Fall 2012

SYLLABUS

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

Mondays and Wednesdays: 2:00-3:15; 1 Washington Place, room 501

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

Office Hours: by appointment, Monday 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

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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.

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Required reading

•"I Wonder," Marian Bantjes (Monacelli Press)

•“Seventy-nine Short Essays on Design, Michael Bierut (Princeton Architectural Press)

•"The Best American Magazine Writing 2011," American
Society of Magazine Editors (Columbia University Press)
• 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 5
• Introductions all around; questionnaire
• Overview of class content and structure/expectations: readings and responses, discussion participation, individual and group work
• Assignments for Sept. 10:
  1. Bring in an example of a magazine (or specific content) you like and one you dislike; be prepared to discuss
  2. Read through page 121 of I Wonder in preparation for discussion

Monday, September 10
• Share examples in groups and report on common/ divergent themes
• Reading discussion
• Assignments for Sept. 12:

1. 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.) Write a one- to 2-page paper, to be handed in, discussing why you chose your objects and how what they “say”/reflect might be translated into compelling magazine content.

2. Choose 3 digital publications that you admire (they may be digital counterparts of print pub[s] and/or solely digital) and write a paragraph or two about each, discussing how you feel they serve the medium, in terms of design and the delivery, organization, and quality of content.

Wednesday, September 12

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

• Reading discussion and response due

Monday, September 17

• Form staffs/brainstorm: thematic concept, name, and potential audience.

• Solo Assignment #1, due September 26/October 1: 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.

• Assignments for Sept. 24:

1. Each member of the group prepare a rough flat plan for review

2. Read the rest of I Wonder and write two pages about the book’s design and content

• Accumulation Magazine begins

Wednesday, September 19

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

• PhotoShop and InDesign tutorial
Monday, September 24
• Groups review flat plans and story ideas
• Reading discussion and response due

Wednesday, September 26
• Share Solo Assignment #1, ½ class

Monday, October 1
• Share Solo Assignment #1, ½ class
• Assignment for October 8: choose 5 pieces from Seventy-nine Short Essays on Design and write a few paragraphs about each, discussing why that particular essay interested you.

Wednesday, October 3
1:50-3:10 MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR
• Assignment for October 8: each group 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

Monday, October 8
• Review flat plans, tasks, calendars, etc.
• Reading response due

Wednesday, October 10
• Confluence/class collaboration meeting #1
• Assignment for Oct. 22: choose in The Best American Magazine Writing: Introduction and four articles of your choosing: what do you think of the points made in the intro about the future of the industry, and how do each of the pieces you selected reflect your ideas of what constitutes good magazine writing? Be prepared to discuss
• Review Time Out New York in preparation for field trip

Monday, October 15
NO CLASSES

Wednesday, October 17
• Field trip: Time Out New York; session with Jordana Rothman, Food & Drink Editor
475 Tenth Avenue, 12th floor
Monday, October 22
• Work session: work on article editing/revisions
• Short discussion of Best American Magazine Writing and response due
Wednesday, October 24
• Rough drafts presentation. Include: Mission Statement, draft flat plan, table of contents, and editorial and production calendar
• Review Cabinet Magazine online in preparation for guest
Monday, October 29
• Guest: Sina Nijafi, editor-in-chief Cabinet Magazine
Wednesday, October 31
MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR
• Work session: work on second drafts
• Assignment for Nov. 5: prepare drafts for peer exchange
Monday, November 5
• 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
• Assignment for Nov. 7: groups prepare responses to peers’ draft
Wednesday, November 7
• Peer responses/presentations
• Solo assignment #2, due December 3 and 10:
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, weather—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, please provide a folder or envelope. Refer to I Wonder for ideas/inspiration.

• Review Lapham’s Quarterly and Tumblr in preparation for guest

Monday, November 12
• Guests: Michelle Legro, associate editor, Lapham’s Quarterly and Rachel Fershleiser, literary outreach, Tumblr

Wednesday, November 14
MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR
• Assignment for Nov. 19: third drafts
• Assignment for Nov. 21: 4-5 pages, American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME) 2012 winners: http://www.magazine.org/asme/magazine_awards/nma2012/finalists.aspx. Choose four winning pieces from four different categories—fiction, public service, reporting, etc. How do these selections serve their subjects and what do you find particularly compelling and/or lacking? Be prepared to discuss.

Monday, November 19
• Present third drafts for class critiques

Wednesday, November 21
• Reading discussion
• Confluence meeting

Monday, November 26
• Guest: Sid Holt, chief executive, American Society of Magazine Editors

Wednesday, November 28
MEET IN MULTIMEDIA CLASSROOM II, 35 W. 4TH STREET, 2ND FLOOR
• Prototype work session: final edits, begin proofing

Monday, December 3
• Solo Projects (½ class)
Wednesday, December 5

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

• Final proofing, make all corrections

• PDFs overnight to printer

Prepare for printing:
1. The 32 interior pages are 8.5 x 11 and the F and B covers and inside F and B covers are 11x17 (each is a two-page PDF).
2. 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
3. Save each of the 3 InDesign files as a hi-res PDF
4. Export each PDF for printing: file>export> "high quality print”>CMYK

To submit to printer:
1. www.endeavorprinting.com
2. Go to "file upload" page
3. Password: printing

Friday, December 7

• 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 10

• Solo Projects (½ class)

Wednesday, December 12

• Presentation of finished prototypes and Accumulation Magazine
Grading standards:

Factors taken into account to determine the final grade:

1. Lateness and attendance: if you know that you will be late to class or 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. More than two unexcused absences will cost one letter grade.

2. Completion of assignments and effective participation in classroom discussions and individual and group projects: all assignments are due on the date indicated. If you cannot submit your work on time, you must let me know so we may agree on a revised date. Work submitted late without notification and missed assignments will adversely impact your grade.

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.

Cell phones/laptops: outside of an emergency, the use of cell phones is not permitted during class. Laptops may be used to work with your group.

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.
When designing pages keep in mind:

1. **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.

2. **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.