New York University  
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute  
Syllabus JOUR-GA-1182-003  
SPECIALIZED REPORTING: AUDIO REPORTAGE  
Spring 2019  
Professor: Quinn, Audrey  
Thursday, 4:45 PM - 8:45 PM  
20 Cooper Square, 659

To contact professor: aq8@nyu.edu  
Office hours: Thurs after class, or any agreed-upon time by phone

Course Description  
Through this course students will learn to produce short documentary-style audio stories. You will be encouraged to develop their own personal voice and style, while also learning practical skills necessary for finding work in both radio and podcasting.

After a quick introduction to audio equipment and a practice assignment, you'll create two broadcast-worthy audio features as if you were working for an actual show. You'll produce your stories through a formal edit process, and fine-tune your audio sensibilities by workshopping each other's stories. There will also be an introduction to using music and sound design.

Classes typically begin with a listening session and class discussion, followed by a lecture or guest speaker. We’ll take a break mid class, then will usually spend the last half assessing work in progress and talking about the next week’s assignment.

Learning Objectives  
In this course, students will:
- Master audio recording equipment and audio editing software
- Identify what makes for engaging audio story subjects and sources
- Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information
- Write for the ear
- Work to integrate documentary scenes into their reportage
- Learn to pitch an audio story
- Demonstrate awareness of journalism’s core ethical values
- Demonstrate critical thinking, independence, and creativity appropriate to the role of journalism in a democratic society
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives
Course Requirements
This class moves very quickly in the beginning, attendance in the first three classes is mandatory, without exception. Every day of class is crucial to this course, any absences must approved in advance, and will count against your grade. A point will also be lost for unapproved tardiness over ten minutes.

There will be four outside-of-class labs for this course. For each lab there will be two time slot options. Attendance at one time slot per lab is required.

1. **Hindenburg help session 1:** (choose one) Tuesday 2/12 3-7pm or Wednesday 2/13 9am-12pm in Room 600
2. **Trend story narration recording:** Each student will have their own half hour time slot Tuesday 3/26 3-7pm or Wednesday 3/27 9am-12pm in the small NYU studio
3. **Hindenburg help session 2:** (choose one) Tuesday 3/26 3-7om or Wednesday 3/27 9am-12pm in Room 600
4. **Final story narration recording:** Each student will have their own half hour time slot Tuesday afternoon/evening 5/7 or Wednesday morning 5/8 in the small NYU studio

Necessary Materials:
- Laptop to edit audio and to bring to class
- Hindenburg audio editing software- Four-month free trial codes will be provided, students who wish to purchase the program can do so at a discounted $85
- Recording equipment (Zoom H4N, shotgun or omni microphone, and headphones) can be borrowed from the 7th floor gear cage, though I recommend having your own decent set of headphones
- **Students will need to provide their own AA batteries and SD card for the recorders.** SD cards must be 32 GB or smaller to work in these recorders.

Grading
Your grade will reflect on-time attendance to class and outside sessions, and on-time submission of your assignments in accordance with directions. Extra credit (2 points each) may be earned by emailing me a short write-up about an audio journalism-related event you attended. Your progress on the grade rubric can be tracked here throughout the semester. All grades are final.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- **Attendance - 36%**
- **Vox Pop (due 2/14) - 6%**
  
  Choose a question to ask strangers on the street. Assemble their answers along with a recorded intro and outro. The total piece should be two minutes max.
● **Trend story (due 3/28) - 25%**  
  *You will report on a recent trend and include scene tape and two extra expert voices. Features should be five minutes max.*

● **Reported feature (due 5/9) - 33%**  
  *This is the assignment where you get a chance to make whatever kind of audio story you would like to hear. The only constraint is that you will need to pitch your story with a particular outlet in mind, and it needs to have some kind of reported element to it. Stories should run eight minutes max.*

Assignments and drafts are due at the start of class. First and second drafts will all be peer-edited with oversight from the professor. If you’d like professor edits on your draft, you’ll need to email it to her by 6pm the night before the class session when it’s due.

**Resources**
- Transom on the Zoom H4N
- An intro to Hindenburg
- We’ll cover how to use Hindenburg in class, but the software’s website goes pretty deep into tutorials.
- EQ in Hindenburg
- Using music. And, Fair Use
- AIR’s Pitch Page

**Course Schedule**

**Class 1 1/31/2019**  
**Intro to audio equipment**  
Check out a Zoom H4N, microphone and headphones to have at the start of class.

