

Magazine making
ARCH 679
School of Architecture
McGill University
Hans Ibelings
Fall 2013

From 1980 to 2002, the McGill School of Architecture had a student-run architectural magazine, The Fifth Column. The aim of this course is to train the magazine's future editors and publishers to reinvent and relaunch the magazine.

The course is based on the principle of learning by doing and contains the following elements: defining the aims of the publication, developing an editorial format and graphic identity (and sticking to it); finding the right medium and means of distribution for the message the magazine wants to convey; organizing and managing the production; editing texts and images; identifying potential writers and readers; marketing and advertising the magazine.

Aside from this, the course will address the fundamental questions what an architectural magazine can be today, and for whom you make it.

The outcome of the course should be the launch of a first issue of The New Fifth Column around the end of 2013, and the contents and organization of at least two more issues. Participants should each make a distinctive editorial and organizational contribution to the first issue, and to commit themselves to continue to work on the magazine after the end of the course.

The course instructor is architectural editor and publisher Hans Ibelings, founder of A10 new European architecture and The Architectural Observer.

Sessions: Wednesdays, 12:30–2:30, Macdonald-Harrington building, Room 206.

Contact: Hans Ibelings 514-419-6091, hans@architectureobserver.eu

Readings:

Alexandra Lange, **DIY Magazines**, (Domusweb March 18, 2013)

<http://www.domusweb.it/en/design/2013/03/18/diy-magazines.html>

Michael Levin, **In Book Publishing Today, Size No Longer Matters**, (Huffington Post, 02/04/2013 2:47pm)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michaellevin/book-length_b_2602507.html

Alessandro Ludovico, **Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing Since 1894** (Eindhoven 2011)

http://monoskop.org/images/a/a6/Ludovico%2C_Alessandro_-_Post-Digital_Print._The_Mutation_of_Publishing_Since_1894.pdf

Note the 34 previous issues of The Fifth Column have been scanned and will be available on-line in September 2013.

Requirements:

Attendance and contribution to the process of developing the magazine (25%)

Editorial contribution to the magazine (25%)

Managing and production of the magazine (25%)

Collective result of the magazine (25%)

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded." (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

Program

The first month is used for the development of a concept of The New Fifth Column, the rest of the semester will be spent on the actual making of the magazine, for which the schedule offers a provisional planning, which will be revised whenever necessary during the course.

4 September

Introduction

The first session will be devoted to the editorial concept for a magazine. What will be The New Fifth Column's raison d'être? How does the new magazine relate to the old Fifth Column and how can it explore and exploit the magazine's content (which has already been scanned completely)? As an introduction everyone should present his or her favorite magazine/website/blog/app in any field, prepare an analysis of its structure, explain why it is so good (topics, sections, angles, images, graphics, graphic design) and how the qualities of one's favorites could be translated into The New Fifth Column. Moreover, everyone should come with suggestion what it could contain and what it could actually be: Paper? PDF? Website? Flipboard? Cross-media? Stand-alone? Integrated? Mainstream? Guerrilla? Mass-media? Exclusive? Popular? Elitist? Does it consist of coherent single issues, or will it be a perpetually updated like a blog?

11 September

Editorial line, format, medium, frequency

Any magazine (or magazine-like publication) in whatever medium needs a clear structure so that readers know how to navigate. How can we integrate all ideas into a clear format, that is strong enough to survive for a couple of years? Which medium would work best for the message? What is the mission of The New Fifth Column? What is its subject? Who are its readers? How often will it appear? How will readers know that a new issue comes out? Which sections and genres will the magazine contain?

18 September

Style

The editorial policy, format and medium need to be translated in a coherent and distinctive look and feel of The New Fifth Column. The visual appearance, the graphic design, the topics, genres and angles of different pieces, the style of writing, the image editing and the balance between text and image all have a tremendous impact on what the magazine is going to be, and to whom it will appeal. The conclusion of a discussion about the style of the magazine should be a brief for the graphic design.

25 September

Team and planning

How is the editorial team organized, who will be responsible for what?

And what needs to be done to have the first issue/version ready before the end of the year?

For this we should define the size and frequency of the magazine, with an estimation of the workload.

2 October

Start making #1

Selecting the topics, angles and authors for the pieces of the first issue, commissioning pieces, starting the images/illustration editing.

9 October

Outline/framework for next issues

Longlist of topics and themes for the different sections for upcoming issues.

16 October

First sketches for the graphic design

23 October

First draft of the texts

30 October

Final version of texts, image editing

6 November

Start lay-out #1

13 November

Finalizing #1

20 November

Finalizing #1, organizing launch #1

27 November

Evaluation of the process and of #1, planning and commissioning #2 and #3