

NEWSLETTER: SERIES, EPISODE, EDITION

Create a web-based newsletter addressing a topic or theme of your choosing. Your newsletter can take any form as long it is divided into at least four (or more) parts. Bear in mind, these four parts should grow or develop in some way, as opposed to a rinse-repeat formula. The content of your newsletter is yours to decide: if you write, write; if you draw, draw; if you shoot film or video, do so. The format, length, typography, and overall design of your newsletter should be shaped by and in turn shape its contents. You will publish your newsletter as a series of simple, hand-built web pages. In addition to these web-pages, you will also need to highlight, summarize, annotate, or tease the content of each new edition in an email.



IMAGE Moyra Davey, *Untitled (Three Butts)*, 2014. Digital C-Print, tape, postage, ink; 28 × 43 cm, unique (mailer H)

The idea of the “Newsletter” can be interpreted loosely. This does not have to be a short essay or a deluge of promotions and deals at some store. I encourage you to think about what you want to see, or to receive online and pursue that, to consider your newsletter as something composed, carried, cared for, sent, and delivered to a specific audience – to consider a website as a portal to another world, your world.

You might choose to address current socio-cultural, environmental, or political topics: climate change, U.F.O.s, Covid-19, the Olympics; to provide resources: links, texts, hacks, recipes; to focus on yourself: introspect or journal, daily routines, exercise, diet; to converse with others: reach out to artists, friends, family, strangers, conduct interviews; or to take this somewhere else entirely. The choice is yours to make.

REQUIREMENTS

A YOUR NEWSLETTER SERIES MUST:

- Have a title
- Offer some indication of seriality – could be indexed, dated, encrypted, your choice
- Be composed of a minimum of 4 parts (could be more, can't be less)

B YOUR NEWSLETTER'S WEBSITE MUST:

- Contain all issues of your newsletter series by the end of the session. Think about how it looks with 1, 10, or 100 issues present. How does your site sunset or fade off in time?
- Have some sort of functional navigation to each issue / episode of your series.
- Offer context, some sort of explanation or extended caption about what it is you're doing. You might think of it as "About" page, an abstract, or a summary. This section of your site can be as informative, descriptive, informal, poetic, cryptic, etc., as you like. Context should be considered a part of your content and includes titles, metadata, descriptions, and so on.
- Use a custom Domain Name*
- Offer some way to allow users to sign up or subscribe to your newsletter – a functional form or contact information.

C EACH OF THE EMAILS (MINIMUM OF 4) MUST:

- In some way highlight, summarize, annotate, or tease the content of your site
- Include a new, unique Subject Line (not a thread)
- Have an audience size of at least 30 recipients (your classmates can be included in that count)
- Include some "live text." An image of text (header, logo, etc.) is technically an image. While you are welcome to include these, they cannot be the only thing you send.

D GENERALLY:

- Aim to keep your file sizes down. No single email should really exceed 10 MB. No single image should exceed 2MB. Unless, big files are somehow imperative to your subject. – Keep your file sizes down.
- Any should use the Alt. Text attribute – will review in class how to write good alt. text.
- If you did not create an image, you must cite its source and credit its creator. This citation should just take the form of a well-formatted image caption. If you can't credit it, don't use it.

SCHEDULE

PHASE 1: Research

Due Thursday, July 15

- A newsletter can be many things, go through your email inbox, bookshelf, local library or bookstore, apartment / home, go for a walk. Take note of anything you're particularly fond that offers some degree of "seriality". You may be drawn to it due to its contents, your own sentimentality, its layout, style, color, etc. Collect 3 (Scan, photograph, record audio narration, draw, etc.) examples that you feel comfortable sharing with the class.
- Send your examples in an email to the class before our next meeting on Thursday afternoon.

PHASE 2: Inventing

Due Sunday, July 18

- Decide 2 entirely different ideas for your newsletter along with some possible content. Compose a 100-300 word (approx.) write-up for each newsletter. In addition to the writeup, include 10 keywords, phrases, images, or references for each direction. See **Getting Started** for help.
- Send your 2 ideas to me and to the class in an email.

PHASE 2: Planning

Due by Friday, July 23

- Based on your own intuition and the feedback you received after **Step 1**, choose a direction.
- Begin refining planning, and creating content for your series. Start thinking seriously about details like title, domain name, Email subject lines, a unique email address, layout, typography, and how all this might lead to an iterative system.
- Send out the first of the emails in your newsletter out, highlighting the content to come.

PHASE 3: Design

Due in-class Thursday, July 29

- Design 2 visually distinct drafts of your website and how your content will appear online.
- Present these two directions during an in-class critique on the 29th.

PHASE 4: Development

July 30 – August 11

- Based on feedback from the critique, begin to refine your website's design and start the development process.
- Set small development goals to prevent yourself from getting stuck, for example: finish site navigation, refine typography, mark up about page, work on mobile styles, etc. Much of this half of the course will be focused on 1-on-1 meetings and building out your site and its content.

