New York University
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
Syllabus JOUR-GA 1182 - 001
SPECIALIZED REPORTING: AUDIO REPORTAGE
Spring 2020
Professor: Quinn, Audrey
Wednesdays, 9am-1pm
194 Mercer St, Rm 203

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.

This class will begin remotely and will transition to in-person around March, depending on virus numbers and our own comfort levels. We'll continue to check in on this throughout the semester, no one should feel like they're putting their health at risk for the sake of this class. We'll try to limit remote classes to three hours, with the option of scheduling more time with the professor via office hours.

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 begins quickly, **attendance (remote) to the first three classes is mandatory, without exception.** The instructor must be informed in advance of all absences as well as tardiness.

There will be three outside-of-class remote labs for this course. **Remote attendance at one time slot per lab is required.**

1. **Hindenburg help session for vox pop assignment:** Each student will need to choose a half hour time slot during 1:30-4:30pm ET on Tuesday 2/9 or 1:30-4:30pm Wednesday 2/10

2. **Hindenburg help session for news story assignment:** Each student will need to choose a half hour time slot during 1:30-4:30pm ET on Tuesday 3/23 or 1:30-4:30pm Wednesday 3/24

3. **Hindenburg/etc help session for final assignment:** Each student will need to choose a half hour time slot during 1:30-4:30pm ET on Tuesday 5/4 or 1:30-4:30pm Wednesday 5/5

Necessary Materials:
- Laptop to edit audio
- Notebook for note-taking during in-person classes. In-person classes will be a laptop-free when we're not editing scripts or audio (please let me know if you have a disability that necessitates typing class notes)
- Hindenburg audio editing software- Three-month free trial codes will be provided before the second class meeting, students who wish to purchase the program can do so at a discounted rate
- Some way to record yourself. If you are remote, we can discuss your best options (smartphones included). **If you are in NYC you'll want to borrow gear from NYU:**
  - Recording equipment (recorder, shotgun or omni microphone, selfie stick-boom pole, and headphones) CAN BE PICKED UP FROM 20 COOPER SQUARE 7th FLOOR GEAR CAGE ~11AM ON 1/28 OR 1/29. (for later pickup arrange with professor)
  - Students who borrow gear will need to provide their own AA batteries and SD card for borrowed recorders. SD cards must be 32 GB or smaller to work in these recorders.
  - Students who will not be in NYC and don't have recording equipment can improvise or ask the professor for recommendations, cellphone recording is sufficient for the needs of this class.

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.

Importantly, if you require accommodations, and/or have a disability that makes strict deadlines difficult, please do not hesitate let me know.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- **Attendance - 34%**

- **Vox Pop (due 2/11) - 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 3/25) - 26%**
  You will report on a recent trend and include scene tape (live or remote) and two extra expert voices. Features should be five minutes max.

- **Reported feature (due 5/6) - 34%**
  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 unless otherwise noted. 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 5pm the night before the class session when it's due.

Resources
- [Transom on the Zoom H5](#)
- [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](#), [Fair Use](#), and [Free and Low Cost Music](#)
- [AIR's Pitch Page](#)

Course Schedule

Class 1 1/28/2021 [REMOTE]   Intro to Class
- Listening in class
- Intro to the course
- Intro to vox pop assignment ([example from old NPR story](#), and [more recent KQED one](#))

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.*
- *Listen to [Au:Ra: The Chemistry of Sound by Paolo Pietropaolo](#)*

Bonus Session 2-3pm Friday 1/29/2021 [REMOTE] Intro to NYU audio equipment
Check out a Zoom H5, omni microphone, boom stick and over-ear headphones to prior to the start of class. Sanitizing wipes are also recommended. YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE YOUR OWN AA BATTERIES AND SD CARD.
To use recorder:

- Turn on (takes a while to load)
- Plug in headphones
- Plug in mic to "1"
- Check battery
- Check that there's space on your SD card:
  - Menu (on side)
  - Use wheel to toggle to SD Card, press in
  - Press in on Remain
- Select external mics by making sure the 1-2 buttons are lit
- Go to Rec, Rec Format 44.1/16hz
- In/out, in1/2 mono mix (toggle way down), on
- Press Record once! Make sure time is rolling
- Hold mic close
- Get levels! (aim for peaks around -12 to -6)
- Adjust headphone volume if needed

