  Where the Personal is the Professional – The New Yorker
  Ruth Reichl Will Write a Substack Newsletter -- The New York Times
  Substack Celebrates One Million Paid Subscribers – Nieman Journalism Lab
  Can Substack CEO Chris Best Build a New Model for Journalism? – The Verge
  The Atlantic Jumps on the Paid Newsletter Bandwagon – Nieman Lab

  What Writing a Pandemic Newsletter Showed Me About America – Wired

3/31/2021 The Age of Newsletters

Readings for next week:

• New York magazine article on Indie Magazines (to be distributed)
• CJR: An era ends for magazines (to be distributed)

• https://www.niemanlab.org/2019/08/new-yorkers-are-lining-up-on-the-street-to-get-free-copies-of-the-new-york-times-1619-project/

• Despite Pandemic, 60 new print magazines launched
4/7/2021  Can Print be Cool Again?

GUEST SPEAKER: Danyel Smith, author of “Shine Bright,” podcast host of “Black Girl Songbook,” former Editor in Chief, Vibe Magazine

- Reading: ASME finalists for Sections
- Class project: develop social media strategy for launch

4/14/2021  Thinking Vertically: Signature Sections

Readings for next week:

- ASME finalists for Multimedia category (To be announced)
- @kathyryan on Instagram – Director of Photography at NYTMAG

4/21/2021  The Multimedia Magazine, Instagram Stories

GUEST SPEAKER: Mark Whitaker, author and former media executive

- Finalize design and graphics for class website

4/28/2021  Visit to “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert”

- Work on digital project
- Prepare final version of mission statement and presentation intro by 5/4/20

5/5/2021  Final Project Presentation
The class will present the Editor’s Vision publication to NYU faculty, staff and other NYU students.

Accommodations
Students with disabilities that necessitate accommodations should contact and register with New York University’s Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu. Information about the Moses Center can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd. The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the 2nd floor.

Diversity & Inclusion
The Institute is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. The Institute embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions.