

Introduction to Narrative Podcasting

New York University - Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute

Summer Session 2: July 6 – August 16, 2023

Class Meetings: Mondays and Thursdays, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm EST

Professor: Claire Tighe (she/her) - claire.tighe@nyu.edu

Office Hours: Mondays / Thursdays 12:00 - 1:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description

Podcasts have become a premier medium for creative storytelling and journalism. It's also a meaningful entry point for new and diverse voices with platforms that can grow quickly and widely. In this course, students will learn to craft compelling stories in sound. We'll learn essential skills like field recording, editing tape with software, and sound design. We'll 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. By the end of the session they will complete professional-quality pieces to add to their portfolios.

Course Objectives

This course will expose students to sound, narrative journalism, and the elements of audio reportage. Students will produce thoughtful and engaging audio stories that demonstrate skill, critical thinking, independence, and creativity appropriate for producing media in a diverse society. Students will accomplish this by interviewing, conducting research, and evaluating information. It's important that each student works ethically in the pursuit of accuracy, fairness, and truths. Students will also learn to use editing software and techniques to create sonically-engaging narratives.

Gear and Software

1. Recording Equipment - On Loan for the Course

Microphones, Headphones, and Cables - NYU will provide on loan to students for the duration of the course. Students are responsible for maintaining the gear and return it upon completion of the course. Students are responsible for any loss or damage.

Recording Devices - Students must provide their own device, smartphone or computer with necessary recording software (to be organized with the professor).

Batteries - Students will provide their own batteries.

2. Hindenburg - Audio Editing Software

NYU will provide students with a 60 day free trial code. Students must download the software on their personal device or use the NYU lab computers.

3. Descript - Transcription Tool

Students can sign up for a free account using their student email address.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is mandatory. All students being present is conducive to an overall productive and informative learning environment. If you miss class, you will be responsible for catching up on missed information and work. All

assignments must be uploaded online, so regardless of whether present in class, or not, assignments must be uploaded on time. Punctuality is expected and included in class grade.

Every day of class is crucial to this course, any absences must be approved in advance, and will count against your grade. Points will be deducted from your final attendance grade for unexcused absences, excessive tardiness, and poor participation.

2 late arrivals = 1 unexcused absence. 2 missed classes = Final grade dropped by one full letter grade.

Assignments must be handed in on time. Late assignments are not accepted. If you are ever concerned about completing a project or assignment, it is your responsibility to communicate with me, as we will review what needs to be done.

Assignments

1. Assignment 1 - Audio Playground - Due Monday, July 10 - 2.5%

This is a very low-stakes creative exercise. Take a risk and try something in one or very few takes. The total run time should be between 40 seconds and 1 minute. No editing or full episode description necessary (just title and one-sentence summary). [Options here.](#)

2. Assignment 2 - Audio Postcard - Due Thursday, July 20 - 20%

Choose one physical place in New York City, preferably with a newsworthy story or trend. Record ambient sound of the place, and record narration of the scene. The total run time should not exceed 3 minutes. Include a photo of your subject. Final grading for this assignment will also include assessment of students' completion of the following:

- *Pitch - Due Thursday, July 13 - 2.5%*
- *Final Submission Audio - Due Thursday, July 20 -15%*
- *Final Submission Written Portion - Due Thursday, July 20 - 2.5%*

**As part of their final submission, students are required to turn in their raw transcripts and audio used for their project.*

3. Assignment 3 - Human of New York - Due Monday, August 14 - 20%

Complete an interview-based profile of one person with a specific angle. Personal connections will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, as this assignment should showcase your reporting and booking capabilities. Max run time is 8 minutes. Your piece must include one piece of archival tape, host intro and outro, and you may choose to write narration into the body of the interview. Submissions must include a photo of your subject, title, deck, episode description, and a script. Final grading for this assignment will also include assessment of students' completion of the following:

- *Pitch - Due Thursday, July 13 - 5%*
- *Prep Sheet - Due Thursday, July 27 - 2%*
- *Draft - Due Thursday, August 10 - 5%*

- *Final Submission Audio - Due Monday, August 14 - 16%*
- *Final Submission Written Portion - Due Monday, August 14 - 2%*

**As part of their final submission, students are required to turn in their raw transcripts and audio used for their project, as well as the guest's contact information.*

4. Assignment 4 - Pink Card Storyboard - Due Monday, August 14 - 5%

Students complete a listening tool in the format of a storyboard that accompanies our homework assignments in the second half of the semester.

