

New York University
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute Syllabus JOUR-UA-202
SPECIALIZED REPORTING: PODCASTING Summer 2021

Professor: Todd Whitney
Mondays & Thursdays 9a-12p EST
20 Cooper Square, Room TBD/Zoom

To contact professor: toddw@nyu.edu
Office hours: TBD

Course Description

Podcasting has become one of the premiere mediums for creative storytelling and journalism.

In this summer course, students will learn to craft compelling stories solely in sound. By the end of the summer session, they will complete professional-quality pieces to add to their portfolios. Students will engage podcasting as an art unto itself while developing storytelling skills useful in any medium. They'll learn essential skills like field recording, editing tape with software, and sound design. They'll also develop the research and interview techniques necessary to craft compelling audio narratives. Importantly, students will develop their own creative voices and abilities to explain the world through sound.

Learning Objectives

Demonstrate the ability to exercise journalism's core ethical values as well as:

- Learn the elements of audio reportage
- Produce thoughtful and engaging audio stories
- Demonstrate critical thinking, independence, and creativity appropriate for producing media in a democratic society
- Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information
- Work ethically in pursuit of truths, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives
- Use technological tools and apply quantitative concepts as appropriate

Course Structure

A typical class will be structured as such:

1. Discuss the previous class' assignment
2. Case studies, discussion, lecture, listening, exercise
3. Workshopping

Readings

Outside of class there will be additional readings, fieldworks, and story production. There's a good amount of homework but by the end of the semester your focus will be on your projects.

- ❑ *Out on the Wire: The Storytelling Secrets of the New Masters of Radio* by Jessica Abel.

- ❑ Additional resources you may find helpful are Transom, NPR Training, Third Coast Conference, Podcast Love.

Tools

- ❑ Reaper
 - ❑ Google Drive
 - ❑ A good pair of headphones. Sony 5706 or Koss Porta Pro, or **reference this list**
- *If you don't own audio equipment you must check out a field kit from NYU. They must be returned within 24 hours of rental. My suggested kit is:
- ❑ Zoom H6 recorder (H5 or H4 if the H6 is unavailable)
 - ❑ Omnidirectional Microphone
 - ❑ XLR Cable (3 feet)
 - ❑ Headphones
 - ❑ Computer Peripherals like SD Card, USB Cable, etc.

Course Requirements

Vox Piece

2-3 minute narrative piece, built on an anecdote, reflection, or a consistent theme. Feel free to get creative but the finished piece must feature vox recordings. Interview yourself, interview a friend, use voice notes, use Internet clips, add music. DO NOT make a song. I encourage music, but the human voice should be the focus of the story.

Final Piece

3-5 minute narrative piece built around planned interviews and original reporting. The final piece should illustrate the full scope of journalistic techniques learned over the course.

Assignments

Assignments are due the evening before class, no later than 7pm EST. High-quality writing is okay but the focus should be to communicate the techniques and ideas from each class.

Class Participation

Participation is an important part of this course. Good collaborators are prized commodities in the radio world, so each student will refine their ability to give editorial feedback as well as create stories on their own. There will be extensive discussions and in-class workshopping. You'll learn from your peers as well as from me so it's important to come to every class prepared. Preparation means submitting assignments on time and coming ready to talk about them.

There will be outside workshop sessions for additional mixing & editorial help.

Formats

When uploading files to Google Drive you must use this convention:
YY.MM.DD_LastName_FirstName_Assignment Title

For example, if I were to upload an assignment due on August 5th:
21.08.05_Whitney_Todd_ThisIsMyAssignmentTitle

If you upload a file with an improper naming convention you will receive a zero for that particular assignment.

Grading

Final Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Class Participation: 40%
- Final Piece: 25%
- Short Piece: 15%
- Weekly Assignments: 20%

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.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Class 1 Introductions & Story Structures

Texts

Out on the Wire, up to and including Chapter 3 (Keep or Kill: Story Structure)

Listening

This American Life, “Kindness of Strangers: Prologue”, “You Can’t Go Home Again”, “Trends With Benefits”

Assignment

- Create a folder in the Google Drive shared folder with your name in it. Just first name and last name.
- Check out gear from the gear shack before next week’s class.

