

The Department of Media and Communications

Media Production Specialisation

Journalism

MC53042A (Spring Term 2012)

Updated September 2011

This course is taken by Media and Modern Literature Students in their third year.

Please note that this course comprises half of your marks this term. You are expected to work on research and writing OUTSIDE workshop days. Workshops are for technical production and feed-back.

Introduction to area of study

The course is designed to enable you to build on and improve the skills you began to learn in years 1 or 2.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Apply an understanding of genre and audience.
2. Critically evaluate arguments and assumptions, frame appropriate questions and make judgments, in a wide range of interview and research situations.
3. Devise and sustain arguments within journalistic conventions and recognize the limits of those conventions
4. Demonstrate a personal prose style
5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate information, knowledge and concepts to a non-specialist audience.
6. Understand and apply the production processes for print journalism.
7. Devise, write and edit your own magazine, in a group.

The Qualities and Transferable Skills acquired will be:

8. The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.
9. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts.

Learning Methods

You will do three practical assignments: a descriptive first person experience feature of 800-1000 words, a profile of up to 2000 words and a topical feature of up to 1200-1500 words. You will also learn how to sub-edit and lay out using Adobe Indesign. Each assignment will be introduced with a talk and all your work will be discussed. You must be prepared to read out your own work and contribute to group analysis of all work produced. Individual tutorials will be provided towards the end of term.

Assessment

Learning outcomes will be assessed by the examination of the portfolio of your work comprising three features (as described) and a joint mark will be awarded for the magazine. Assessment criteria 1- 6 comprise 80% of the marks, criteria 7 -9 [the magazine] comprise 20% of the marks:

(Portfolio)

1. The ambition of the work.
2. The understanding of genre and audience.
3. The variety and appropriateness of sources used across the portfolio.
4. The quality of analysis.
5. The structure and style of the work.

(Magazine)

6. Application of production skills (including spelling and punctuation).
7. Ability to organise independently and work to deadline.

Please ensure you refer to the handbook 'Pocket guide to media law and ethics' available on learn.gold when writing all articles.

Timetable

(You will have access to a computer room until 8pm on workshop days)

Week One

Objectives

- 1. To get started with Adobe InDesign**
- 2. To learn what makes a successful magazine and come up with the idea for your own**

Morning

What makes a good magazine? In groups, imagine that you are an editorial board being given a dummy mag: think about design, target audience, positioning of each element within the magazine, content, balance of news/features, the people featured - case studies, celebs, members of the profession, etc. Does the magazine work? If so, why? What would you do differently? Finish with brainstorm within groups on what your own magazine will be, considering all the elements that make up a successful magazine. Over lunch come up with a shortlist of three mag ideas per group which will then be voted on.

Afternoon

Getting started with Adobe - basic page creation, text boxes, image boxes.

Exercises: create a magazine page using either the supplied text/images or your own text and images - ideally your short features for East London Lines.

FOR NEXT WEEK: bring moodboard materials plus ideas for assessed feature/profile (one needs to be part of your magazine)

Assignment: Describe the following briefly using your words with care: a meal you have had this week, a person you have encountered this week, an object or garment. Email your description to your tutor by Friday 10am .

Week Two

Objectives:

- 1. Learn how to create and save master pages on Adobe and experiment with typography and colour, saving your preferences as paragraph styles**
- 2. Understand the importance of a magazine's look, feel and target by creating a moodboard, a target reader analysis and a rationale**

Morning

Adobe - master pages and libraries, typography, paragraph styles

Exercises - create a master page for a magazine's news section, save it in library, apply typographical effects (eg drop caps), create paragraph styles

Afternoon

Designing your magazine - look and feel. Think about target reader: he/she should inform everything you do with the magazine. Write your target reader profile. Then come up with words/pictures/images/events/fabric/whatever that contributes to the look and feel of your magazine. Get on Adobe and produce a couple of dummy pages - think about colours. Alongside the moodboard, work on your target reader analysis and your rationale.