How to Turn In Assignments

Assignments will be turned in *before* class on the due date.

Assignments must be submitted to the correct assignment folder in our shared Google Drive. **Project submissions must adhere to the following guidelines, otherwise, they may be marked late, failed, or otherwise not considered for review.**

Final submissions for audio assignments must always include:

1. The final mp3* uploaded to the appropriate Google Drive folder, labeled LastnamesFirstName_Assignment1.mp3.*For assignment 1, m4a file format is fine.
2. A matching Google Doc with the same naming convention with an episode description including title, one sentence "deck" or summary, and a

description, as well as a written script. *For Assignment 1 just a title and one-sentence deck are necessary, no description.

3. Students are required to turn in their raw transcripts and audio used for their project, as well as the contact information for any interviewees.

Grading

I grade based on the quality and content of your **attempt** as much as the quality of the final products. Group assignments are not easy, but few audio productions are completed by just one person. The best audio reporters and producers can communicate and collaborate productively with others. Plagiarism and [dishonest or unethical reporting](#) will not be tolerated. [Please review the NYU Journalism Handbook for other ethics guidelines.](#)

- **Attendance and Class Participation - 30% (~two points per class)**
- **Professionalism - 5%**
- **Assignment 1 - Audio Playground - Due Monday, July 10 - 5%**
- **Assignment 2 - Audio Postcard - Due Thursday, July 20 - 20%**
 - *Pitch - Due Thursday, July 13 - 2.5%*
 - *Final Submission Audio - Due Thursday, July 20 - 15%*
 - *Final Submission Written Portion - Due Thursday, July 20 - 2.5%*
- **Assignment 3 - Final Submission - Due Monday, August 14 - 25%**
 - *Pitch - 5%*
 - *Prep Sheet - Due Thursday, July 27 - 2%*
 - *Draft - Due Thursday, August 10 - 5%*
 - *Final Submission Audio: 16%*
 - *Final Submission Written Portion: 2%*
- **Assignment 4 - Pink Card Storyboard - Due Monday, August 14 - 5%**

AI Policy

Descript is the only AI tool approved for use in this class. Students who wish to incorporate the use of AI tools for any aspect of production must do so with prior written approval by the professor. The use of Chat-GPT or other AI tools without the approval of the professor will result in an automatic fail. As part of their final submission, students are required to turn in their raw transcripts and audio used for their project, as well as the guest's contact information. The professor may ask for interview notes, raw transcripts, raw audio, and/or guest contact information at any time.

Professor Contact and Communication

Come by office hours to talk about all things audio, journalism, and jobs in the industry. Every Monday and Thursday right after class. You are also welcome to email me questions. I will get back to you within one day on weekdays and two on weekends.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute is committed to creating an anti-racist learning environment that embraces diversity, complexity, and honesty. We are an intellectual community enriched by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, sex, gender identity, class, ethnicity, sexualities, abilities, religion, and culture. Our student body is excitingly international. We welcome a multiplicity of perspectives. We acknowledge that listening to other perspectives on some of these issues may be personally challenging, and we accept that challenge. We further acknowledge that our profession, journalism, and our home, New York University, have participated in the systemic racism that underpins U.S. history. We are committed to teaching and practicing fair, rigorous, and engaged journalism that helps all our communities move toward

justice and equality. The Institute is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment, and embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions. For more information about NYU Journalism's efforts as well as professional development resources please visit: <https://journalism.nyu.edu/about-us/diversity/>.

Accommodations and Moses Center

If you anticipate any challenges with completing the assignments, readings, exams and other work required in this course, I encourage you to contact and register with the Moses Center in advance so that you may be granted the proper academic accommodations. Contact by phone (212) 998-4980 or by email mosescsd@nyu.edu. More information about the Moses Center can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd. If you need assistance contacting the Moses Center please let me know.

