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JRNL 640.01: Montana Journalism Review

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JRNL 640 Montana Journalism Review

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:10 to 6:30 p.m., DAH 301

Instructor

Prof. Henriette Lowisch

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Office hours

Mondays, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Thursdays, 1 – 3 p.m.

And by appointment

Course objectives

This capstone course will introduce you to the theory and practice of magazine journalism. As a team, you will produce the 2016 edition of Montana Journalism Review, an award-winning publication of the School of Journalism, with readers across the state and the nation. The magazine was founded in 1958 as the first journalism review in the United States. This issue, themed "Burn," will be the 45th.

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.
- Appreciate 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 digital publishing.
- Practice using social networks to develop brands and audiences.

About the magazine

Montana Journalism Review is a public-interest magazine that looks at journalism, media and communication in the western United States. Stories for MJR take a variety of formats, from long-form features to shorter profiles, essays, columns, Q&A's, service pieces, listicles and department briefs. Our bias is toward visual and innovative forms of storytelling. The typical page contains fewer than 500 words.

The 2016 cover story will deliver a critical assessment of how the media cover wildfire. While this is a perennial topic in the West, it is worth a fresh look for two reasons: (1) the heightened conflict

between science and politics in the face of climate change, and (2) the emergence of social media and immersion journalism in news coverage of wildfires.

Five to six other feature stories, fitting the 'burn' theme, will make up the magazine's well, at a length of 1,000 to 2,000 words each. We will also publish a few columns in the 500-word range.

Our three departments (magazine speak for sections) will contain an array of shorter stories that aren't necessarily compliant with the 'burn' theme. Some will be briefs -- ideally 50 to 100 words -- while others will take the form of a small infographic, Q&A or photo with caption. Each department will have 4-8 pages and start with a leader (narrative, interview or column) that's up to 500 words long.

Except for the cover story and some departmental stories, the features, infographics, and photos in our magazine will come from freelance journalists, UM undergraduate and graduate students and alums. We do not pay, but strive to get as many professionals to contribute as possible.

We will use social media to build community, preview content, promote the publication and drive the conversation about media and journalism in Montana and other Western states. The printed magazine (64 pages) will be published in December. At that time, we will also update the MJR website, which serves as an archive for all of our content and a landing page for prospective readers and subscribers.

MJR 2016 staff

- Editor-in-Chief: Henriette Lowisch
- Managing Editors: Nicky Ouellet (Editorial), Celia Tobin (Creative)
- Director Marketing/Development: Tana Wilson
- Art Director: Hannah-Laura Rudolph
- Designers: Alyssa Dillon, Katie Hofschield, Olivia Keith, Declan Lawson
- Copy Chief: Reagan Colyer
- Copy Editors: Claire Burgeson, Ailene Camacho, Hunter Schmitz, Bree Zender
- Senior Editors: Shanti Johnson, Erin Loranger, Hunter Pauli, Taylor Wyllie
- Staff Writer: Andrew Graham
- Multimedia Editor: Evan Frost
- Staff Photographer: Jake Green
- Staff Videographer: Dayton Smith
- Social Media: Suzie Chiem (Lead), Christian Grant
- Web Producer: Scott Hawk

Class Time

Attendance at our weekly meetings is mandatory.

Tuesday meetings will be led by the editor-in-chief. Though there will be time to discuss urgent magazine business, the focus will be on the principles of magazine publishing. Expect mini-lectures, in-class workshops and occasional guest speaker visits.

Thursday meetings will be led by the managing editors. They will start with a general update, and then break the group into smaller teams, to allow for specific progress reports and workshops.

Please be aware that you will have to invest substantial time outside of class, so we can produce a quality magazine by the end of the fall semester.

Staff assignments

Each of you will receive an individualized checklist that describes your position, the chain of command and specific tasks you're expected to complete. Read your checklist closely and ask if something needs clarification. Ultimately, your grade depends on how well you fulfill all these tasks.

During finals week, I will schedule a 30-minute individual review with each staff member, at which we will evaluate your performance and discuss your grade for the class.

Timeline

The magazine will go to press mid-November. This means crunch time for the print edition will be in the second half of October and the first half of November. Copy editors, designers: Please clear your calendars and make MJR a priority during that phase. In addition, there will be ample work to do before and after, with the first third of the semester focused on planning, ad sales, reporting and editing (print, photo and graphics). The last third of the semester will focus on web and digital production, print distribution and accounting, all the way up to and through finals week.

Graduate increment

Graduate students enrolled in this class take on leadership roles on MJR staff. Overall, they face higher expectations in terms of performance and professionalism. In addition, each graduate student will prepare a class presentation on one of the following topics related to magazine publishing:

- The Magazine in a Digital World
- The Magazine as a Marketplace
- The Magazine as a Historical Document
- The Magazine as a Social Barometer
- Magazine Legalities: Understanding the Law

Required textbook

Johnson, S. & Prijatel, P. (Third Edition 2012). *The Magazine from Cover to Cover*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. \$79.95

Professionalism

To learn is your responsibility. Don't squander the opportunities this course affords.

- Make sure you understand assignments and meet all deadlines.
- 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 need to miss a class for a valid reason.
- You get one "free" absence, as long as you notify me in advance.
- You'll need to complete an extra assignment for each additional class you miss.
- Missing one third of classes will automatically result in failing the course.

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](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php) (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

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](http://life.umt.edu/dss) (<http://life.umt.edu/dss>) will assist in the accommodation process.