Assignment: write a first person experience piece that could work in your magazine. Deadline next Tuesday 10am. Please take or source a photograph to go with your report. Please also read interviews in at least three different kinds of publication.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Bring one-par summary of a feature and profile idea. Think about how each might fit into your magazine. Ensure you have completed your moodboard, target reader analysis and your rationale.

Week Three

Objectives

1. To become familiar with using colours and images on InDesign
2. To learn how to generate and refine ideas for features and profiles

Morning: InDesign using colours and pictures

Exercises - create a feature double-page spread. magazine section for your group's magazine. Create paragraph styles to use on that master page. Consider colours and styles as per the moodboard you put together last week. Come together with your group to discuss your work at the end of the session.

Afternoon

Ideas workshop. Discussion: where do ideas come from? Ideas brainstorming exercise. Hooks and angles. Examples of good features, timely features, features inspired by different things - anniversaries, pictures, links between news stories, reports, studies, personal experience, etc. How to work out whether an idea is a goer. Finding ideas through research.

Topicality - lead times, etc.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Think up a list of potential ideas for your magazine and bring them to class.

Week Four

Objectives:

- 1 to consolidate knowledge gained so far.
- 2 understand how to generate feature ideas.

Morning: to bring together previous sessions on InDesign, make a start on design and mop up any unanswered questions

Afternoon: writing features and profiles.

Exercises on putting together a feature and profiles - intros, hooks, angles, conclusions, structure, adding colour to your writing, writing for your target audience, quotes, research, description, structure, setting. Examples of good features, why they worked, what didn't work. Come together in groups to discuss ideas for your magazine. Individually discuss feature and profile ideas.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Start researching either a feature or your profile. Provide a short summary of who you have/will contacted, sources used, etc. Come to next week's class with at least five ideas for your magazine.

Week Five

Objectives

- 1. To bring together previous morning sessions on InDesign and mop up any unanswered questions**
- 2. To understand the basics of flat-planning and putting together a magazine**

Morning

Continue working on your basic design palette. Put together dummy cover, contents page, news page, features page. Troubleshooting.

Afternoon

Making a start on flat-planning. Consider all elements - contents page, classifieds, ads, features, news, regulars (eg letters page), cover, contents, news, features, regulars (letters page, reviews, etc), end page, advertising, masthead page, captions, pictures, subs page, classifieds. Think about where each element should go - look at mags for examples.

Individual tutorials on your features/profiles

Week Six

Monitoring Week – work on your feature research and interviews. Send a draft of your feature/profile to your tutor and your magazine group by Friday 10am.

Week Seven

Objectives

- 1 To understand the editing process**
- 2 To start work on your magazine**

AM: Features meeting: you must all have produced either a profile or a feature to discuss in your groups. Are they suitable for your magazine (or for another magazine) how can they be improved?

PM: Start to organise the look of your magazine and to write headlines and create templates in In Design

Tutorials: your tutor will discuss your features/profiles. Feature plans will be submitted and marked with the final draft of your piece.

Assignment: Continue work on feature, sub-edit each others work, layout articles, write contents page for your magazine.

Week Eight

Objectives: to continue work on your magazine with feedback

Deadline for second feature/profile

Group feed-back on work so far. Continue work on individual and group projects. Start cutting and fitting articles into your publication.

Individual Tutorials.

Assignment: Work on features.

Week Nine

Objectives: to continue work on your magazine with feedback

Am/pm: book a tutorial to talk about your work if necessary. Work on individual and group projects.

Week Ten

Objectives: to continue work on your magazine with feedback

Your tutor will be available to give assistance if necessary. Finish off magazine – concentrating on its design.

Week Eleven

Objective: to finish group project,

PDF and print your magazine. NB You need only print two copies of each magazine: one for each marker. You don't need one for each portfolio.

Please hand in two copies of your individual work, in two separate portfolios.

Review and discussion.