Counseling and Wellness Services

If you are experiencing undue personal and/or academic stress during the semester that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, the [NYU Wellness Exchange](#) (212-443-9999) offers a range of services to assist and support you. I am available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course, and I can assist you in connecting with the Wellness Exchange.

From the NYU Wellness Exchange: "With the coronavirus outbreak disrupting academics, travel, housing, and daily life, many people are feeling uneasy, anxious, or stressed. Here are some strategies for maintaining your health and well-being": [Mental Health During COVID-19 – Tips and Resources for Students](#)

Resources and References

Podcasts about Podcasting: Sound School (Transom), The Werk It Podcast, Third Coast Pocket Conference, Out on the Wire (podcast), Shameless Acquisition Target

Books: Sound Reporting by Jonathan Kern, NPR's Podcast Start-Up Guide, So You Want To Make a Podcast by Kristen Meinzer, Make Noise by Eric Nuzum, Out on the Wire by Jessica Abel, Radio Diaries DIY Handbook, Ways of Hearing by Damon Krukowski

Digital Publications and Newsletters: [How To Make A Podcast](#), [Starting Out](#), Transom.org, NPR Training, Soundbite by Ashley Carman (Bloomberg), Hot Pod Newsletter, Poynter Institute, Columbia Journalism Review, [The Audio Storyteller](#).

Networking and Conferences: AIR Media (professional network, listserv, workshops, mentorship), POC in Audio Directory, On Air Fest, HearSay Audio Festival, Missouri Review Miller Audio Prize.

Outside Learning: Maine College of Art Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, Transom Story Workshop, BRIC Media Center, UnionDocs, Made in NY Media Center.

Jobs, Gigs, and Internships: [AIRMedia's list of regional groups and listservs](#); [podcastjobs.net](#), [Study Hall](#), Starting Out newsletter. NYU listservs and Career Services. Check related association newsletters and online portals as well as websites for specific outlets and stations. Don't forget about your AJO program mentors!





Class Schedule

WEEK 1 - MAKING AUDIO STORIES

Class 1 - Thursday, July 6 - The Elements of Great Audio Stories

- Welcome and Introduction
- Listening and the elements of great audio stories
- In class listening: How To Remember by Axel Kacoutie
<https://axelkacoutie.com/work/how-to-remember/>
- In class listening:
<https://www.wnyc.org/story/72332-an-audio-postcard-from-beneath-the-east-side/>

Homework





1.  Read the syllabus.
2.  Acquire any need class materials (batteries, etc). Download audio recording software onto phone. Download Hindenburg onto computer.
3.  Create: Assignment 1 - [Audio Playground](#). Choose one prompt from the following list and follow the directions for turning in your assignments from the syllabus: <https://www.audioplayground.xyz/assignments>. Due next Monday, July 10.
4.  Listen: Audio postcard: Spending a day on a forest path in the Silh River valley
<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/21/1106320921/an-audio-postcard-from-switzerland>

WEEK 2 - PITCHING, PLANNING, AND PRODUCING

Class 2 - Monday, July 10 - Finding a Story in Sound

- Pitching audio stories and collecting scene tape
- In class listening: No Hay Palabras / There Are No Words - Ariana Martinez <http://www.arianamartinezstudio.com/no-hay-palabras>
- Gear and Recording 101






Homework

1.  Submit Audio Playground to Sarah@audioplayground.xyz
2.  Read: What makes a good pitch? NPR editors weigh in <https://training.npr.org/2017/01/24/what-makes-a-good-pitch-npr-editors-weigh-in/>
3.  Write: 250 word pitch for Assignment 2 - Audio Postcard. Pitch due Thursday, July 13.
4.  Listen to: "At age 22, Samara Joy is a classic jazz singer from a new generation" - NPR (7-minute listen): <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/20/1124142705/at-age-22-samara-joy-is-a-classic-jazz-singer-from-a-new-generation>

