

PODCAST BOOTCAMP

The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University
In Collaboration with the Digital Media Center

INTERSESSION 2018
January 22–26

Instructor Information

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Course Information

AS 220.173.31 Podcast Bootcamp
1 credit

Location: Mattin 226 (Digital Media Center, <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/dmc/>)

Lecture times: M–F 10 a.m.–12 p.m., M–T 1 p.m.–3 p.m., F 12:00–2:00 p.m.

Lab times: Workstations and instructors will be available daily at the DMC until 5 p.m.

Note: Attendance is required at the *Out of the Blocks* event and lecture, held at the Mattin Center in Jones 101 on Tuesday, January 23, at 7 p.m.

Course Description

In an era of political unrest, podcasts have become a powerful means of expressing personal voices and generating civil discourse. As a collaboration between the Writing Seminars and the Digital Media Center, the Podcast Bootcamp presents students with an intensive, weeklong introduction to creating podcasts. Students will learn techniques of recording, editing, producing, and marketing audio works while cultivating skills of critical listening and analysis based on a wide range of modes and genres. Podcasts can be made individually or in pairs.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

- Acquire a deeper understanding of the history and diversity of podcasts as forms of news, entertainment, personal expression, and civil discourse.
- Identify and describe the major modes and genres of podcasting in order to effectively pitch a new podcast.
- Analyze the formal and narrative structures of podcasts to learn new techniques for how to research, write for, and produce podcasts.
- Develop the critical listening skills necessary to recognize effective sound design choices and apply them to producing podcasts.
- Gain a working knowledge of recording, editing, producing, and marketing audio works.

Course Materials

Textbooks

This course has no required textbooks. Recommended as a primer on audio storytelling, with its insider details from public radio personalities, is Jessica Abel's graphic narrative *Out on the Wire*. See also below a bibliography of useful resources for audio production, radio programming, and sound studies.

Bibliography

Abel, Jessica. *Out on the Wire*. New York: Broadway Books, 2015.

Biewen, John, and Alexa Dilworth, eds. *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Crook, Tim. *The Sound Handbook*. New York and London: Routledge, 2012.

Kaempfer, Rick, and John Swanson. *The Radio Producer's Handbook*. New York: Allworth Press, 2004.

Kern, Jonathan. *Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Sterne, Jonathan, ed. *The Sound Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Street, Seán. *The Poetry of Radio: The Colour of Sound*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Websites

StoryCorps, storycorps.org

Transom, transom.org

Technology

The Digital Media Center will provide sound recording and editing hardware and software; however, resources are limited, so students are encouraged to use the recording capabilities of their phones, tablets, laptops, and other recording devices. Students may also benefit from having a USB flash drive (with a capacity of several gigabytes) and personal headphones.

Materials

Students will need a notebook or sketchpad to take notes on podcasts and develop their concept and script in class. Because this is a class based on listening, students will not be permitted to use their computers during listenings.

Assignments

Assignment 1: Concept (10 points)

Due in class on Monday afternoon. A worksheet will be provided in class asking you to title your podcast, create a tagline, imagine episode topics, and write a promotional blurb of 50 words or less. The goal is to create a concept that can be expressed clearly and concisely through a title and description, and eventually through a "sound" and "look."

Assignment 2: Working Script (10 points)

Due before class on Tuesday morning. Drawing on scripts shown in class, write a rough script or plan for a single episode. What is the format of your podcast: narrative, discussion, interview? How many and what kinds of voices will you feature? What kinds of soundscape and sound effects will you use? How will you use silence? What will be the pace and tone?

Assignment 3: Intro and Outro (10 points)

Due before class on Thursday morning. Design a short intro and outro for your podcast using voice, sound effects, or music, or some combination thereof. Even if you plan to use a cold open, you need to create an intro, if only to have it available or to use it potentially after your opening. The idea is to create a “sound” that matches your concept

Assignment 4: Graphic Design (5 points)

Due in class on Thursday afternoon. Create an image or logo for your podcast that evokes its overall concept. Select a color scheme, image design, and font.

Assignment 5: Podcast Episode 1 (50 points)

Due on Google Drive by 9:00 a.m. on Friday. It’s important that you upload your podcast by this time so I can compile all the sound files for our in-class listening and discussion.

Participation (15 points)

Includes in-class assignments, group exercises, and discussions.

Total: 100 points

Evaluation

Grades will be based on completion of all assignments, active and constructive participation in class discussions, and high-level creative and academic thought.

A (93–100): Exemplary

A- (90–92): Excellent

B+ (87–89): Strong

B (83–86): Good

B- (80–82): Satisfactory

C+ (77–79): Adequate

C (73–76): Acceptable

C- (70–72): Minimally Acceptable

D (60–69): Unsatisfactory

F (59–0): Failure

Academic Integrity

The Johns Hopkins policy on academic integrity states: “Undergraduate students enrolled in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences or the Whiting School of Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University assume a duty to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the University's mission as an institution of higher learning. Students are obliged to refrain from acts which they know, or under circumstances have reason to know, violate the academic integrity of the University. Violations of academic ethics include, but are not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; submitting the same or substantially similar work to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission; submitting as one's own the same or substantially similar work of another; knowingly furnishing false information to any agent of the University for inclusion in academic records; falsification, forgery, alteration, destruction or misuse of official University documents or seal.” See <http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/>.

Disability Services

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Schedule

Monday, January 22

10:00–10:15 a.m. Welcome and introduction

10:15–12:00 p.m. Listening for the concept

1:00–1:15 p.m. DMC membership signup

1:15–2:00 p.m. Concept workshop

CONCEPT ASSIGNMENT DUE

2:00–3:00 p.m. Analyzing formal structure and sound design, crafting a script

3:00–5:00 p.m. Open lab hours; work on concept and script

Recommended reading for drafting your concept and script: Glass, “Harnessing Luck”; Brookes, “Are We on the Air”; Spiegel, “Variations in Tape Use and the Position of the Narrator”

Tuesday, January 23

SCRIPT ASSIGNMENT DUE

10:00–10:30 a.m. Discussion of scripts

10:30–12:00 p.m. In focus: Documentary, reporting, and discussion formats

1:00–2:00 p.m. Elena Debold on microphones, recording, and interviewing for podcasts

DESIGNATED RECORDING TIME TUESDAY AFTERNOON

7:00 p.m. *Out of the Blocks* event and lecture, attendance required

Wednesday, January 24

10:00–11:00 a.m. In focus: Storytelling for podcasts, narrative and history formats

11:00–12:00 p.m. Listening for sound design

DESIGNATED STUDIO TIME WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

1:00–2:30 p.m., 3:00–4:30 p.m. Sound editing tutorials (two time slots; attendance optional)

1:00–5:00 p.m. Open lab hours; work on intro and outro

Recommended reading on sound design: Abumrad, “No Holes Were Drilled”; Roberts “Finding the Poetry”

Thursday, January 25

INTRO AND OUTRO ASSIGNMENT DUE

10:00–12:00 p.m. Listening and discussion of intros and outros; overflow and meetings

1:00–2:30 p.m., 3:00–4:30 p.m. Graphic design tutorials (two time slots; attendance optional)

1:00–5:00 p.m. Open lab hours; work on logo and podcast episode

GRAPHIC DESIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE

Friday, January 26

PODCAST EPISODE ASSIGNMENT DUE

10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. In-class listening and discussion of podcast episodes; food provided