* ● Listening  
  ● Intro to the course  
  ● Practice gathering tape*

*Homework:*

* ● Finish gathering your vox pop tape. If you're looking for a number to aim for, try to talk to about a dozen people, and have at least six responses that you're happy with.*

**Class 2 2/7/2019**  
**Intro to audio editing software**  
Vox pop tape is due.

* ● Listening  
  ● Editing with Hindenburg*

  To start, save a new session
  File: Import (puts files where the cursor is)
  Arrow key scrolls
  cmd +/- zooms
  “I” for inpoint, “O” for outpoint
  Once you have a selection, you can delete to leave a hole, cmd “X” to
have it snap together, “A” cmd “X” to cut across all tracks, shift up-arrow cmd “X” to cut across two tracks “B” to make a break
Cmd alt 1 to put clip in first group bin
Esc clears in and out points
“P” brings you to a few seconds before the last edit
cmd alt click selects everything to the right

• Brief intro to writing for the ear

Homework:

• Attend Hindenburg editing help session either Tuesday 2/12 3-7pm or Wednesday 2/13 9am-12pm in Room 600. You’ll want to have your intro already recorded when you arrive.

• Create a vox pop with a recorded intro, 2 minutes max in length. You do not need to export your vox pop from Hindenburg, as we’ll finalize your sessions in class.

• Keep your eyes open for trends of any kind that you might want to report on.

Class 3 2/14/2019  Pitching audio news stories
Vox pops are due.

• Listening
• Finalizing your vox pops
• Share your vox pop with the class
• How to pitch a trend story

Homework:

• Book your interviews for your news story to occur between the morning of 2/22 and the afternoon of 2/28

• Write a pitch for your trend story

Class 4 2/21/2019  Good tape
Trend story pitches are due, and interviews must be booked.

• Listening
• What is good tape
• Interviewing for audio

Homework:

• Conduct your trend story interviews

• Transcribe your interview tape

Class 5 2/28/2019  Writing for the ear
Come ready to discuss your interviews.

• Listening
• Review your interviews
• Writing for audio
• Host intros

Homework:

• Write (and pull the quotes for) the first draft of your trend story, including host intro
Class 6 3/7/2019  How to be a good story editor
Trend story draft 1 due.
  ●  Listening
  ●  How to edit other people’s stories
  ●  Peer-edit 1st drafts
  ●  Professor dissects a Planet Money trend story
Homework:
  ●  Write (and pull the quotes for) the second draft of your trend story

Class 7 3/14/2019  Incorporating factual information in storytelling
Trend story draft 2 due.
  ●  Listening
  ●  Meg Cramer of Trump Inc, formerly of Another Round and Marketplace
  ●  Peer-edit 2nd drafts
Homework:
  ●  Finalize your news story script
  ●  Attend a (pre-scheduled) narration tracking session
  ●  Attend a Hindenburg help session

Class 8 3/28/2019  Planning your final stories
Final trend stories due.
  ●  Listen to everyone’s trend pieces
  ●  Karen Duffin of Planet Money, formerly of This American Life and Invisibilia
  ●  Planning your final stories
Homework:
  ●  Book your interviews for your final story to occur between the morning of 4/5 and the afternoon of 4/11
  ●  Write a pitch for your final story, email it to me by 6pm 4/3

Class 9 4/4/2019  An editor responds to your pitches
Final story pitches due the night before, and interviews must already be scheduled.
  ●  Listening
  ●  Annie McEwen of Radiolab visits
  ●  Interview prep for final story
Homework:
  ●  Conduct your final story interviews
  ●  Transcribe your interview tape

Class 10 4/11/2019  Story beginnings
Come ready to discuss your interviews.
  ●  Listening
  ●  Story beginnings
  ●  Start your final script
Homework:
  ●  Write (and pull the quotes for) the first draft of your final story
Class 11 4/18/2019  Audio story structure
Bring your final story first drafts.
  ● Listening
  ● Audio story structure
  ● Peer-edit your first drafts

Homework:
  ● Write (and pull the quotes for) second draft of final story to email me by 5pm Monday 4/24

Class 12 4/25/2019  Scoring
Final story second drafts due 5pm the evening before class.
  ● Listening
  ● Using music
  ● Peer-edit your second drafts

Homework:
  ● Edit your script again, then create a rough mix of your story- record your narration at home, and mix it in with your selected quotes. Again, this doesn't need to be perfect, it will just give us a sense of roughly how your story will sound.

Class 13 5/2/2019  Experimental audio
  ● Her Long Black Hair sound walk in Central Park
  ● Peer-edit rough mixes

Homework:
  ● Make your final edits, record (if any) narration at the NYU studio at your assigned time, and mix your final piece, adding music and sound design if desired.

Class 14 5/9/2019  Listening night
Final assignment due. Last day for extra credit.
  ● Turn in final stories and prepare for event
  ● Public listening event at 6:30pm at the 7th floor stage

Accommodations
Students with disabilities that necessitate accommodations should contact and register with New York University’s Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu. Information about the Moses Center can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd. The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the 2nd floor.

Diversity & Inclusion
The Institute is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. The Institute embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions.