

LITERARY REPORTAGE (MFA)

Department Website (<http://journalism.nyu.edu>)

NYSED: 40728 HEGIS: 0602.00 CIP: 09.0702

Program Description

Journalism schools produce good reporters; MFA programs train beautiful writers. The Literary Reportage program combines the best of both. And, as of 2020, our students will receive an MFA, rather than an MA. Other than the degree, nothing about the program will change. The MFA is merely recognition of the merits and methods of the existing program. One advantage of an MFA is that it is a terminal degree, recognized as a teaching credential by nonfiction MFA programs.

At Literary Reportage, we will teach you how to transform your passions into well reported, thoroughly researched, beautifully expressed journalism. Literary Reportage students pursue their own long form projects (<https://journalism.nyu.edu/graduate/programs/literary-reportage/student-theses/>), mentored by veteran writers (<https://journalism.nyu.edu/graduate/programs/literary-reportage/faculty/>) in reporting classes and seminars.

We'll teach you how to do what Tom Wolfe once termed "stylish reporting," how to master the art of the interview, and then go beyond it. We have a much more expansive, ethnographic approach to reporting than most other journalism programs. Literary Reportage students cover every subject imaginable: a meditation on the nature of trails; an exploration of the underground world; an investigation of the political and real estate corruption behind the construction of Yankee Stadium; the search for a New York writer who vanished half a century ago. Perhaps you will become a participant-observer in order to tell the inside story. Or maybe you have a strong personal connection to your story, and choose to fashion it as a kind of memoir. Or maybe your advantage will come from the intensive research you do, whether in government archives or libraries.

We embrace all forms of nonfiction, particularly print and audio. Literary Reportage distinguishes itself from other MFA programs by stressing the value of examining personal experience through the reporting and research that comes from the world outside one's head. That way, when you sit down to fashion your narrative, you'll have a richer set of materials to work with, and a greater chance of publishing your work in professional venues (<https://journalism.nyu.edu/graduate/programs/literary-reportage/student-work/>), whether while at NYU or beyond. The Literary Reportage faculty and alumni network will introduce you to editors at every publication imaginable. So far, the program has produced five books, each of which came directly out of the participant's final thesis.

How do you apply? You will submit a sample of your existing work (articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, essays—published or not), and a description of the kind of project you want to pursue while at NYU. Your passions and obsessions are valuable, they are what make for good writing. We want to hear know more about them. Think big, but also think concretely: What particular works or authors have inspired you and your project? What journalistic forms could you imagine it taking? What models do you have in mind? We don't care if you change your mind later — experimentation is part of the idea. Your project will become clearer once you've worked on it with our faculty and your colleagues.

Projects can be local, national, or international in scope. But since much of your reporting will be done while in residence at NYU, your project should have some kind of a NYC dimension. Some students divide their time between their final international or national project and its local iterations. A lot of travel and reporting can be accomplished during summers and other breaks, and we offer travel/research grants to help you.

We encourage you to pursue a project in whatever form you like. Some Literary Reportage students want to write books (<https://journalism.nyu.edu/graduate/programs/literary-reportage/journalism-by-litrep-alumni/>) and articles (<https://journalism.nyu.edu/graduate/programs/literary-reportage/student-work/>), while others produce audio podcasts (<https://journalism.nyu.edu/graduate/programs/literary-reportage/audio-reportage/>). You will learn how to work in all of these forms. Much of the best literary reportage today is appearing on audio podcasts like This American Life, Serial, 99% Invisible and Radiolab. And there have never been so many opportunities to publish, and get jobs, in the podcast world. We have integrated audio storytelling into the program, and every Literary Reportage student takes two week-long audio crash courses—one immediately before the start of the fall semester, and another immediately before the start of the spring semester. We also offer semester-long audio courses and free weekend skills courses throughout the year. But the most important thing we teach is how think in terms of "stories." Rigorously reported, well-researched, imaginative, artfully written stories.

Admissions

All applicants to the Graduate School of Arts and Science (GSAS) are required to submit the general application requirements (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/nyu-as/gsas/admissions/arc.html>), which include:

- Academic Transcripts (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/nyu-as/gsas/admissions/arc/academic-transcripts.html>)
- Test Scores (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/nyu-as/gsas/admissions/arc/test-scores.html>) (if required)
- Applicant Statements (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/nyu-as/gsas/admissions/arc/statements.html>)
- Résumé or Curriculum Vitae
- Letters of Recommendation (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/nyu-as/gsas/admissions/arc/letters-of-recommendation.html>), and
- A non-refundable application fee (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/admissions/arc.html#fee>).

See Journalism (<https://gsas.nyu.edu/admissions/arc/programs/journalism.html>) for admission requirements and instructions specific to this program.

Program Requirements

| Course | Title | Credits |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|
| Major Requirements | | |
| JOUR-GA 1021 | Writing/Report Wkshp I | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 1022 | Writing/Report Wkshp II | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 1044 | Portfolio | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 2048 | Introduction to Literary Reportage | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 1193 | Introduction to Audio Reportage | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 2090 | Master's Thesis | 1-4 |
| JOUR-GA 1290 | Fieldwork in Journalism | 1-4 |
| Electives | | |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Other Elective Credits | 12 |
| Total Credits | 38 |

Additional Program Requirements

Capstone

The capstone project for the program is a significantly reported, publishable master's thesis of up to 10,000 words in length (or a similarly substantial work of audio journalism). The student completes work on the project while enrolled in JOUR-GA 2090 Master's Thesis.

Apprenticeship

Literary Reportage students are required to take a 2-credit apprenticeship in their third or fourth semester.

Sample Plan of Study

| Course | Title | Credits |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1st Semester/Term | | |
| JOUR-GA 2048 | Introduction to Literary Reportage | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 1021 | Writing/Report Wkshp I | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 1193 | Introduction to Audio Reportage | 4 |
| Credits | | 12 |
| 2nd Semester/Term | | |
| JOUR-GA 1022 | Writing/Report Wkshp II | 4 |
| JOUR-GA 1044 | Portfolio | 4 |
| Credits | | 8 |
| 3rd Semester/Term | | |
| JOUR-GA 1290 | Fieldwork in Journalism | 1-4 |
| Journalism Elective | | 4 |
| Journalism Elective | | 4 |
| Credits | | 10 |
| 4th Semester/Term | | |
| JOUR-GA 2090 | Master's Thesis | 1-4 |
| Journalism Elective | | 4 |
| Apprenticeship | | |
| Credits | | 8 |
| Total Credits | | 38 |

Graduate School of Arts and Science Policies

Academic Policies for the Graduate School of Arts and Science can be found on the Academic Policies page (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/arts-science/academic-policies/>).

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will have learned:

1. How to transform their passions into well reported, thoroughly researched, beautifully expressed journalism.
2. How to report creatively, using the techniques of anthropology and ethnography.
3. How to conceive of, report, structure and produce ambitious narrative stories, whether in print or audio.
4. To work ethically, treating their subjects with respect and maintaining high intellectual and moral standards.

Policies

NYU Policies

University-wide policies can be found on the New York University Policy pages (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/nyu/policies/>).