Fall 2011

SYLLABUS

Creating a Magazine: From Inspiration to Prototype/ARTS-UG.1652

Mondays and Wednesdays: 2:00-3:15; 1 Washington Place, room 401

Lise Friedman; lise.friedman@nyu.edu (the best way to reach me outside of class or office hours)

Office Hours: by appointment, Monday and Wednesday 11:30-1:30; Thursday noon-4, 1 Washington Place, room 429

If you need to leave me a phone message outside of office hours, please leave it at 212.992.7768

******************************************************************************

Course Description

A crazy-quilt of high and low culture, magazines—whether printed or rendered digitally—are one of our most potent forms of cultural commerce, a striking mix of content and form, covering everything from politics, fashion, and celebrity to performing and visual arts, technology, crafts, and the environment. No matter the topic, design has become an increasingly crucial editorial element. It sets one publication apart from the next, and at its best unifies the content and instantly telegraphs to the reader where it figures in the media landscape. In this workshop we will explore this rapidly changing world. We will discuss notions of good vs. bad design, engaging vs. dull content. And, through the development of in-class publications, will put into practice the many aspects that contribute to a magazine's creation, from initial concept to the realization of a prototype. Directed readings, fieldtrips, and visits from magazine professionals will contribute to our discussion.

******************************************************************************

Required reading


• "Merz to Emigre and Beyond: Progressive Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century," Steven Heller (2003, Phaidon)
• Selected links

Every magazine you care to pick up and/or scroll through online has had a tumultuous life prior to its appearance. It likely had at least a few other names, several different looks, and content that bears relatively little if any resemblance to what you’re holding in your hands. Even though this gestation period is not at all evident to the magazine’s audience, it happens to be the most exciting (and maddening) stage of producing a publication. And it’s what you, propelled by equal amounts of brilliant ideas, angst, elbow grease, and hopefully humor, will concentrate on this semester.

The class will be divided into three “staffs,” each of which will be charged with:

• Coming up with a solid thematic concept and rich content
• Determining the magazine’s audience
• Arriving at a powerful editorial vision/mission statement
• Organizing tasks and creating a production schedule
• Designing a strong, identifiable logo
• Creating a print prototype

**In addition to the group work, you will complete 2 solo assignments, write short responses to assigned readings, and participate in one semester-long “accumulation” project.

Why Do Magazines Matter?

Before beginning your work in this class, it’s imperative to ask yourself why magazines matter. Their printed form—and frequently their content—sometimes seems at odds with a culture that demands (and receives) information delivered at warp speed and shows little if any allegiance to the source. (Because most digital content looks relatively similar, we lose track of where it comes from; it just “is.”) So given the prevalence of digital content, how can print publications possibly compete? Put simply, they have to offer an experience that isn’t available anywhere else—one that works with their long leads and relatively glacial production schedules. Maybe that experience has to do with the quality of the paper, the presentation of photography, the pleasing tactility and intimacy of holding something in
your hands; or maybe it has to do with an appreciation of the time taken in preparing material for print: careful photo and text editing, skilled and effective layouts, a palpable sense of purpose and progression. Assuming you feel that print magazines can compete and, going further, are a viable and exciting medium, your job is to determine what that “experience” means to you, and make the most of it.

One basic question: Do you want to bring your magazine to your audience or bring your audience to your publication? The former entails tailoring your publication to known tastes, habits, and mindsets. Most magazines go this route, and many are extremely successful. The latter approach, generally found in less mainstream, hybrid publications, is riskier in that you can’t predict how far your readership is willing to go when they don’t necessarily know what they’ll find when they get there. On the other hand, this approach is potentially more rewarding as you can set a considerably higher bar for experimentation.

Note: the group work in this class will include a fair number of outside-of-class meetings to prepare material for presentation (each group will come up with suitable days and times). If this is something you cannot manage, this class won’t work for you.