Class 3 - Thursday, July 13 - Planning The Narrative

- In class listening: Annie McEwen’s “Here I Am And Here Be Danger”
<https://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/feature/here-i-am-and-here-be-danger>
- Story Meeting
- Planning a story and organizing your project

Homework



1.  Collect your tape for Assignment 2 - Audio Postcard (at least 3-4 minutes of ambi, and ideally 1 voice). Log your tape with Descript and Google Drive. Bring your tape to class next week!
2.  Listen: Listen to Geechee World Order - Resistance
<https://gimletmedia.com/shows/resistance/8wh9d98>
3.  Read: “How to Edit with Your Ears”
<https://training.npr.org/2015/11/13/how-to-edit-with-your-ears/>
4.  Read: “Cultivating the Editor in Your Brain”
<https://transom.org/2011/cultivating-the-editor-in-your-brain/>
5.  Read: RTDNA Guidelines for Ethical Video and Audio Editing:
<https://www.rtdna.org/video-and-audio-editing>



WEEK 3 - EDITING AUDIO

Class 4 - Monday, July 17 - Editing Audio Projects

- In class listening: “Short of Breath” by Ryan Sweikert
<https://missourireview.com/2017-miller-audio-prize-winner-in-documentary-short-of-breath-by-ryan-sweikert/>
- Descript 101 and Hindenburg 101
- Writing and recording host intros

Homework





1.  Finish Assignment 2 - Audio Postcard. Make sure to record your host narration!
2.  Write: Assignment 2 - Audio Postcard Submission document (instructions in syllabus).

3.  Read: “The ear training guide for audio producers”
<https://training.npr.org/2017/01/31/the-ear-training-guide-for-audio-producers/>
4.  Listen: Author Aubrey Gordon wants to change the way you think – and talk – about fat people: (8 minute listen):
<https://www.npr.org/2023/01/09/1147909132/author-aubrey-gordon-wants-to-change-the-way-you-think-and-talk-about-fat-people>

Class 5 - Thursday, July 20 - Audio Postcards Due

- Listen to Audio Postcards
- Review Assignment 3 - Profile Interviews - “Humans of New York”
- In class listening: Ghost Industrial Complex (TAL) - Chenjerai Kumanyika
<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/793/the-problem-with-ghosts/act-one-7> (contains sensitive content)

Homework

1.  Write: Assignment 3 - HONY Pitch. Due next class!
2.  Listen and  Read: The Ohlone Love Story with Outside/In:
<http://outsideinradio.org/shows/the-acorn-an-ohlone-love-story>
3. “15 Principles of show booking” by Jessica Deahl (NPR):
<https://training.npr.org/2015/06/04/15-principles-of-show-booking/>
4.  Review: Producing Remote Scenes, Transmitter:
<https://transmitter.fm/blog/producing-remote-scenes>

WEEK 4 - INTERVIEWING GUESTS

Class 6 - Monday, July 24 - Booking and Pre-Producing

- In class listening: Sayre Quevedo's Espera - <https://www.sayrequevedo.com/espera>
- HONY Pitches
- Guests 101 - Researching, Booking, Pre-Interviewing, and Pre-Producing
- Review - Profile Interviews - "Humans of New York" and Assignment 3

Homework




1. 📄 Write: Assignment 3 - Prep Sheet - due next class! Research and book guest interviews.
2. 📖 Read "Getting the Guest you Want" by Kristen Meinzer
<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1Ftrd1luAHP1-ktxU899dQtj1Q7Tsk0G9>
3. 📖 Read "The Art of the Pre-Interview" by Sally Herships (Transom)
<https://transom.org/2016/art-pre-interview/>
4. 🎧 Listen: The Silver Dollar (Love + Radio) (39 minutes):
<https://loveandradio.org/2014/02/the-silver-dollar/>

Class 7 - Thursday, July 27 - Interviewing

- Producing the interview and choosing selects
- Creative ways to use tape and make scenes
- In class listening: Author Aubrey Gordon wants to change the way you think – and talk – about fat people: (8 minute listen):
<https://www.npr.org/2023/01/09/1147909132/author-aubrey-gordon-wants-to-change-the-way-you-think-and-talk-about-fat-people>

