The Columbia Publishing Course does not discriminate among applicants or students on the basis of race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, color, or disability.
Columbia Publishing Course

Careers in Publishing have always attracted people with talent and energy and a love of reading. Those with a love of literature and language, a respect for the written word, an inquiring mind, and a healthy imagination are naturally drawn to an industry that creates, informs, and entertains.

For many, publishing is more than a business; it is a vocation that constantly challenges and continuously educates. Choosing a career in publishing is a logical vocation that constantly challenges and continuously educates. Choosing a career in publishing is a logical way to combine personal and professional interests for people who have always loved books and who have worked on school publications or spent hours browsing in bookstores and libraries.

The Columbia Publishing Course was originally founded in 1947 at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where it thrived as the Radcliffe Publishing Course. In 2001, the course moved to Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism in New York City, where its strong legacy continues. In 2016 a sister course in New York was launched.

The class of 2023.

The course is designed to help shepherd more people into publishing both in America and abroad.

The course at Oxford is even more selective, with only eighteen seats available.

Many legendary publishing professionals in the United Kingdom took the course in America and returned home to create stunning careers for themselves. Now the same is true for Americans taking the course at Exeter, who return to the States and are afforded the same respect and job opportunities as the people who took the course a month and a half earlier in New York City.

Meanwhile, British citizens and others have met the crème de la crème of British publishing as well as many of their future colleagues.

The Publishing Course provides an intensive introduction to all aspects of book publishing, from evaluations of original manuscripts to the sales and marketing of finished products. Students learn from writers, editors, publishers, design directors, marketing experts, and publicists: all are leaders in the industry, and many are course graduates. More than eighty publishing professionals come to the course each September to describe the nature of their work, conduct a weekend intensive book workshop, give illuminating seminars, and answer questions in classroom discussions and informal sessions.

Students learn about publishing through a rigorous schedule of lectures, seminars, and workshops and by completing professionally evaluated assignments.

By spending time with speakers and instructors in in-depth discussions, working on assignments after classes end, and interacting with like-minded colleagues for four weeks, students take part in a total-immersion program that cannot be duplicated by a series of part-time courses. In the process, these students discover a capacity to assimilate and produce more than they ever imagined possible.

The Publishing Course allows students to compare opportunities in publishing, which helps them determine their career preferences—from editor to publicist, from foreign rights associate to literary agent, and so forth.

Students study every element of the process: manuscript evaluation, agenting, editing, design, production, publicity, subsidiary rights, sales, e-books, and marketing. Students also learn about various types of publishing houses, publishing strategies, and career paths. The class then divides into small groups for a seven-day book workshop. Each workshop group simulates the operation of a publishing house, giving students a chance to apply what they’ve learned and gain hands-on experience in the craft of creating a book from start to finish.

The final week of the Publishing Course ties together everything students have learned in the previous three weeks and features additional career guidance.

The instructors and lecturers, drawn from all areas of the publishing industry, are recognized as experts in their fields. Many speakers are course regulars; others are invited to speak because they are setting trends or challenging traditional methods. Faculty members represent publishing’s diversity: some are publishing executives, others are successful entrepreneurs, or consultants to the industry, but all have had illustrious careers in all aspects of publishing.

Editing Seminars

A short seminar is held during the course to teach the fundamentals of manuscript evaluation. Each student reads an unpublished manuscript and writes a reader’s report recommending whether or not they would publish it. Students meet in small groups with editors or literary agents to discuss the editing process and methods of evaluation.

Book Workshop

The workshop is an intensive, collaborative simulation that requires interaction with the experienced publishing faculty, the works of numerous published authors and the wider class, as students apply what they have learned in lectures. Each group of ten students forms a hypothetical publishing company that develops six or seven potential titles for publication. Students pair up and each pair is responsible for creating one original book idea that might be authored by a published writer. What follows is nothing less than magic as they watch their ideas take form. Students learn about publishing through a rigorous schedule of lectures, seminars, and workshops and by completing professionally evaluated assignments.

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The course in New York is limited to 110 people, so Exeter enables us to help shepherd more people into publishing both in America and abroad.

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2023 PROGRAMME

CAREER RETROSPECTIVE

Marianne Velman, Former Publishing Director, Doubleday UK
* Keynote: Publishing: Getting Started, Getting Going
Joanna Lee, Commissioning Editor, Atlantic Books

PUBLISHING CONTRACTS MASTERCLASS

Emma D’Cruz, Group Contracts Director, Penguin Random House
Tara Book’s Curve
Jamie Keenan, Graphic Designer, Keenan Design

LIFE AS A FREELANCER

Saatchi Kalsi*, Freelance Author, Literary Scout, Critic
On Editing
Julie Gourinchas*, Junior Agent, Bell Lomax Morston

PUBLISHING ACROSS THE ACADEMIC/TRADE DIVIDE

Rebecca Barden, Senior Publisher, Visual Arts and BFI, Bloomsbury UK

WHAT DO BOOKS SELL? DO?

