

Magazine Reporting in Italy: The Urbino Project

A journalism study-abroad program in Urbino, Italy, June 10 to July 7, 2011

Welcome to the Urbino Magazine Project!

This month-long course in international reporting and writing will introduce you to the essentials of magazine journalism. Together, we will create the text, photography, and design for *Urbino Now*, a magazine about the people, culture, life, economy, food, and arts of Urbino, Italy, and the surrounding region of Le Marche. Aimed to inform and inspire English-speakers about the area, the magazine will be a reflection of your explorations and discoveries in this beautiful rural region of ancient fests, traditional crafts, slow food, and slower living. You will learn by doing, using the city of Urbino as a laboratory. The final product will be a print-on-demand magazine, available through MagCloud.

In addition, you will study basic Italian language and learn about the culture and history of Urbino and the Marche region. You will learn to work with an interpreter and navigate a foreign culture, getting a taste of what it's like to be a foreign correspondent in the 21st century.

OBJECTIVES

In this course you will:

- learn the fundamentals of magazine-making, such as understanding and targeting the reader; creating an identity and voice; and pacing and organizing content
- focus on the fundamentals of magazine journalism: interviewing and reporting; clear and engaging writing; and story structure (including leads and endings)
- learn how to identify, conceive, and shape a story idea (as opposed to a topic)
- learn to use text, images, design, and display copy as effective story-telling tools
- learn how to conceive and develop story “packages”
- learn to work with an editor during story development, reporting, and writing
- learn basic design principles and work with a designer to plan story presentation

FACULTY

- Susan West, editor of *Urbino Now* and director of the magazine program (susan@westgoldeditorial.com)
- Michael Gold, associate editor and magazine instructor (michael@westgoldeditorial.com)
- Lona Cobb, associate editor and magazine instructor (cobblo@wssu.edu)
- Johanna Guevara, art director (info@7one8.com)
- Francesca Carducci, Italian instructor and interpreter coordinator (fran.carducci@libero.it)
- Terri Ciofalo, program assistant (gogirl212@gmail.com)

CALENDAR

Week 1: You'll start getting acquainted with Urbino and the surrounding area, putting to immediate use your daily lessons in Italian language and culture. In class, we'll discuss the principles of "magazine making;" introduce the structure, voice, and approach of *Urbino Now*; and explore what it takes to develop a story. Much of your time this week will be devoted to identifying and researching stories that will bring Urbino and Le Marche alive for your readers. You'll be asked to present a compelling story pitch for your major assignment this week.

Week 2: With your major assignment approved, you'll focus on reporting and writing. The faculty will work with you in these areas, both in seminars and during one-on-one coaching. You'll also begin to develop visual ideas for your articles and pin down your secondary assignments. As in every week of the program, you'll have language class in the mornings and occasional critique sessions and cultural activities in the evenings.

Week 3: Story editing will be the focus this week, as you put the finishing touches on your major assignment and continue working on your secondary pieces. We will select the stories for the magazine and edit photographs. In class, we'll cover design principles and story "packaging," including headlines, subheads, and other display copy.

Week 4: You will work with your editor on final changes to your text and with the art director on photo selection, fitting text, captions, heads, subheads, and so on. We will choose a cover image, craft cover lines, and develop the table of contents.

MODULES

Magazine Making

Students will learn the importance of understanding the audience and how to construct a magazine based on the readers' needs, desires, and habits. We will explore how a magazine projects its identity—and connects with its readers—through cover images, design and layout, story approach and tone, the types of departments and features, pacing and organization, and so on. You will also gain an appreciation of how each member of a magazine's team contributes to the publication's identity and execution.

Magazine Reporting and Writing

Students will learn and practice the skills necessary for successful magazine journalism: Identifying and developing compelling story ideas aimed at a specific audience; targeting appropriate sources; effective interviewing; selecting an approach appropriate to the publication and the material; and weaving interviews and background material into a well-structured, clear, and engaging article. You will also learn to work with an editor in all aspects of story development and creation, accepting criticism and working creatively and collaboratively while framing the story concept, reporting, and writing.

Photography and design

Students will be introduced to the basic principles of magazine design and photography and their roles in establishing a publication's voice. You will be encouraged to "think visually": to

appreciate and use the tools of design—layout, image choice and size, type style, etc—to complement your text. You will identify and direct the photographic approach for each of your articles.

Magazine Editing

Students who choose this optional module will learn to methodically but quickly assess the quality of an article’s reporting and writing, develop suggestions to solve the story’s problems, and work with a writer to fix those problems. A good editor is part coach, part taskmaster, and always the reader’s advocate: You will learn how and when to apply the appropriate tactics to draw the best out of a writer so that your reader gets what she or he wants.

Italian Language and Culture

Over the course of our four weeks in Urbino, you will receive approximately 30 hours of Italian language instruction. Depending on your previous experience with the language, you will learn survival Italian—how to order in a restaurant, how to buy something in a store, how to introduce yourself to a source, etc.—or you will study at a more advanced level. All students will learn about the culture of Italy and specifically the Marche region.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student will be responsible for reporting and writing one medium-length feature article (1,000 to 1,500 words) and two short pieces. You will also be responsible for the photography that accompanies your articles, either taking the photos yourself or teaming up with a student-photographer. You will work with an interpreter to report these stories and will be assigned an editor with whom you will work to develop and polish your piece. You will also be expected to make sure the story is factually correct and to document all sources. And you will work with the magazine’s art director to plan the story presentation, fit the story to the layout, and write captions, headlines, and other display copy.

The magazine we will create will be a lively, in-depth guide to Urbino and Le Marche, aimed at English speakers. Your job is to find, report, and write articles that reveal the heart and soul of the region and its people, re-creating on the page the experience of life there. Your story might be a profile, an exploration of a cultural or culinary tradition, a destination piece, a look at a local industry—such as shoe design, fashion, hat-making, accordion production, or lace making—an historical analysis, a practical guide to some aspect of the city or region, or a report or critique related to music, sports, or the arts. As we work together to develop the magazine’s content, the editors may decide to group related stories into a single “package,” and you may be assigned to an ad hoc team that will work collaboratively on a story package.

You will be expected to attend weekly “staff meetings,” where we will review progress and make decisions on stories, photography, and design. If you have a particular interest in editing, you may, as an option, substitute the editing of another student’s story (or stories) for the reporting and writing of one or more of your shorter articles. All students will be involved in copy-editing and proofing stories for grammar, style, and consistency. Your byline will appear on the article(s) you write, and your name will appear on the magazine masthead as an editor, writer, and/or photographer, depending on your involvement.

The course will follow a Monday through Thursday schedule, allowing you time to travel or visit local sites on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday—provided you have completed your assignments for that week. Each day will start with a language and culture class, followed by a seminar, one-on-one coaching, or reporting and writing on your own. Following the local custom, we will break from about 1 pm to 3 pm—which means you will need to arrange your interviews outside of these hours. Additional one-on-one coaching, as well as cultural events and critique sessions will take place some evenings.

Your work will not automatically be placed in the magazine: Space in the magazine is limited, and the writing, reporting, and photography must achieve a high standard. Faculty members reserve the right not to publish any work that is offensive, libelous, or poor quality. Plagiarism will earn an F.

If your work is especially strong, we will help you place it elsewhere professionally. For example, Big World magazine (<http://www.bigworldmagazine.com>), an online travel and culture magazine, may be interested in publishing your work.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all classes and participation in assigned activities and fieldwork is mandatory. The success of the project depends on working closely together, learning all the technical/creative aspects, and meeting all deadlines. Only serious illness or disability will be permitted as excuses for absence or lateness. Lackadaisical participation will be considered a serious breach of the professionalism required in this course. Students are expected to come to every class prepared, to be attentive, and to participate in all activities.

GRADING

Students will receive one grade for the course, an average of the grades for each module, for professionalism, and for citizenship. The instructors will give grades based on the following standards:

A Work is excellent in all respects, meeting the highest standards of journalism. It is complete, done well, and turned in on deadline. Work could be published in a professional publication with little to no editing or reworking.

B The work meets most but not all of the requirements of excellence. Work could be published in a professional publication with some editing or reworking.

C The work meets the deadlines but only barely meets requirements of excellence. The work may lack a strong grasp of the principles of journalism. It could be published in a professional publication only with significant reworking.

D Work fails to meet most deadlines and/or basic journalism standards. It could not be published in a professional publication without a total reworking.

F Work is not turned in on deadline or fails to meet basic journalism standards. It is absolutely unpublishable.

PROFESSIONALISM

Program participants are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. This includes:

- Treating faculty, staff, and fellow students with respect and courtesy
- Coming prepared to group meetings with suggestions and ideas
- Attending all class sessions and showing up on time
- Acting respectfully toward interview subjects and interpreters
- Using the equipment responsibly
- Working through challenges and conflicts in a mature, responsible way.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

One of the goals of the program is that students get to know the local culture and customs of Urbino. Good citizenship means:

- Exploring the culture, attractions, foods, and traditions of Le Marche and Italy
- Being respectful of the local environment and local customs
- Being a responsible neighbor/tenant
- Getting to know Urbino residents

DEADLINES

Monday 6/13	Scavenger hunt photos due (7 pm)
Wednesday 6/15	Story pitch for major assignment due (5 pm)
Monday 6/20	Optional portrait photos due (7 pm)
Wednesday 6/22	Story pitches for secondary assignments due (5 pm)
Monday 6/27	First draft of major assignment (text and photos) due (9 am)
Wednesday 6/29	First draft of second assignment (text and photos) due (9 am)
Thursday 6/30	First draft of third assignment (text and photos) due (9 am)
Sunday 7/3	All final text and photographs due (5 pm)

USEFUL WEBSITES

Marche Voyager Detailed online database full of events, excursions, restaurants, and resources <http://www.le-marche.com/Marche/index.htm#>

Le Marche Travel Guide Many ideas for cultural travel
<http://www.le-marche-travel-guide.com/>

Best of Le Marche <http://www.my-italy-piedmont-marche-and-more.com/best-of-le-marche.html>