Homework

1. 📖 Read: Read Meinzer Chapter 18 - Conducting a First Rate Interview:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1Ftrd1luAHP1-ktxU899dQtj1Q7Tsk0G9>





2.  Read: "You asked: How do you tell a story in 3 acts?" (NPR Training): <https://training.npr.org/2017/11/10/you-asked-how-do-you-tell-a-story-in-3-acts/> AND "Story Structure" by Dan Harmon https://channel101.fandom.com/wiki/Story_Structure_104:_The_Juicy_Details
3.  Record guests for Assignment 3. Transcribe and log their tape in Descript.
4.  Listen: Love and Other Exports (This American Life) ~37 minutes: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/794/so-close-and-yet-so-far/act-one-11>

WEEK 5 - SCRIPTING

Class 8 - Monday, July 31 - Writing for the Ear

- Scripting for the five senses
- In class: As Many Leaves by Sally Herships (30 minutes) <https://www.sallyherships.com/post/2017/06/27/as-many-leaves>
- In class: Portrait of a Parent with Alzheimer's (Code Switch) (12 minutes) <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/09/28/917861536/portrait-of-a-parent-with-alzheimers>

Homework

1.  Record additional tape for Assignment 3.
2.  Read: The journey from print to radio storytelling: A guide for navigating a new landscape, NPR Training: <https://training.npr.org/2017/12/06/the-journey-from-print-to-radio-storytelling-a-guide-for-navigating-a-new-landscape/>
3.  Listen: Pink Card Episode 1. <https://30for30podcasts.com/pinkcard/>
4.  Work on Pink Card Storyboard (Assignment 4).

Class 9 - Thursday August 3 - Voicing

- The art of the host intro
- Watch: Three Tips for Training Your Voice - NPR Training
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSTgKi7Wug4>
- Editing and recording voiceover

Homework

1. 📄 Edit script and voiceover tracking for Assignment 3.
2. 🎧 Listen: Pink Card Episode 2. <https://30for30podcasts.com/pinkcard/>
3. 📄 Work on Pink Card Storyboard (Assignment 4).
4. 🎧 Download the tracks and images for Her Long Black Hair Here: <https://phiffer.org/hlbh/>. And here: <https://soundcloud.com/incredibleworksofart/sets/janet-cardiff>. For our class meeting next week, bring a pair of headphones and a device to listen to the audio in real time. If you need headphones or a device, let the professor know.


WEEK 6 - POLISHING AND POST PRODUCTION

Class 10 - Monday, August 7 - Field Trip

- Her Long Black Hair in Central Park. ~80 minutes of flat walking with some slight inclines and options for sitting. Begins at José Julián Martí Statue and ends at Bethesda Fountain. Accommodations provided for alternative assignment if needed. Adjustments will also be made if inclement weather.

Homework






1. 🎤 Complete Draft of Assignment 3.
2. 🎧 Listen: Pink Card Episode 3 and 📄 Work on Pink Card Storyboard (Assignment 4) <https://30for30podcasts.com/pinkcard/>
3. 📖 Read: "Using Music" - Jonathan Menjivar (Transom): <https://transom.org/2015/using-music-jonathan-menjivar-for-this-a-merican-life/>

4.  Read: "Basic EQ in Hindenburg" by Jeff Towne (Transom):
<https://transom.org/2017/basic-eq-hindenburg/>

Class 11 - Thursday, August 10 - Post Production

- Drafts of Assignment 3 Due
- Working with Music and Post Production

Homework

1.  Finish Assignment 3 and  Assignment 3 written portion.
2.  Listen: Pink Card Episode 4. <https://30for30podcasts.com/pinkcard/>
3.  Finish Pink Card Storyboard - Assignment 4. Due August 14.
4.  Listen: Frank Ocean's Blonde.

WEEK 7 - BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

Class 12 - Monday, August 14 - Last Class

- Listen to your final assignments.
- Discuss Pink Card storyboards.

*Syllabus design inspo from Ari Melenciano and Todd Whitney