Class 2 Good Tape, Field Reporting, Writing, Story Editing, and Organization

Texts

Out on the Wire, Chapter 5 (Your Baby’s Ugly: The Edit), Epilogue

Listening

Snap Judgment, “Texas vs. Texas” • “Tupperware,” by The Kitchen Sisters • This American Life, “129 Cars”

Assignment

- Collect vox stories with fantastic anecdotes/reflections and log all your tape.

Class 3 Mixing, Pt. 1: The Basics, and Tracking

Texts

“Chenjerai Kumanyika’s Manifesto” by Chenjerai Kumanyika (Transom)

Listening

- Uncivil*, “The Raid”
- This American Life*, “Freedom Fries”

Assignment

- Vox: Scratch Draft

Class 4 Mixing, Pt. 2: Going Deeper

Texts

- “The ear training guide for audio producers” by Rob Byers (NPR Training)

Listening

- “The Giant Pool of Money” by *This American Life*

Assignment

- Vox - Draft 2

Class 5 Mixing, Pt. 3: Music and Sound Design

Texts

- Out on the Wire*, Chapter 4 (The Deep Sea: Sound)
- Transom’s “Using Music” series (Transom)

Listening

- Snap Judgment*, “Night at the Rock Bar”
- Radiolab*, “Out of Body, Roger”
- The Heart*, “The Hurricane”
- Love + Radio*, “The Silver Dollar”

Assignment

- Vox - Penultimate Mix

Class 6 Mixing, Part 4: Final Mix and Mastering

Texts

- “Basic EQ In Hindenburg” by Jeff Towne (Transom)
- “A few notes on levels and mixing” by Whitney Jones (Google Docs)
- “Zardulu,” by Alex Goldman and team (*Reply All*)

Assignment

- Vox - Final Mix
- Conflict - Pitches

Class 7 Pre-Production

Texts

- “15 principles of show booking” by Jessica Deahl (NPR Training)
- “The Art Of The Pre-Interview” by Sally Herships (HowSound)

Listening

- “Hello, Hello,” by Tobin Low and Kathy Tu (Nancy)

Assignment

- Conflict-Outline

Class 8 Planned Interviewing, Active Tape, and Scenes

Texts

- “Before The First Question” by Rob Rosenthal (Transom)
- “NPR’s Howard Berkes: The fundamentals of field reporting” by Howard Berkes and Alison MacAdam (NPR Training)

Listening

- Radio Diaries*, “Teen Contender”
- “Today’s the Day” by Reply All

Assignment

- Conflict - Scratch Track

Class 9 Story Structure, Part 2

Texts

- NPR Training*, “You asked: How do you tell a story in 3 acts?”
- Dan Harmon, “Story Structure” (101: Super Basic Shit-104: The Juicy Details)

Listening

- “Ghetto Life 101,” by Dave Isay (*Sound Portraits* + WBEZ)

Assignment

- Conflict - Draft 2

Class 10 Writing for Radio, Part 2

Texts

- Nancy Updike's Manifesto (Transom)
 - "Writing through sound: A toolbox for getting into and out of your tape" by Alison MacAdam (NPR Training)
- "Campfire tales: The essentials of writing for radio" by Chris Joyce (NPR Training)

Listening

- "I'm from the Private Sector and I'm Here to Help" by Nancy Updike (TAL)
- "Britney" by Starlee Kine (Mystery Show)
- "Buddy Picture" by Jonathan Goldstein (This American Life)

Assignment

- Conflict Penultimate Draft

Class 11 Story Editing, Part 2

Texts

- "How to edit with your ears" by Alison MacAdam (NPR Training)
- "Cultivating the Editor in Your Brain" by Julia Barton (Transom)

Listening

- "Just Another Fish Story" by Molly Menschel

Assignment

- Conflict - Final Draft

Class 12 Pushing the Medium

Texts

- "Invitation: PRPD Benediction" by Jay Allison (Transom)

Listening

- "The Neighborhood" by Scott Carrier
- "Everything, Nothing, Harvey Keitel" by Pejk Malinovski

###