Class 2 2/4/2021 [REMOTE]   Intro to audio editing software
Vox pop tape-gathering must be completed.
- 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
  Mac shortcuts
  Windows shortcuts
- Listen to more vox pop examples: Student example 1, student example 2
- Brief intro to writing for the ear

Homework:
- *Attend a Hindenburg editing help session. You'll want to have your intro already recorded when you arrive. Sign up HERE.*
- *Create and export a vox pop with a recorded intro, 2 minutes max in length.*
- *Keep your eyes open for trends of any kind that you might want to report on.*

Class 3 2/11/2021 [REMOTE]   Pitching audio news stories
Vox pops are due. Come to class with your story finished and exported.
- Listening

- 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 evening of 2/25 and the afternoon of 3/4*
- *Write a pitch for your trend story*
- *Read/listen to Lewis Raven Wallace's Transom Manifesto*

2/18/2021 NO CLASS

Class 4 2/25/2021 [REMOTE]   Good tape
Trend story pitches are due, and interviews must be booked.
- Listening
- Going over pitches
- What is good tape
- Interviewing for audio

Homework:
- *Conduct your trend story interviews*
- *Transcribe your interview tape*
- *Read NPR's How Listeners Listen*

Class 5 3/4/2021 [REMOTE]   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 [example scripts here]*

Class 6 3/11/2021 [location TBD]   How to be a good story editor
Trend story draft 1 due in class.
- Listening
- How to edit other people's stories
- 2Q1Q Hindenburg exercise
- Peer-edit 1st drafts

Homework:
- *Write (and pull the quotes for) the second draft of your trend story*

Class 7 3/18/2021 [location TBD]   Narrative audio stories
Trend story draft 2 due in class.

- Listening to Object Anyway by Sean Rameswaram for *More Perfect*. (*Play from 1:30-16:25*)
- Peer-edit 2nd drafts of trend stories
- CLASS GUEST

Homework:
- *Finalize your news story script*
- *Attend a Hindenburg help session*

Class 8 3/25/2021 [location TBD]   Planning your final stories
Final trend stories due.
- Listen to everyone's trend pieces
- Planning your final stories

Homework:
- *Book your interviews for your final story to occur between the morning of 4/2 and the morning of 4/15*
- *Write a pitch for your final story, paste it into this document [link tk] by 12pm 4/1. Direct your pitch at a particular show. Please limit your pitch to half a page.*

Class 9 4/1/2021 [location TBD]   An editor responds to your pitches
Final story pitches due the night before, and interviews must already be scheduled.
- GUEST EDITOR responds to final story pitches
- Listening
- Interview prep for final story

Homework:
- *Begin your final story interviews and reporting*
- *Listen to Chenjerai Kumanyika and Sandhya Dirks' talk All Stories Are Stories About Power*
- *Read Sandhya Dirks' piece, Listening is an Act of Power*

Class 10 4/8/2021 [location TBD]   Story Beginnings
Come ready to discuss your interviews.
- Listening
- Story beginnings
- Script planning

Homework:
- *Finish your reporting and interviews for final story*
- *Read Jules Horne's Writing for Audio: Understanding Attunement*

Class 11 4/15/2021 [location TBD]   More on Hindenburg
- Listening
- Start your final script
- GUEST

Homework:
- *Write (and pull the quotes for) first draft of final story*
- *Read Wil Williams' [The Audience As A Third Wheel](#)*

Class 12 4/22/2021 [location TBD]   Scoring and Structure
Final story first drafts due at class.
- Listening
- Using Music
- Audio story structure
- Peer-edit your first drafts

- *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 4/29/2021 [location TBD]   Sound Walk
Rough mix must be brought to class.
- Conditions permitting, we'll do an audio tour out in the city
- Peer-edit rough mixes

Homework:
- *Make your final edits, record (if any) narration at your assigned time, attend Hindenburg help session and mix your final piece, adding music and sound design if desired.*

Class 14 5/6/2021 [location TBD]   Listening party
Final assignment due. Last day for extra credit.
- Share final stories in class
- Discuss opportunities for future work in audio

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. *Registration is not necessary for you to receive accommodations in this class.*

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.

Health and Safety
We are all doing our best to live through a deadly airborne pandemic. In-person assignments and class attendance will always be optional, just be sure you've discussed an equivalent remote option with the professor. Masks must be worn at all times when attending in-person classes. Your well-being takes precedence over any educational activity.