What is “literary reportage”? Sometimes called “literary journalism” or the “literature of fact,” it might best be thought of as a way of weaving characters, reporting, research and stories together to create something that appeals to the general reader. In my opinion, literary reportage is less a subject to be studied than a collection of practices, insights, techniques and formulas—embodied in wonderful literature—to help a writer explore the subjects he/she cares about, and articulate that passion 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. Introduction to Literary Reportage has several goals.

First, we will read some significant works of American literary reportage, analyze how they work, and discuss how they might help you become better journalists.

Second, we will discuss how those works were published, with special attention to the role editors and publications have played. Anyone who has worked in the industry knows that editors are at least as important as writers. We’ll explore how several editors—Harold Ross, Harold Hayes, Clay Felker, Willie Morris, Lewis Lapham—navigated periods of 20th century American culture.

Third, you will respond to the readings in short (3-4 paragraphs) weekly assignments, and post your response by 11 pm Tuesday. These pieces should reflect the fact that you have read that week’s assignment, and thought about it both in relation to your own work and the course in general.

Fourth, you will explore your capstone projects through short (15 minute), informal presentations whose goal is to spark a discussion and acquaint your colleagues with your ideas.

Assignments/Grades
1. Weekly reading response – 30%
2. Class participation – 30%
3. Final project presentation - 40%

Readings
I will make copies of most readings for you, and they can be downloaded as well. I may make small changes to the assignments as the semester progresses.

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

Week 1 - September 2 - Introduction
Week 2 – September 9 – Why write? What should we write about?
- Daniel Boorstin, “Introduction” to The Image: An Introduction to Pseudo Events, 1961
- Ryszard Kapuscinski, “Herodotus and the Art of Noticing,” 2003
- Calvin Trillin, “Introduction” to Killings, 1984
- George Orwell, "Why I Write," 1946

Week 3 - September 16 - Early American Literary Reportage
- Daniel Denton, “A Brief Description of New York,” 1670
- Elizabeth Hanson, “God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty,” 1728
- James Fenimore Cooper, “Preface” and “New York City,” Notions of the Americans, 1828
- R.H. Dana, “Departure,” “First Impressions,” “Flogging,” Two Years Before the Mast, 1840
- Louisa May Alcott, Hospital Sketches, 1863
- Jacob Riis, “Genesis of the Tenement,” “The Mixed Crowd,” How the Other Half Lives, 1890
- Stephen Crane, “When a Man Falls,” 1894; “The Open Boat,” 1894

Week 4 - September 23 - What is a Process Piece?

Week 5 – September 30 - The New Yorker, A.J. Liebling and Joseph Mitchell
- New Yorker Prospectus, 1925
- “Church and State,” memo from Harold Ross to Raul Fleischmann (April 17, 1926)

Week 6 – October 7 -From the page to the Screen
- In class viewing of the movie version of Joe Gould’s Secret (2000)

Week 7 - October 14 - Covering the City: The Village Voice and New York Magazine
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
- Pete Hamill, “The Revolt of the White Lower Middle Class,” 1969
- Barbara Goldsmith, “La Dolce Vita,” 1968

Week 8 - October 23 - Harold Hayes and Esquire
- George Lois, “Not Like Us: George Lois Recalls Esquire’s Glory Days” 2006
- Frank DiGiacomo, "The Esquire Decade." Vanity Fair, January 2007
- Michael Herr, “Hell Sucks” August 1968
- Gina Berriault, “The Naked Luncheon” March 1966
- Gary Wills, “Martin Luther King is Still on the Case” August 1968
- Norman Mailer, “Superman Comes to the Supermarket” November 1960
- Nora Ephron, "A Few Words on Breasts," 1972

Week 9 – October 28 - Joan Didion
- “Preface” to Slouching Towards Bethlehem
- “7000 Romaine, Los Angeles 38” 1967
- "Goodbye to All That" 1967
- "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" 1967
- “On Morality” 1965
- “Notes from a Native Daughter” 1965
- “Why I Write,” 1976
- Paris Review interview 2006
- John Leonard, “Introduction” to We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live, 2006
- Barbara Grizzutti Harrison, "Joan Didion: Only Disconnect" 1979

Week 10 - November 4 – Gay Talese
- The Bridge (“Part Two” in Fame and Obscurity) 1964
- Gay Talese, “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold" 1966
- Gay Talese, “When Frank Sinatra Had a Cold,” 1987
- Frank Sinatra Has a Cold - Annotated, Nieman Storyboard, 2013
- Ron Rosenbaum, Magazines, Bring Back the Write-Around!, Slate, 2007

Week 11 - November 11 – Tom Wolfe and the New Journalism
- Gay Talese, “Joe Louis: The King as a Middle-Aged Man,” 1962
- Tom Wolfe
  - “The Birth of the New Journalism: An Eyewitness Report” 1972
  - “The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test” 1968
  - “Introduction,” The Pump House Gang 1968
  - “The Pump House Gang” 1968
  - “The Put-Together Girl” 1968

**Week 12 - November 18 - 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
- Barbara Ehrenreich, “Nickel and Dimed,” January 1999
- Adam Davidson, “Out of Iraq,” Harper’s, February 2005

**Week 13 - December 2 - Multimedia Literary Reportage**
- Lawrence Wright, “My Trip to Al Queda,” HBO, 2011
- Alex Blumberg and Adam Davidson, "The Giant Pool of Money,” NPR, 2008

**Week 14 - December 9 - Final Capstone Drafts Due**