Daniela Schlingmann, Director, Daniela Schlingmann Literary Sourcing Ltd

How to Pitch
Barrie Dolkyn, Public Speaking Consultant and Producer, Oxford University

WHAT THE #@$&*! DOES A NONFICTION COMMISSIONING EDITOR DO ALL DAY?

Rupert Lancaster, Nonfiction Publisher, Hodder & Stoughton, Rupert Lancaster

No One Belongs Here More Than You: How to Shine—and Rise—in Publishing
Elin Moore*, Author and former Senior Editor, Guardian Books

From PENGUIN TO PUSHPIN

Adam Freudman, Publisher and Managing Director, Pushkin House

Your Brilliant Career
John Duff, Former Publisher, Perseus Books, Penguin Random House
* “It’s FR, no HEB”
Jessica Furlong Sharpes, UK Comms Lead, Amazon Books & Authors

FROM PROPOSAL TO PUBLICATION: AN EDITOR’S PERSPECTIVE

Mr Hafes, Commissioning Editor, Guardian Faber

THE BASICS OF BOOK PUBLICITY

Shona Abhyankar, Associate Director, ed public relations

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING

Aless Birch, Global Licensing & UK Rights Director, Writers House

READER’S REPORT SEMINAR

Julie Gourinchas*, Literary Agent, Bell Lomax Morston
Sam Bruce*, Literary Agent, Peters Fraser and Dunlop
Lucy Irving*, Literary Agent, Peters Fraser and Dunlop
Carissa Hoekstra*, Program Coordinator, Wise UK

The AUTHOR’S PERSPECTIVE

Wendy Holden, Bestselling Author
Book Tour
Bruce Tracy, Former Senior Editor, Workman Publishing Company, Publisher of Bruce Tracy Editorial

PUBLISHING RIGHTS: THE WHAT, THE WHY AND THE THINGS NO One Tells You
Jennifer Powell, Director of Subsidiary Rights, Scholarly

TALES FROM THE SLUSH PILE

Tig Wallace*, Senior Commissioning Editor, Sphere, Little Brown, Hutchins UK

PROFIT AND LOSS

Lisa Adams, Director, the Garamond Agency

THE SALES CLASSIC

Andrew Stanley, SVY/Director, Group Sales & Marketing, Quarto Books

THE ROLE OF MANAGING EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION

Simon Rhodes, Production Director, Adult Books, Pan Macmillan

ENCOUNTERS WITH LEGENDS: A Life in Celebrity Publishing
Alan Samson, Former Publisher, Paul Feudel & Nicholas, Orion Publishing Group, Hutchins UK

THE ROLE OF AN AGENT

Carrie Pitt, Literary Agent/Director, Talisman Blue Agency
Andrew Clarke, Publishing Director, William Books, Hutchette

The BUSINESS OF LIST-BUILDING

Alex Clarke, Publishing Director, William Books, Hutchette

How to Create an Independent Career in Publishing
Richard Arcus, Founder, Arcus Editorial

ALUMNI PANEL

Ashton Mucha*, Rights Assistant, HarperCollins
Robbie Howell-Jackson*, Head of Publishing, Harper’s Magazine
Evan Valentien*, Assistant Director, Columbia Publishing Course

BOOK WORKSHOP INSTRUCTORS

Lisa Adams, Director, the Garamond Agency
Rebecca Bongeoses, Senior International Rights Manager, Princeton University Press

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A FREE BOOK!

Emily Salten*, Executive Editor, Scholastic
Robin Dennis*, Editorial Consultant
Barrie Dolkyn, Author, Public Speaking Consultant and Producer, Oxford University

“I’m doing a job as CU and I’m incredibly lucky not only to have learned everything I did during those six weeks (my notebook is completely full), but to have met such an incredible group of wonderful people. These connections have genuinely changed my life.”

Ellie Wells, Class of 2023

“T&C-Oxford is a wonderful program, with informative speakers, fabulous mentors, and a truly amazing group of peers. I feel incredibly lucky not only to have learned everything I did during those six weeks (my notebook is completely full), but to have met such an incredible group of people. These connections have genuinely changed my life.”

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Publishing Assistant, PublicAffairs

I have a job as a Sales Assistant with the Quarto Group! I am thrilled to have this opportunity and know that it is only available to me because of the work you did at CPC-Oxford. I feel incredibly proud to be the first person in my family to attend university, and feel incredibly lucky to have learned everything I did during those six weeks (my notebook is completely full), but to have met such an incredible group of wonderful people. These connections have genuinely changed my life.”