FINAL CRITIQUE

August 12

- All requirements met
- Website with custom domain online and available.

GETTING STARTED

The following prompts and questions are here to help you start thinking seriously and critically about your newsletter. They are not meant to be answered literally nor are you required to answer them at all – only a launchpad that you may or may not find useful.

Coming up with your idea:

- How does my idea operate serially? How do I do it again, but different?
- What do you want to share with others?
- What are you an expert in? What are you an amateur in with strong opinions?
- What do you wish you could read (in an email or on a website) but have not?
- What examples / references resonate with you? Why?
- What do you currently enjoy doing, reading, seeing?
- Do I have one single idea – a narrative sent out in installments – or is each issue something completely different?
- Who do I hope sees this: friends, colleagues, a crush, the government, random strangers, your future self, extra-terrestrial beings?
- What do I need to better connect with that audience?

Deciding your content:

- What sort of experience do I want someone to have – visual, auditory, quick, slow, fun, tragic, mysterious, horrific, etc.?
- What feelings or thoughts will my audience have when they receive a notification, when they read the subject line, while they're reading? Excitement, confusion, anger, dread, laughter.
- Am I doing too many things at once?
- Are some things better left unsaid?
- Do I want to invite for a response or prompt an action?
 - “Don't forget to hit like and subscribe”
 - “Leave your comments below”
 - “Send fan mail to PO Box ...”
- Will you have live events or material objects: readings, sweepstakes, surveys, merch, printed materials, etc.?
- How might change how the content is understood – is your design technical, serious, ironic, morose, playful, tongue-in-cheek, etc.?
- Is there something else that should be added to improve this?
- When do you send your newsletter – day, night, witching hour, sunrise, sunset, randomly, just before bed?
- How often do you send it – every day, weekly intervals, whenever you feel like?
- What can you get away with? What have you wanted to do anyway outside of class?

REFERENCES, STARTING POINTS

The following list offers references, examples, and possible points of inspiration that might help you get started. In no particular order, this list contains newsletters, serial print publications, and other examples of what a newsletter or serial publishing could entail. Mentions ≠ Endorsements.

ONLINE

[Real News](#)

by Rosa McElheny and Hilary duPont.

[Laurel's 'Letter' newsletter.](#)

A general, periodic letter from the artist and designer Laurel Schwulst.

[TCI Newsletter](#)

"Exploring the emotional and practical facets of creating..."

[ICA Daily Newsletter](#)

Recommendations of reading, viewing, listening and more from the ICA London

[\[SLUG\]](#)

"[SLUG] publishes pamphlets and distributes them via email."

[Avery Shorts](#)

"Short-form architectural writing through email."

[Internetting with Amanda Hess](#)

NYTimes "Amanda Hess decodes the culture of the internet"

[The Julie/Julia Project](#)

"365 days. 536 recipes. One girl and a crappy outer borough kitchen."

[a newsletter](#)

Alison Roman's weekly newsletter with recipes, stories, and recommendations.

[Other News](#)

News from Other Means, a graphic design studio in New York City.

[Hacker Newsletter](#)

"Weekly newsletter of the best articles on startups, technology, programming, and more."

TEXTS DON'T HAVE TO TACKLE ANY ONE, SINGLE SUBJECT:

Ryan Gander, [Loose Associations PDF](#) and [Video](#)

Seth Price, [Notes on this Show](#) and [Redistribution](#), among others.

IN PRINT

[The Fungifile](#)

[Newsletter of the Triangle Area Mushroom Club](#)

[80s Metal Newsletters from Slayer or Hellhammer](#)

[Riot Grrrl and the Grrrl Zine Network](#)

"Start a fuckin riot"

Will Holder, [Middle of Nowhere](#)

ARTISTS AND WRITERS APPROACHING THE 'EVERYDAY' AS SUBJECT MATTER

[John Smith, The Girl Chewing Gum](#)

[Sophie Calle, Cash Machine](#)

[Moyra Davey](#)

[Georges Perec's writings](#)

[Mark E. Smith's songs](#)

[Pati Hill's photocopier work](#)

MISC.

[ARM Tutorial](#)

and Alan Resnick's other YouTube tutorials.

[Art Thoughts, Hennessy Youngman](#)

Contemporary art and race relations in a YouTube-based performance work

[Krzysztof Kieślowski's Three Colours](#)

[Eva and Franco Mattes, Life Sharing](#)

"A radical gesture of self-surveillance."

[Brian Mackern, netart latino database](#)

"Hundreds of links to works by Latin American artists as well as related online discussions and criticism."

[Jane Goodall's field observations](#)

[Amalia Ulman, Excellences & Perfections](#)