

Carleton University
Winter 2025 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 4139A: Editing a Literary Magazine

Prerequisites: fourth-year standing or permission of the department

Instructor: Chris Johnson
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***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

Course description: This main focus of this experiential learning course is editing, designing, and producing the online journal *Sumac Literary Magazine*. Seminar participants will work in teams to design and implement a production schedule, assess and edit submissions, collaborate with authors, and promote the magazine. Students will gain or practice their skills in digital editing software such as WordPress. There will be a dedicated laptop for this course, but given the digital components of this course students are encouraged to use their own laptops or library computers. The digital edition of *Sumac* will be accompanied by print supplements produced in MacOdrum Library's Book Arts Lab. Students will gain hands-on experience of letterpress printing and other traditional print-making techniques by producing broadsides or chapbooks that will accompany the digital edition of the magazine.

This is still a relatively new venture at Carleton; students enrolled in this course will have a chance to help shape the fourth edition of *Sumac Literary Magazine* and build on the groundwork of the first two editorial teams. We hope to conclude the course with a magazine launch, organized and hosted by seminar participants, and with readings by contributors.

Learning Outcomes: The student will reliably demonstrate the ability to...

- Articulate current trends, best practices and strategies for literary magazine publishing
 - Identify the ways different magazines target and serve varied audiences
- Develop, organize, and create a digital literary magazine using on-line publishing techniques
 - Acquire and edit text and art suitable for publication
 - Plan and create attractive, organized, and effective layouts based on sound principles and elements of design by efficiently using industry standard tools
 - Understand and apply industry best practices in planning, creating, proofing, managing files, and preflight and portable document format options
- Work as part of a creative production team

- Implement basic on-line branding and social media marketing using communication strategies
- Use fundamental printmaking skills

Texts:

- Submissions to *Sumac Literary Magazine*
- “The Little Magazines” section, pp. 203-227, from Dudek, Gnarowski, (Eds.) *The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017) – available from MacOdrum Library
- John Barton’s “Inside the Blind: On Editing Poetry” on *the Arc Poetry Magazine* website (<https://arcpoetry.ca/resources/on-editing-poetry/>)
- Fazeela Jiwa’s “The Radical Role of Developmental Editing” on *The Editors' Weekly*, official blog of Editors Canada (<https://blog.editors.ca/?p=10217>)
- *Elements of Indigenous style* – available via MacOdrum Library
- *The New Yorker* Poetry Podcast episode “How Do You Fact-Check a Poem?” (<https://www.newyorker.com/podcast/poetry/how-do-you-fact-check-a-poem>)

Evaluation:

- Attendance 5%
- Magazine Analysis 20%
- Editing Experience & Reflection 20%
- Broadside & Reflection 20%
- Final Reflection 35%

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.