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April 25 2025

Final Paper

My Semester on Miracle Monocle

Over the course of the semester for English 450, I have completed an impressive portfolio of work for Miracle Monocle. I voted and commented on each assigned submission for this semester's issue of the journal in Submittable, half of the submissions for the anthology: *A Little Sugar in the Tank*, (and I am currently still working through the other half), and the submissions for the American Black Writer contest. I completed all of my Editorial Reports, I designed promotional images for a piece from the Miracle Monocle archives as well as two of the pieces for Issue 24 which I top-edited, I completed coding for *Instructions For Ada*, I attended our anti-Valentine's Day Open-Mic event, and I proposed additions/adjustments to Miracle Monocle's Style Guide.

Having completed all of these tasks, I have fulfilled not only my base requirements for the class, but also my two mandatory assignments for each of the categories in our Project List. The diverse range of assignments and responsibilities for this internship helped me to develop both my technical abilities and my editorial judgment. I believe that all of these tasks overall made me become a better editor and prepared me for a career after graduation.

As a Public and Professional Writing major, I hope to go into a career in journalism or editing after graduation, and my involvement working on the Miracle Monocle has been an important experience to help prepare me for potential future jobs as well as an opportunity to try out dabbling in this field for a semester. I now possess skills to edit following a Style Guide, work through submissions to find the best works for publication, and basic coding knowledge for formatting online journals. I also think that being able to put this internship on my resume will help me stand out amongst other recent college graduates.

This paper will explore each major task that I completed for this class throughout the semester and reflect on the skills that I gained from each. It will also consider how my time on Miracle Monocle has helped me to grow as an editor, as a professional, and how it has prepared me for the future. In placing this internship within the context of my overall college experience and the skillset I had prior to Miracle Monocle, I can better see how far I've come and where I want to go next.

Learning how to use Submittable and reading pieces was one of the most important things that I did this semester. I think that knowing how to efficiently read through so many pieces and be able to articulate why I did or didn't like them was a substantial part of my learning this semester. As a college student, it is essential to think critically and express opinions thoughtfully, and our discussions on Submittable helped deepen that skill. I was also getting to hear my peers' thoughts and feedback on submissions which helped me to better understand how collaborative editorial work functions in real-time. I had never used Submittable before, and I think that entering the working world it is important to know how

to use as many websites and online tools as possible, especially considering how many journals use it, so I was grateful to gain that experience.

I not only read through our mandatory assigned submissions, but I also read and helped select pieces for the Black American Writer contest, completing my category requirements by helping choose the winner for our prize nomination and allowing me to participate in an important conversation about diversity. This was a unique experience because of the bills being passed during the time eliminating DEI and placing restrictions on what schools were allowed to speak on, so we ended up having a time crunch in order to declare a winner before this contest could be disallowed by the state. This contest being a part of such a political turmoil was unexpected, but it taught me to expect the unexpected and to be able to roll with the punches. I think we made the best out of a bad situation during this time, and it made me all the more passionate about advocating for underrepresented voices.

Moving into the editing process once we had picked our pieces for publication was another great learning opportunity as I got to practice following a journal's style guide and using coding. Learning how to copy-edit according to a house style is an important skill for a future in journalism, and top-editing my assigned pieces for Issue 24 taught me about the back-end responsibilities of preparing work for publication, which is noteworthy experience if I decide to work in editing.

The Editorial Reports were also prominent portions of my work this semester. They gave me space to reflect on the larger literary landscape and how Miracle Monocle fits into it.

I enjoyed that during Week 4 we got to look at other literary journals outside of Miracle Monocle because then I got to see how different journals utilized their different platforms to promote their publications. This gave me ideas and suggestions for how Miracle Monocle could further advance our social media presence. Being a journal affiliated with a university, I also suggested that we could use this to our advantage and promote by encouraging other UofL faculty and students to spread the word in their classrooms similarly to that Professor Mattes occasionally pops into classrooms to promote his English internships. This could be a quick class announcement or a post on Blackboard, but just a small way to help spread the word.

Before this course, I had not considered the promotional side of literary publishing to be something I might enjoy. However, designing promotional images taught me how important it is to communicate visually, especially in the age of digital media. Designing promotional images—both for pieces I top-edited and for an archival feature—taught me the importance of visual literacy in digital publishing. When designing my social media posts, I tried to design pieces that I thought fit Miracle Monocle's aesthetic. This was also a good way for me to practice graphic design, which is something that I had less familiarity with than journalism and something that I was frankly not very good at. Getting to consistently create these pieces helped me to grow my skills.

This not only helped prepare me for potential future careers (such as if I end up working on another digital journal in the future), but also was beneficial for my time in college this semester. In my English 405: Edit, Publish, & Design class, I had practice thanks to my promotional pieces for Miracle Monocle which helped me to better succeed on my assignments. I better knew how to use editing software like Canva, which is another beneficial online tool that could be needed in several jobs.

For my other category assignments, I attended a Miracle Monocle event-- our anti-Valentine's Day Open-Mic-- and proposed additions to our Style Guide. Attending the Open-Mic reminded me that literary publishing is also about fostering community. Hearing other writers perform their work helped me connect with the broader UofL community and understand the journal's role as a platform for emerging voices. I appreciated the variety of writing, whether it was poetry, excerpts from short stories, or even one girl's tweets. Although I did not read any of my writing, I was glad to be a part of the event and felt emboldened to try reading something the next time I go to an Open-Mic.

During discussions about proposing additions to Miracle Monocle's Style Guide and Handbook, I pointed out in our fifth Editorial Report that although our Code of Conduct was well written, it was out-dated saying that we only occasionally charge submission fees, but typically try not to since we do not have the budget to pay contributors for their published pieces. I proposed that since Miracle Monocle now does consistently charge submission fees, it would be beneficial to update this information.

My time on Miracle Monocle has been a truly enjoyable, formative experience which shaped not only my professional growth, but also my educational growth. I developed practical skills such as coding, graphic design, and editing that will be beneficial for a future career in journalism, but I also developed skills like communication and collaboration as we worked to bring this issue together. I feel proud of how much I've grown both as a student and as an aspiring professional. Each task pushed me out of my comfort zone in a different way, and the overall experience has helped me to go into graduation with a great level of knowledge that will help me to pursue whatever I'd like to do next.