

Unit Assignment: Make a Zine!

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"When making a zine, you do not have to follow a rubric, structure, or organizational pattern."
-Julianna Holshue, from "[Zine Making is for The Scatterbrained](https://www.rowanglassworks.org/opinion/zine-making-is-for-the-scatterbrained)
(<https://www.rowanglassworks.org/opinion/zine-making-is-for-the-scatterbrained>)" (*Glassworks*)

We begin our course by taking a practical look at the grassroots side of self-publishing by exploring the world of zines — photocopied and hand-assembled print publications with small print runs of 200 copies or less. You'll get a sense of what they are on the first day, ordering zines online, making mini-zines, and developing a plan for producing your own. I'll introduce you to some methods of production and distribution and you'll hopefully try to sell yours at our table at the [Collingswood Book Festival](https://www.collingswoodbookfestival.com/) (<https://www.collingswoodbookfestival.com/>) on Saturday, October 2.

Zines are difficult to categorize, let alone evaluate. In fact, as my colleague [Kelly McElroy](https://twitter.com/kellymce) (<https://twitter.com/kellymce>) argues, "What makes an "A" zine, and who the hell are you to decide that?" (source: [Broken Pencil](https://brokenpencil.com/news/educating-with-zines/) (<https://brokenpencil.com/news/educating-with-zines/>)). Hence, grading for this unit is determined by you, with some supporting structure coming from the class and from me. The process is a bit complicated, but works like this:

1. Pitch 2-3 zine ideas via Canvas Discussion. Each idea will include ideas and info about potential:

- *content* (title, themes you'll explore using writing/drawing/photography/etc.)
- *materials* (kinds of paper, colors, binding, ink, printing method, etc.)
- *format* (size of pages, # of total pages, layout/structure)
- *circulation* (# of copies, what machine you'll use to copy, and where you might distribute it in your community and online)

2. Peer review of pitches. Each member of the class will then review at least some of these pitches and provide you with feedback.

3. Talk with me. After you've gotten feedback, we'll meet on Zoom to discuss your ideas. Since I'll have read everyone's ideas by then, I'll have a better understanding of what the community standards are (that is, what an "A" zine might entail). At this conference we'll discuss the work involved and I will make some suggestions or other ideas you might consider for your zine, especially based on the creative efforts of the class.

4. Use feedback to craft a tentative plan. After we've conferenced and met once as a class to discuss more zine-making options, you will turn your pitch into a game plan by sharing a Google

Doc with me. At this point the document becomes a flexible agreement— that is, a reference point for your final zine and the accompanying statement.

5. Make your zine. This step is the messy part, but you'll basically try to do the thing you planned in step 4. Expect failure, but also innovation and resilience. You also have my help (and my copy access if needed).

6. Distribute your physical zine and put it online. Assuming campus hasn't been shut down due to rising COVID cases, anyone who wants to can distribute their zine in Glassboro and at the Collingswood Book Festival. You'll also put it online somewhere so readers who encounter your zine irl can find it on the info superhighway as well.

7. Reflect. After making and sharing your zine, you'll reflect on that experience via an accompanying statement. Things will certainly change as you make and share your zine; the accompanying statement will help you be accountable for them. At the end of the unit — that is, after your zine has been distributed — you'll share a copy with me along with a Google Doc statement (share link via this assignment) that considers several questions, below. Your statement will be single-spaced and formatted using a 12-point, readable font. If you are contracting for an A (or striving for one), this statement will need to be at least 1,200 words. Here's a [good example \(https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jrbjTiUIOSHEAtecKwE0bNzr6oeyhw18&authuser=luther%40rowan.edu&usp=drive fs\)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jrbjTiUIOSHEAtecKwE0bNzr6oeyhw18&authuser=luther%40rowan.edu&usp=drive_fs).

Required:

- What goals did you have for this zine and did you meet them?
- Assess your grade. What did you earn and why?

Encouraged:

- Think about yourself at the start of this unit/course. What was the extent of your experience or knowledge of zines and DIY print communities at the beginning of the unit? What did you learn about them and how did it apply to your zine?
- Discuss how you arrived at the the idea for your zine. Was it inspired by something specific?
- Talk about the limitations and choices you made with regard to the materials of your zine, the tools required, and social circumstances surrounding its creation? What was your vision and how was it compromised by these materials, tools, and circumstances?
- If applicable, reflect on your experience planning and witnessing your zine in the wild. Were you inspired by where it ended up? Did you get any feedback?
- Discuss the implications of creating your zine with regard to your future as a writer. How did zine'ing support or complicate your goals?
- What will Issue #2 of your zine look like? How will it build from the lessons of Issue #1?

Submitting. Please draft and design your zine reflection in a Google Doc. To share and submit:

1. Click the blue share button at the top right of your reflection in Google Docs.
2. Add my email ([luther@rowan.edu \(mailto:luther@rowan.edu\)](mailto:luther@rowan.edu)) and choose "commenter" or "editor."
3. *Unclick* the "Notify people" box (so I do not get 30+ emails).
4. Click "share" and copy the URL.
5. Navigate to this assignment in Canvas and paste the URL in the appropriate field and submit.

Points 50

Submitting a website url

Due	For	Available from	Until
Oct 7, 2021	Everyone	-	-