New York University
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
Syllabus - JOUR-UA 202.002
AUDIO REPORTING

Thursdays 9:00 AM - 12:40 PM
20 Cooper Square Room 750

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Office hours: 8 AM before class or by appointment

Course Description
We are living in a golden age for audio journalism. Radio has long been a medium that lends itself to communicating the news in an immediate and intimate way. Now, podcasting is allowing new voices to be shared widely. We can tell stories not just about the world around us but also share our own narratives and perspectives on anything and everything. This course will provide you with the tools to tell audio stories, while learning practical skills that will help build your career.

Learning Objectives
In this course, you will learn to:
  ○ Get good tape
  ○ Write for the ear (with direct, conversational tone, and by actively engaging with tape)
  ○ Edit audio (using Audition)
  ○ Voice scripts
  ○ Produce audio stories in different formats - news feature, non-narrated, etc.
  ○ Demonstrate critical thinking, independence, and creativity appropriate to the role of journalism in a democratic society
  ○ Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information
  ○ Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives

Course Structure
Every week we will discuss past week's assignments and explore an aspect of audio journalism with case studies, discussion, listening, and exercises. We will have regular lab times for you to work on your stories by group workshopping and peer editing. Periodically we will also have guest lecturers come in to discuss their careers in audio. And each week you will email me 200 words of reflections on the work we’re doing.

Readings
The required text for the course is: `Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production`

**Course Requirements**
1. Vox pop - 2:00 length, plus a 1:00 edit.
2. News feature - 3:00 length.
3. Profile - 4:00 length.

**Grading**
15% vox pop, 25% news feature, 25% feature, and 35% attendance, class participation, and reflections. Extra credit may be earned by attending an audio journalism-related event and writing up your reflections in 200 words; each write-up is worth two points, for a maximum of four points. All grades are final.

*Dishonest or unethical reporting* will not be tolerated.

**What you need for the course**
1. SD card, no bigger than 32GB, for the Zoom H5 recorder you will be checking out.
2. A personal check for the equipment room as security deposit for the semester.
3. Google Drive, for all your writing assignments (reflections, pitches, scripts) and audio deliverables. No email attachments please.

STUDIO RESERVATION: Email Adrian Mihai am14@nyu.edu. He can assist during your recording. (His cell is 646-707-4375)

**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](http://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.

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**BASIC COURSE OUTLINE**

**CLASS ONE - September 6**
Intros. Syllabus. Listen to pieces.

Writing for the ear - know your neighbor paparazzo exercise.

Homework for class two:
And listen: https://www.thisamericanlife.org/579/my-darn-mind
What are the relative strengths of audio as opposed to the written word?

CLASS TWO - September 13

Vox Pop exercise.
-Listen to examples.
-Discuss interviewing techniques that yield good vox.
-Go over equipment.
-Collect vox pop at Washington Square Park.

Homework: Bring at least eight good voices to class three.

CLASS THREE - September 20

Debrief last week’s vox pop assignment. Listen to examples of good montage.

Audio editing is like driving a car or riding a bike. We will learn Audition together and mix our vox pop montage.

Homework -
1. Read handout on writing for broadcast, pp. 25-38. I will email the PDF.
2. Listen: American Icons: Shaft. It’s 22 minutes long. Don’t read the text, just listen all the way through, uninterrupted. When it’s over, type out the first 10 pieces of audio you recall from the piece. They can be anything -- interview sound bites, music or movie clips, reporter narration. Type the first ones that come to mind. Number them, and stop after you have 10 items. Then type out other impressions the piece left you with. Email me your notes by 8 am before class four.

CLASS FOUR - September 27

Discuss Shaft.

Listen to our vox pop montages. Discuss good interview practices.

What makes a good audio pitch?

Homework:
1. Read this handout and this page on pitching. Write two to three pitches for your first feature. Up to 150 words each. Due 8am before class five.
2. Listen to Sandy/McCune & AT/Pearl and take notes on their use of sound.

CLASS FIVE - October 4

Go over pitches for the first feature.

Deeper look at the art of interviewing for radio. What is great tape and how to get it.

Anatomy of a radio script. Discuss how to write for broadcast (handout from class three).

Guest speaker: Tracie Hunte of Radiolab

Homework:
1. Report first feature. Write first draft, due 8am before class six. (A script example will be provided as a handout by Friday.)
2. Listen to Swagger/Hogan & Tennis/Cleveland for inspiration for your features.

CLASS SIX - October 11

We will listen to our tape and edit our second drafts. Continue reporting as needed.

Homework: Finish script of second draft, due 8am before class seven.

CLASS SEVEN - October 18

We will peer critique our second drafts. Then make final script edits.

Tips on voicing your scripts.

Homework: Continue to write/edit your feature script. Get final script approval by the start of class eight. Once you get the final script approval, you can record narration in the booth and work on your final mix.

And listen to these three pieces by Jim O'Grady. Bring questions for next class.
1. Did New York City Botch the 1918 Flu Epidemic? The Debate Still Rages
2. The Complicated Fight Over Walt Whitman’s Sole Surviving NYC Home
3. Up the Ozzies!

CLASS EIGHT - October 25

Record narration. Mix in Audition. Final mix, including the whole Audition multitrack session, is due by 11:59 pm on Saturday, October 27 by emailing me your project in a Google Drive. No late project will be accepted.
Guest lecturer: Jim O'Grady

Homework: Write a pitch for your second feature (which will be 5 minutes). Have a backup idea or two in case your pitch doesn't work out. Email me before next class.

And listen to these pieces by Matt Katz. Bring questions for next class.
   1. Unsettled. This is 40 minutes. If you only listen to one, make it this one.

CLASS NINE - November 1

We will listen to our pieces and critique them.

Guest lecturer: Matt Katz at 11am.

Homework: Begin research and pre-interviews for your second feature story.
 Listen: Pieces by Beenish Ahmed emailed

CLASS TEN - November 8

We will go over everyone’s pitches for the final feature.

Begin reporting your second feature story.

Guest lecturer: Beenish Ahmed at 11am

Homework:
   1. Email me your first script draft by Google doc by 9am Wednesday 11/14.
   2. If you wish to submit a revised version of your first feature, the deadline is 9am 11/15. Email me the new mp3 mixdown, along with a list of the changes you made.

CLASS ELEVEN - November 15

We'll spend class time on your second feature story.

Individual meetings with me as needed.

NO CLASS November 22: THANKSGIVING BREAK

CLASS TWELVE - November 29

We'll talk about intros, listen to different examples, and discuss why they're effective.
Guest lecturer: Cindy Rodriguez at 11am. Listen to this 30-minute episode before class. We'll also listen to this story together in class.

Homework: Continue reporting and writing your final feature.

CLASS THIRTEEN - December 6

We'll do final script edits and mixing in class. We'll also do some voice training.

At 12:30pm student advisor Andrea Brown will come and discuss course evaluations.

Homework: Finish your final feature, due 11:59pm Wednesday 12/12.

CLASS FOURTEEN - December 13

Class meets at WNYC for studio visit and final critique.