Rosamund Hutchison, Commissioning Editor, Penguin Random House

“We can barely thank you enough for all of your kindness, encouragement, and expertise. We are grateful to have secured a position that aligns perfectly with my geographical preferences and professional interests.”

Karen Keenan, Publisher, Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, Quarto Books

Richard Arcus

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Karen Keenan, Publisher, Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, Quarto Books

Richard Arcus
Career Planning and Placement

Over the years, publishers have come to recognize the advantages of hiring applicants who possess the skills and knowledge gained at the Columbia Publishing Course. The percentage of course graduates placed in publishing jobs each year is very high, often as much as 95% in the first year for students who stay in the London or New York City metro areas. Students are encouraged to put the Columbia Publishing Course in the first paragraph of their cover letters and at the top of their resumes, as the course is extremely well known and respected throughout the publishing industry. Being affiliated with the course can mean the difference between getting an interview and not getting one.

What Should Apply

The course is aimed primarily at recent college graduates, but other applicants are not discouraged. Many students have worked in publishing briefly and would like to broaden their understanding of the field or have decided to make a career change from an unrelated field. Because entry into the field of publishing is by no means restricted to those who want to work in an editorial capacity, the choice of college major has little bearing on admissions decisions. Although most applicants have majored in English and other subjects in the humanities, many have majored in other disciplines, particularly art, history, economics, business, law, music, and the sciences, among others.

Students with a demonstrated interest in publishing have always gained the most from the course. Those who have held publishing internships or worked on high school or college publications are familiar with publishing's long hours and constant deadline pressures. Those with bookstore, library, or office experience have skills and insights that publishers find valuable. Many types of activities, paid positions, and volunteer work can be considered related to publishing. For example, experience with photography, graphic arts, sales, and marketing can be good training. If you are looking for instruction in journalism or creative writing, though, other educational opportunities may be more appropriate. Still, applicants with writing experience who seek new ways to apply their skills within the world of publishing—as editors, publicists, designers, marketing and business managers, or rights specialists—are encouraged to apply.

Applicants should note that the Columbia Publishing Course is a highly intensive four-week session, during which students are expected to attend classes and participate in group projects, activities, and discussions. This course is not aimed primarily at recent college graduates who are looking for instruction in journalism or creative writing. Those who have held publishing internships or worked on high school or college publications are familiar with publishing's long hours and constant deadline pressures. Those with bookstore, library, or office experience have skills and insights that publishers find valuable. Many types of activities, paid positions, and volunteer work can be considered related to publishing. For example, experience with photography, graphic arts, sales, and marketing can be good training. If you are looking for instruction in journalism or creative writing, though, other educational opportunities may be more appropriate. Still, applicants with writing experience who seek new ways to apply their skills within the world of publishing—as editors, publicists, designers, marketing and business managers, or rights specialists—are encouraged to apply. Applicants should note that the Columbia Publishing Course is a highly intensive four-week session, during which students are expected to attend classes and participate in group projects, activities, and discussions.

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workshops every weekday morning, afternoon, and some evenings as well as over one weekend. As a result, students can expect little free time during the course.

APPLICATIONS

Applications are accepted anytime after November 17, 2023 and students will be told of acceptance on a rolling basis—therefore it’s to an applicant’s advantage to apply before the March deadline.

The following items must be received no later than March 1, 2024, to complete the application process:

1. A completed application form (available at bit.ly/applycpc2024)
2. A $55 nonrefundable application fee (payable by credit card)
3. A two-page personal statement and a short answer response (essay prompts for 2024 are given on the application)
4. Two to three letters of recommendation from employers and/or professors
5. Academic transcripts listing degree date or expected degree date from each undergraduate and graduate institution attended as a degree-seeking student
6. A current résumé or curriculum vitae

Interviews are not required, but information sessions will be conducted virtually through the career services offices of some colleges during the first half of the spring semester. The course will also be holding its own virtual information sessions. Applicants should check the course website and social media platforms to determine when information sessions will be available.

Those accepted are required to make a $1,000 nonrefundable deposit by April 12th.

ADVANCE ASSIGNMENTS

In preparation for the program, all students must complete advance reading and assignments, which are short, practical, and require the class to perform tasks related to many of the topics to be discussed in lectures. All of these will be evaluated by publishing professionals.

FEES

Tuition & Workshops .......... $6,000
Room ................................ $2,226
Board .............................. $ 985

The mandatory board plan includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner on weekdays. Students living off campus will be assessed a $985 fee for the mandatory board plan.

Applications are evaluated by the admissions committee several times during the spring, and notifications of acceptance will be sent on a rolling basis.

Because of the short length of this course, grants and student loans funded by the US government are not available.