Schedule

Wednesday, September 7
• Introductions all around; questionnaire
• Overview of class content and structure/expectations: readings and responses, discussion participation, individual and group work
• Assignments for Sept. 12:
  1. Bring in an example of a magazine (or specific content) you like and one you dislike; be prepared to discuss
  2. Read Intro to Best American Magazine Writing in preparation for discussion

Monday, September 12
• Share examples in groups and report on common/divergent themes
• Reading discussion
• Assignment for Sept. 14: bring in five objects that reflect the sensibility, essence, and/or tone of your ideal magazine (photos, swatch of fabric, piece of music, food, etc.)

• Reading/writing assignment: read Intro and Chapter 1 of Merz to Emigre and Beyond and write a two-page response commenting on the idea of “artists, writers, and editors as the vanguard of the avant-garde.” Due Sept 14

Wednesday, September 14

• Share objects in groups and report on common/divergent themes

• Merz to Emigre reading discussion and response due

Monday, September 19

• Form staffs/brainstorm: thematic concept, name, and potential audience. Each member of the group prepare a rough flat plan for review September 26

• Solo Assignment #1, due September 28/October 3: Create a five-page draft using one or more of your objects as inspiration. This is an “instant” magazine; think of the process as an improvisation or a study as opposed to a finished product. In other words, do not labor over this.

• Reading/writing assignment: Merz to Emigre and Beyond, Chapters 2, 3, 4: write a two-page response focusing on the periodical as a forum for protest. Due September 26

• Accumulation Magazine begins

Wednesday, September 21

1:50-3:10 MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR

• PhotoShop and InDesign tutorial

Monday, September 26

• Groups review flat plans and story ideas

• Reading discussion and response due

Wednesday, September 28

• Share Solo Assignment #1, ½ class

Monday, October 3

• Share Solo Assignment #1, ½ class
• Reading/writing assignment: Merz to Emigre and Beyond, Chapters 5: write a two-page response focusing on typography as a form of expression. Due Oct 12.

Wednesday, October 5
1:50-3:10 MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR

• Group work session: finalize flat plan (lineup and organization of stories/photos, etc.); delegate tasks; create calendar with all due dates and production steps; begin to draft mission statement, due Oct 12

Monday, October 11
• NO CLASSES
• Review Longshot magazine on Blackboard in preparation for guest

Wednesday, October 12
• Guest: Sarah Rich, founding editor, Longshot magazine
• Mission statements and reading response due
• Reading/writing assignments:
  1. Merz to Emigre and Beyond, Chapter 6: write a two-page response discussing the role of the magazine as a vehicle for commerce. Due Oct 17
  2. Choose three articles from Best American Magazine Writing and write a few pages about why these particular pieces spoke to you. Due October 19

• Review Time Out New York on Blackboard in preparation for guest and field trip

Monday, October 17
• Guest: Jordana Rothman, Food & Drink Editor, Time Out New York (TONY)
• Reading response 1 due

Wednesday, October 19
1:50-3:10 MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR
• Work session: Complete rough draft layout
• Short discussion of Best American Magazine Writing and response due

Monday, October 24

Field trip: Time Out New York
475 Tenth Avenue, 12th floor
New York, NY 10018

• Reading/writing assignment: Merz to Emigre and Beyond, Chapters 7, 8: write a two-page response discussing the magazine as a vehicle for cultural and social revolution. What do YOU think the future holds for this medium? Due October 31.

Wednesday, October 26

• Rough drafts presentation. Include: Mission Statement, draft flat plan; table of contents and editorial and production calendar

Monday, October 31

• Reading response due; class discussion of readings

Wednesday, November 2

MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR

• Work session: work on second drafts; prepare for peer exchange November 7

Monday, November 7

• Second drafts presentation to another group. Include table of contents; first edits of stories (including photos and/or illustrations); cover ideas; exchange copies for peer critiques; groups prepare responses to peers for November 14

• Review Lemon Magazine on Blackboard in preparation for guests

Wednesday, November 9

• Guests: Kevin Grady, Editor-In-Chief, Creative Director And Colin Metcalf, Publisher, Creative Director, Lemon

Monday, November 14

• Peer responses/presentations (plan lab sessions for your group to prepare third draft)
• Solo assignment #2, due December 5 and 12:

What’s in a word? Letters. How does the way those letters look—font, size, color, etc.—affect the word’s meaning? Using these three words, and only these three words—dream, interruption, climb—create three different text “stories” for each, each of which is one 8.5 X 11 page and offers a unique interpretation of the word. You may use fonts available on a Mac as well as any others you find. I encourage you to include hand-drawn or stenciled letters, letters made of images, cut outs, etc. If you wish to bind these stories you may, or you may keep them loose. If you choose the latter, pl provide a folder or envelope.