Official website of the Le Marche region <http://www.regione.marche.it/>

Comune di Urbino <http://www.comune.urbino.ps.it/>

Towns of Le Marche
<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Marche/home.html>

Gai Piceno Site covering 40+ towns in southern Le Marche
http://www.galpiceno.it/index_en.php

Dream Marche <http://www.dreamarche.it/press.php>

Slow Travel Le Marche http://www.slowtrav.com/anne/le_marche.htm

Lonely Planet (online only) <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy/umbria-and-le-marche/le-marche/places>

Restaurant Guides <http://www.lavitalemarche.com/>
http://www.letsgo.com/17846-le_marche-travel-guides-urbino-restaurants-c

RESOURCES

Currency Converter <http://www.bloomberg.com/personal-finance/calculators/currency-converter/>

Online translator <http://www.languageresourceonline.com/pilot.asp?pg=translator>

More travel navigation tools from Big World Magazine (miles to kilometers, etc)
<http://www.bigworldmagazine.com/travel-calculators/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative course schedule. Some magazine seminars may be moved to the evenings so that you can spend your days reporting and writing. We may also organize sessions on selected topics as the need arises.

- Friday 6/10 Students arrive at Rome airport (FCO)
 Bus to Urbino leaves airport at 2 pm.
 Settle in on campus.
- Saturday 6/11 9:30 am Meet at student dorm for tour of city with Francesca Carducci
 (Italian instructor). Plus, intro to scavenger hunt (to help you get to know
 Urbino and to warm up your photography skills, you'll be given a list of
 things to look for and photograph around town). Tour ends at Saturday
 market.
 7 pm Group dinner
- Sunday 6/12 10 am Overview of magazine course
 Scavenger hunt

Week One: Refining the magazine idea; choosing your stories

- Monday 6/13 9 am Seminar: What makes a good magazine?
 Introduction to *Urbino Now*
 Story idea and section brainstorming
- 11:15 am Introduction to interpreters
- 3 pm In-class writing assignment
- 3:45-4:45 pm Italian class
- 7 pm Scavenger hunt photos due**
- Tuesday 6/14 9 am Short session: Working with an interpreter
 Seminar: Developing a story and a story pitch
 Story idea and section brainstorming
- Research and reporting on your own
 Faculty consultation as needed
- 3:45-4:45 pm Italian class
- 8:30 Scavenger hunt photo critique session
- Wednesday 6/15 9 am Seminar: Magazine design principles
 Research and reporting on your own
 Faculty consultation as needed
- 3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

5 pm Story pitch for major assignment due

Thursday 6/16 Meetings with assigned faculty to review & decide story pitches
Research and reporting on your own
Faculty consultation as needed
Interpreters set up interview appointments for next week
Optional camera controls session

3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

Friday 6/17 Free (if your assignments are done)

Saturday 6/18 Free (if your assignments are done)

Sunday 6/19 Free (if your assignments are done)

Week Two: The elements of a good story; reporting and writing

Monday 6/20 9 am Staff meeting: Review of tasks for the week
10 am Seminar: Story structure

Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own
Faculty consultation as needed

3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

7 pm Portrait photos due (optional)

Tuesday 6/21 9 am Seminar: Reporting and interviewing

Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own
Faculty consultation as needed

3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

8:30 Portrait critique session

Wednesday 6/22 9 am Seminar: Clear and engaging writing

Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own
Faculty consultation as needed

3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

5 pm Story pitches for secondary assignments due

- Thursday 6/23 Meetings with assigned faculty to review & decide story pitches
Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own
Faculty consultation as needed
Interpreters set up interview appointments for next week
3:45-4:45 pm Italian class
- Friday 6/24 Free (if your assignments are done)
- Saturday 6/25 Free (if your assignments are done)
- Sunday 6/26 Free (if your assignments are done)

Week Three: Writing and editing; preliminary design

- Monday 6/27 9 am Staff meeting: Prelim story line-up and tasks for the week
Major assignment (text & photos) due at staff meeting
10:15 am Italian class
Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own
Text and photo editing, and faculty consultation as needed
- Tuesday 6/28 10:15 am Italian class
Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own
Text and photo editing, and faculty consultation as needed
- Wednesday 6/29 **9 am Second assignment (text & photos) due**
10:15 am Italian class
Research, reporting, writing, photography on your own
Text and photo editing, and faculty consultation as needed
- Thursday 6/30 **9 am Third assignment (text & photos) due**
10:15 am Italian class
Research, reporting, writing, and photography on your own

Text and photo editing, and faculty consultation as needed

Friday 7/1 Text and photo editing, and faculty consultation as needed

Saturday 7/2 9 am Staff meeting: Final story line-up

Final text and photo editing; faculty consultation as needed

Sunday 7/3 Heads & decks, captions, table of contents
Final text and photo editing; faculty consultation as needed

5 pm All final text and photographs due

Week Four: Final edits and design

Monday 7/4 Final edits, layout, story fitting, and proofing

3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

Tuesday 7/5 Final edits, layout, story fitting, and proofing

3:45-4:45 pm Italian class

Wednesday 7/6 Wrap up, pack

Thursday 7/7 Early am: Students return to Rome airport (FCO) via bus