**Course description**

This course is an introduction to literary magazines and to the work of editing. We will examine the history of “little” magazines from the mid-nineteenth-century to the present day, and investigate their impact on literary culture (primarily in America). We will take stock of the current magazine landscape, print and digital, with a special focus on *The Common*, a new print literary magazine based at Amherst College. We will also study the art and technique of editing through reading essays by editors, editor-author correspondence, and original and edited texts. We will also engage in active editing work. Students will have weekly reading and writing assignments, regular editing assignments, a midterm and two final projects, and two class presentations.

**Course Reading**

There will be three kinds of reading for this class: 1) critical and historical perspectives on literary magazines and editing; 2) literary magazines (isolated stories and essays and whole issues); 3) unpublished short fiction and essays submitted to *The Common*.

\*\* denotes books/materials students must purchase, either online or at Amherst Books. All other materials will be available via e-reserves or passed out in class.

Periodicals

* *\*\*The Common* (one-year subscription, Issues 01 and 02) [purchase online at www.thecommonline.org/subscribe]
* *Mississippi Review,* special issue on literary magazines (vol. 36, #3, 2008)
* *ZYZZYVA: The Corporate Autobiography* (Fall/Winter, 2000)
* *The Little Review*, edited by Margaret Anderson, Jane Heap and Ezra Pound
* Other literary magazines

Articles

* “The Man in the Back Row Has a Question” *Paris Review* 167 (Fall, 2003)
* “Rough Crossings: The Cutting of Raymond Carver” *The New Yorker* (December 24, 2007), plus supplementary primary source material
* “Independent Presses and ‘Little’ Magazines in American Culture: A Forty-Year Retrospective,” by Gayle Feldman (Council of Literary Magazine and Presses, 2001)

Books

* *The Little Magazine: A History and Bibliography*, eds. Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, Carolyn F. Ulrich (Princeton Univ Press, 1946)
* *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History*, ed. Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie (Pushcart Press, 1978)
* *Women Editing Modernism: “Little” Magazines and Literary History*, by Jayne E. Marek (University Press of Kentucky, 1995)
* *Editor to Author: The Letters of Maxwell E. Perkins*, ed. by John Hall Wheelock (Scribner, 1950)
* *\*\*Editors on Editing: What Writers Need to Know About What Editors Do*, ed. by Gerald Gross (Grove Press, 1993) [purchase at Amhert Books]
* *The Little Magazines: A Study of Six Editors* by Ian Hamilton
* *Best American Short Stories of the Century* ed. by John Updike and Katrina Kenison (Houghton Mifflin, 1999).
* *\*\*The Whole Story: Editors on Fiction*, ed. Warren Slesinger (The Bench Press, 1995) [purchase at Amazon/Powell’s]
* *The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction*, ed. Ann Charters, Eighth Edition (Bedford/ St. Martins, 2010)
* *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*, ed. by Richard Bausch. 7th edition. (W.W. Norton, 2006)
* *\*\*Beginners: The Original Version of What We Talk about When We Talk About Love*, by Raymond Carver (Vintage, 2010) [purchase online, Amazon]
* *\*\*What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* by Raymond Carver (Vintage, 1989) [purchase at Amherst Books]
* *Pushcart Prize XXXV: Best of the Small Presses* (2011 Edition)
* *A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing 1960-1980*, edited by Steven Clay and Rodney Phillips (Granary Books, 1998)
* *The World of Zines: A Guide to the Independent Magazine Revolution*, by Mark Gunderloy and Cari Goldberg Janice (Penguin, 1992)
* *Pocket Pal: A Graphic Arts Production Handbook*
* *Writer’s Market*
* *Council of Literary Magazines and Presses Directory*

**Web resources**

* *The Common* Online: [www.thecommononline.org](http://www.thecommononline.org)
* The Modernist Journal’s Project: <http://dl.lib.brown.edu/mjp/index.html>
  + Digital, open access editions of modernist literature, including journals
* Council of Literary Magazines and Presses: [www.clmp.org](http://www.clmp.org)
  + A resource for independent publishers and of magazines and books. Includes a directory of member presses, background reading, and practical information for editors and writers.
* LunaPark Review: <http://lunaparkreview.blogspot.com>
  + A compilation of reviews and excerpts from a variety of literary magazines.
* New Pages: <http://www.newpages.com>
  + News, information, and guides to literary magazines, alternative periodicals, bookstores, and more.
* Duotrope’s Digest: <http://www.duotrope.com/index.aspx>
  + Online directory of magazines that includes viewer-added information about submitters experiences.

**Written work**

*Weekly writing assignments*

There will be short, weekly writing assignments. **Assignments are due in the Dropbox folder of the course page by 8 p.m. on Sunday night.**

Assignments include the following:

* Brief critical analyses of short fiction and essays
* One-page manuscript evaluations
* Brief analyses of literary magazines
* Brief (one- to two-paragraph) curatorial labels for an exhibition of literary magazines (see below)
* Editing assignments: edited manuscripts and a one-page letter to the author articulating editorial choices

*Blog post for* The Common *Online*

* Each student will write a short feature for the website of *The Common*
* Each student will be responsible for editing a classmate’s blog post

*Mid-term*

Five-page research paper on a literary magazine of your choice.

*Final projects*

There are two final projects for this class.

* The conception and description of a new literary magazine, edited by you. Written materials must include the journal’s name; an editorial or mission statement; a design description; an outline of the website’s design and features; a masthead complete with job descriptions; submission guidelines; instructions for internal readers about how to evaluate manuscript for your magazine. Select three already published pieces for a “dummy” issue, demonstrating the kinds of pieces you would publish.
* A portfolio of edited manuscripts accompanied by letters articulating your editorial decisions.

**Participation in and outside of class**

Students must attend and participate in every class. Students are also expected to attend extracurricular literary events such as readings and panel discussions. These will be scheduled in advance, so plan accordingly. Attendance will be taken.

*Presentations*

Each student will give two presentations related to mid-term and final projects.

1. Presentation on an existing or defunct literary magazine, print or digital. Present the magazine in historical context, including brief profiles of editors; describe its mission and the work it publishes; describe its strengths and weaknesses.
2. Presentation on the new literary magazine you create for your final project. Explain why your magazine is relevant now, the format (design and distribution), and your target audience.

*Exhibition for Amherst College Archives and Special Collections*

Much of the work of this class involves reading and evaluating literary magazines from 1840 to the present, of which Frost Library holds many important examples. Interested members of the class will curate a “Little” Magazine exhibit to go up at the end of the term, displayed through May 2012. We will host a College-wide opening reception for the exhibit in early December.