Syllabus - Newsletter strategies for journalists: How to create, grow & monetize newsletters

The course is divided into four weekly modules

Introduction Module: Course Description

Instructors: Joseph Lichterman, Caroline Porter, and Emily Roseman

In the introductory module, you will watch a welcome video and meet the instructors for the course. The video will provide an overview of the course, and the instructors will begin to discuss why newsletters are an essential platform for both individual journalists and news organizations. You can also review the course's introductory reading materials.

Module 1: Choosing the Right Newsletter: What is Important for Your Audience—and You

Instructor: Emily Roseman

(February 22 - February 28, 2021)

One should never start a newsletter just to check a box.

Newsletter format, tone, content and overall strategy should be rooted in what works best for your audiences and your own workflow and bandwidth. Module 1 will introduce key concepts

around audience research, product thinking and prioritization that will help you decide what you can do to best serve your audience's needs.

This module will cover:

- Defining your audience
- Strategies for audience research
- Synthesizing audience research
- Considering bandwidth
- Choosing newsletter structure

Module 2: Launching a Newsletter: What You Need to Know to Get Your Newsletter Off the Ground

Instructor: Joseph Lichterman

(March 1 - March 7, 2021)

Now that you've done your initial audience research and have an idea for a newsletter, we'll get into the nitty-gritty logistics of actually launching a newsletter and getting it off the ground. This module will focus on the key infrastructure needed to launch an email newsletter and how to test your ideas.

During this week we'll identify the most important questions you should ask when choosing an email service provider, essential privacy and data security considerations such as Europe's GDPR and California's CCPA, and the process for launching a minimally viable product.

This module will cover:

- Key infrastructure

- Privacy and data security

- Creating a minimally viable product

Module 3: Growing Your Readership: How to Build an Engaged Subscriber List that Generates Revenue

Instructor: Caroline Porter

(March 8 - March 14, 2021)

Once you've launched your newsletter, you can focus more on strategies to grow your audience in organic ways and ways to generate revenue through your newsletter product.

This module will review healthy habits for nurturing an engaged subscriber base, as well as the pathways to making money through the newsletter. We'll review examples of profitable newsletters as well as interviews with newsletter pioneers who have augmented their reach and capital through newsletters.

This module will cover:

- Various routes to build an audience

- Key clues for assessing engagement levels

- Methods for monetization

- How-to examples with newsletter creators

Module 4: Improving Your Newsletter: How to Optimize Your Newsletter for the Long Haul

Instructor: Joseph Lichterman

(March 15 - March 21, 2021)

Like a garden, newsletters need constant care and tending. This module will focus on strategies for continuing to maintain and optimize your workflows, how to keep your lists fresh and clean, and how to know when it's time to wind down a newsletter.

We'll discuss critical strategies for audience retention, which begin as soon as you get a new subscriber to your email list. We'll also share tips for re-engaging lapsed subscribers and discuss how to keep your subscriber list up-to-date.

This module will cover:

- How to retain your audience

- Segmenting your list

- Technical considerations

- How to end a newsletter