• Review Lucky Peach on Blackboard in preparation for guests

Wednesday, November 16

MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR

• Guests: Paul Beddoe-Stephens, VP of Digital Production, Zero Point Zero Productions and Mike Steed, Creative Director, Lucky Peach

Monday, November 21

• Present third drafts for class critiques

• Reading/writing assignment: Merz to Emigre and Beyond, Chapter 9 and epilogue: write a two-page response focusing on the notion of the periodical as a forum through which to “challenge the sanctity of art, politics, society, and culture.” Due November 30

Wednesday, November 23

• Catch up readings: discuss The Best American Magazine Writing 2009

• Review Triple Canopy on Blackboard in preparation for guests

Monday, November 28

• Guest: Triple Canopy

Wednesday, November 30

MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR

• Prototype work session: final edits, begin proofing

• Reading discussion and response due
Monday, December 5
• Solo Projects (½ class)

Wednesday, December 7
MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR
• Final proofing, make all corrections
• PDFs overnight to printer

Friday, December 9
• On press at Endeavor Printing: 9-12

Endeavor Printing, LLC
37-04 29th Street
Long Island City, NY 11101
718-570-2720
sales@endeavorprinting.com

Directions: take the N or W toward Queens to 36th Avenue stop, then walk to 37th Ave and make a right. Endeavor is 2 blocks up on left hand side, on corner of 29th St and 37th Ave. The blue awning reads "Carter, Milchman and Frank" (they share space with them); that is the entrance.

Monday, December 12
• Solo Projects (½ class)

Wednesday, December 14
• Presentation of finished prototypes and Accumulation Magazine

Grading standards:
Factors taken into account to determine the final grade: attendance, completion of assignments, and effective participation in classroom discussions and individual and group projects. More than two unexcused absences will cost one letter grade. If you know that you will be absent, please make the effort to email me in advance. You are responsible to your fellow students as well. Absences due to illness, family emergency, etc., will be excused if properly documented.
Incompletes:

If you find that you will not be able to complete the course work by the end of the semester, speak with me before the end of the semester.

Plagiarism:

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

Parameters:

1. Trim size: 8 ½ X 11

2. Length: 32 interior pages total + front and back inside and outside covers

3. The 32 interior pages are 8.5 x 11 and the F and B covers and inside F and B covers are 11x17 (a two-page PDF). The 32 interior pages should be in one PDF set up as individual pages, in order, with no facing pages (spreads), and the covers as 2 separate PDF files (FC + BC and IFC + IBC), each designed as one continuous image that wraps around on a 17 x 11 inch canvas.

4. Bleeds; safety space: If you want the inside pages or covers to bleed, design your content to the very edge of the page. Leave ½ inch of safety space for any written content. A small portion of the top, bottom, and side will get cut off when the book is trimmed. Do not put any text near the edges of the pages; be aware of where you place page numbers.
5. Images: The DPI of each image should be 300. Avoid downloading images from the web; in addition to copyright issues, these are usually only 72 DPI. These types of images will look sharp when displayed on your computer screen but will not print crisply and will look “pixilated.” When using candid shots taken with digital cameras, make sure the camera is set to “high quality” to ensure the best results.

How to start a new InDesign document and how to save as a high-res PDF:
1. Create main folder containing images and other files
2. Go to Start>New>Document
   Set preferences: i.e. 32 pages
   SAVE the new file in your folder
   Layout pages- make sure to only use images from your main folder, don’t place any important text inside the bleed/margin and gutter area
   Export PDF for viewing: file>export> “smallest file”
   Export PDF for printing: file>export> “highest file”>CMYK
   Save high-res PDF on a CD