Advanced Writing Course: **Magazine Writing**
Gallatin — Spring 2014
WRTNG-UG 1024-001
Wave 435, Th, 6:20pm-9pm

Instructor: Taylor Antrim, itantrim@gmail.com
Office Hours: Tu, 6-7:30pm, Gallatin, Room 619, or by appointment

**Course Description:**
For more than a century the American magazine has provided a distinct literary experience—timely subjects, a juxtaposition of text and image, a rich grab bag of styles and forms. In this seminar we'll look at examples of reporting, profile writing, criticism, and memoir from the pages of magazines past and present. How have magazines, and their distinctive design vocabulary, driven the national conversation? How do we understand "facts" in these publications? What roles do voice, point-of-view, character, dialogue, and plot—the traditional elements of fiction—play? Over the course of the semester students will be expected to discuss readings, shape a feature pitch and write and revise a variety of stories on deadline.

**Required Texts**

*Hiroshima* by John Hersey  
*Portrait of Hemingway* by Lillian Ross  
*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* by Joan Didion  
*The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* by Tom Wolfe  
*The Journalist and the Murderer* by Janet Malcolm

The majority of readings will be available as pdfs on NYU Classes. My recommendation is that you print them out, but you may read them digitally. In either case, I expect you to read the old-fashioned way, pen in hand, able to jot down notes and marginalia.

**Writing Assignments**

4 assignments  
3-4 rounds of written feature pitches  
1 presentation with handout  
1 feature-length story  
Final edit of feature-length story
Attendance

As this course meets only once a week, I expect perfect attendance. I’ll allow one unexcused absence. Any subsequent absences will count against your participation grade—though they can be excused due to illness with a doctor’s note or a note from your academic advisor. **Miss more than three classes and you will receive a failing grade for the semester. There will be no exception to this policy.** If you do miss a class it is your responsibility to gather all reading and complete all assignments for the subsequent class.

Class Preparation

*Participation:*
Speak up! Class participation is a major (30%) part of your grade. To ensure that everyone is involved in discussion, please come to class prepared with a comment or question on the week’s reading. How does the writer or journalist approach his subject? How does she capture the reader’s attention? How are facts communicated? How does the reading compare to other pieces from the semester? **Preparing this comment or question before you get to class is a requirement of the course.** You will be called on to deliver your comment/question aloud.

*Writing assignments:*
Students are expected to follow the assignments as written, turn in stories on time and should not exceed word count limits. As much as a third of a grade may be deducted from any piece each day it is turned in late. All work written for this class should be original work. No student should repurpose articles they have written elsewhere, and any confirmed cases of plagiarism will result in the student’s automatic failure of the course.

*Presentations:*
Each student is required to give a 10-minute presentation assessing an article from a current or recent issue of a print magazine, or a long-form article from a digital publication. He/She should summarize the story, assess the visual style of its presentation, be knowledgable about the magazine as a whole, offer his or her opinion about why the story is relevant or worthwhile, critique any weaknesses in the story as well, and give a sense of its reception online. If the article is from a print magazine, the presentation must be accompanied by a copy of the issue and a handout summarizing the points
of the presentation.

*Pitches:*
Students will be required to pitch ideas three to four times over the course of the semester, a process that will result in a final feature-story assignment. A pitch should be tailored to a specific magazine or category of magazines and include images if appropriate. These pitches will be discussed and critiqued in small groups.

*Feature story and revision:*
Each student will write a 2000-2500 word feature story based off of his or her most promising and developed pitch. After turning the piece in and receiving feedback the student will have to revise the story for the end of term.

**Grading**

Your grade will be based on the quality of your written work and on effort. What does effort mean? Attendance, class participation, and on-time delivery of assignments.

Final grades will be composed as follows:
- Assignments/Pitches: 30%
- Feature and revision: 30%
- Attendance/Participation: 30%
- Presentations: 10%

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**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Week 1
Jan 30: Introduction

Week 2
Feb 6: BEGINNINGS
Stephen Crane, "When a Man Falls, A Crowd Gathers" (New York Press, 1894) - **Class Page**
Morris Markey, “Drift” (The New Yorker, 1931) - CP
Jonah Weiner, The Impossible Body, (The New Yorker, 2014) - CP

Assignment #1 DUE

Week 3
Feb 13: REPORTING
John Hersey, “Hiroshima” (The New Yorker, 1946) - Book or CP

Feature Pitches DUE round 1 (min 5 ideas)

Week 4
Feb 20: PROFILE
Lillian Ross, “How Do You Like it Now, Gentlemen?” (The New Yorker, 1950) - Book (Titled Portrait of Hemingway) or CP

Assignment #2 DUE

Week 5
Feb 27: TOM WOLFE
all readings from The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby (1963-65)
Introduction
“The First Tycoon of Teen”
“The Marvelous Mouth”
“Loverboy of the Bourgeoisie”
“The Girl of the Year”
Pitches DUE round 2

Week 6
March 6: JOAN DIDION
readings from from Slouching Towards Bethlehem (1961-68)
Preface
“Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream”
“John Wayne: A Love Song”
“Slouching Towards Bethlehem”
“Guaymas, Sonora”
“Los Angeles Notebook”
“Goodbye to All That”

Assignment #3 DUE

Week 7
March 13  WRITER AS SUBJECT
Hunter S. Thompson, “The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved” (Scanlan’s Monthly, 1970) - CP
John Jeremiah Sullivan, “Leaving Reality” (GQ, 2005) - CP

Pitches DUE round 3

Week 8  ---SPRING BREAK---

Week 9
March 27:  JANET MALCOLM
“The Journalist and the Murderer” (The New Yorker 1989) - Book or CP

Assignment #4 DUE

Week 10
April 3:  PROFILE
Gay Talese, “Frank Sinatra Has a Cold” (Esquire, 1966) - CP
Dan P. Lee, “I Just Want to Feel Everything: Hiding Out With Fiona Apple” (New York, 2012) - CP

Week 11
April 10:  DAVID FOSTER WALLACE
“Consider the Lobster” (Gourmet, 2004) - CP

Week 12
April 17:  MEMOIR
“A Box of Puppies,” Lena Dunham (The New Yorker, 2013) -
“The Old Man at Burning Man,” Wells Tower (GQ, 2013)

Pitches finalized

Week 13
April 24: “The Story of a Suicide,” Ian Parker (The New Yorker, 2013)

Feature story DUE

Week 14
May 1: Keller and Greenwald debate or TK

Week 15
May 8: Final Edit DUE