21W.730-5 Writing on Contemporary Issues: Culture Shock! Writing,
Editing, and Publishing in Cyberspace
Fall 2008

21W.730:05, Writing on Contemporary Issues: *Culture Shock!*
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GUIDELINES FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS
ON ONLINE MAGAZINES

Week after next we will start the cycle of your first oral presentations for the class. The task for each pair of you as presenters will be to research an online magazine of non-fiction or journalism or literature and present it to the class. The purpose is to give us a collective view of what such magazines are like and what possibilities there are for us to adapt to our own use as we create a magazine of our own.

Your presentations will be about 15 minutes each, including time for discussion, so you should prepare to lead the rest of us through the magazine in about 7 or 8 minutes. You will need to bring a laptop computer to class (or use one from one of your classmates) so that you can take us through the magazine's site. Here are some things to remember:

*The magazine you present to the class must be strictly an online publication, not the online version of a print magazine.

*You must read several issues of the magazine you present so that you can tell the class what sort of writing the magazine publishes.

*Part of your task is to take us through the site visually, commenting on features you found successful and others you found to be difficult to navigate through. Some comment on the style of the magazine—how it presents itself—will be important to your presentation. You should include your assessment of whether there are things about this magazine that we could or should consider in putting our own together, and conversely, whether there are things we should be sure to avoid.

*You should practice your presentation several times, and time yourselves carefully: at least once or twice just the two of you, at least once or twice with friends who can give you some response. The Writing Center is also available to help you in preparing for your presentation; give them plenty of advance notice.

*You must not read your presentation. Use an outline to keep organized and on task. You will need to make frequent eye contact with your audience and avoid mumbling, looking down at your papers too much, or filling your presentation with things like "Uh," "Um," "You know…," "Like…," etc.

The ability to make skillful oral presentations will be a crucially important part of your professional life, as well as your life at MIT. Here's the place to start polishing your public

speaking abilities. And, of course, this is a chance to shine! I'll circulate a sign-up sheet for presentation dates.