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JRNL 640.01: Montana Journalism review

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Office Hours: T 1:30-3:30 p.m.
R 9:30-11:30 a.m.
and by appointment

Course objective

This capstone course will introduce you to the theory and practice of magazine journalism. As a team, you will produce the 2015 edition of Montana Journalism Review, an annual publication of The University of Montana's School of Journalism that is distributed throughout the state and the nation. This will be the 44th issue; the magazine was founded in 1958 as the first journalism review in the United States.

Magazine work requires extraordinary precision, depth of reporting and creativity, as well as a close understanding of audiences and the publishing business. As a staff member, you will be assigned specific tasks, to be completed under real-world deadline pressure. Your teamwork and leadership skills will also be tested: In any team effort, the final product needs to be greater than the sum of all individual contributions.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Understand the business and process of magazine publishing.
- Analyze the past and current roles of magazines in the media system.
- Hone your ability to deliver publishable work on deadline.
- Grow your communication, teamwork and leadership skills.
- Develop innovative angles and storytelling formats.
- Apply rigorous copy-editing and fact-checking standards.
- Juggle the requirements of print and the Web.

About the magazine

The 2014 edition of MJR is themed “shift:” It will focus on the shifting media landscapes of Montana and neighboring states. We will cover shifts in newsgathering methods, career paths, story formats and media use. The theme was inspired by a phenomenon all journalists are experiencing today – that the ground beneath us is shifting, and though that might be thrilling, it makes it hard to keep standing or moving forward.

Stories for MJR will take a variety of formats, from a few long-form features to shorter profiles, essays, columns, Q&A's, service pieces and department briefs. Our bias will be toward visual and innovative forms of storytelling. We will not bore our readers.

Though staff members will report some longer pieces, as well as many briefs and photo stories, we will actively solicit contributions from outside writers, photographers and artists. The final deadline for all contributions of one page or more is Sept. 18.

The printed magazine will be published in December, accompanied by a website and a tablet edition. We will use social media throughout the semester to build our audience and help create an interactive community interested in our theme.

MJR 2015 staff

Managing Editor: Austin Schempp

Deputy Managing Editor: Madelyn Beck

Senior Editors: Peregrine Frissell, Katheryn Houghton, Conrad Scheid

Web Editor: Paul Nocchi

Tablet Designer: Abbey Dufoe

Photo Editor: Sarah Chaput de Saintonge

Copy Chief: Tera Johnson

Art Director: Jessica Neary

Page Designers: Amanda Bryant, Kristin Kirkland, Rachel Leathe

Staff writer: Bjorn Bergeson

Copy Editors: Courtney Anderson, Jesse Flickinger, Michael Hanan, Ryan Mintz

Photographer: Elliott Natz

Videographer: Gracie Ryan

Marketing/Sales Director: Jess Field

Course Structure

Class Time: Attendance at our weekly meetings is mandatory. Class time will be divided between short lectures and discussion of the principles of magazine publishing, with the occasional guest speaker, on the one hand, and budget meetings, with progress reports and discussion of story ideas and assignments, on the other.

Staff assignments: Each of you will receive a sheet that describes your position, the chain of command and specific tasks you're expected to complete as a member of the staff.

Read these task sheets closely and ask if something needs clarification. Ultimately, your grade will depend on how well you fulfill all of these tasks.

Graduate Increment

Graduate students will assume a leadership role on the MJR staff. They will also hold a 30-minute Powerpoint presentation that (1) exhibits the research they've done for the course, and (2) demonstrates their ability to reflect on the state of the magazine industry.

Grading

Your grade will be based on how well you fulfil all tasks assigned to you; your reliability as a member of the team, and the quality of your product. A's are for outstanding work in all these areas; B's are for good work, C's for work with minor deficiencies.

Professionalism

To learn is your responsibility. It is imperative that you follow all instructions closely and completely. Otherwise, you risk squandering the opportunities this course affords.

- Adhere to all deadlines and closely follow instructions for assignments.
- Don't be late. Class doesn't start at 5:11 p.m. It starts at 5:10 p.m.

- Notify me in advance if you are ill or need to miss a class for other valid reasons.
- You get one free absence, as long as you notify me in advance.
- To act professionally at all times will positively affect your final grade.
- Unexcused absences and late shows will negatively affect your final grade.
- Missing one third of classes will automatically result in failing the course.

Textbook

Johnson, S. & Prijatel, P. (2006). *The Magazine from Cover to Cover*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php

Same Work for Multiple Classes in J-School

You may not submit for this course any assignment that has previously or will be concurrently submitted for another class, unless you receive prior approval from the professor for this course. To do so without permission will result in an "F" for the assignment, and could result in an "F" for the course.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

This course is accessible to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. Disability Services for Students will assist the instructor and student in the accommodation process. For more information, visit <http://life.umt.edu/dss>.