COMMUNICATING THROUGH PODCASTING

COM 394   3 CREDITS

Instructor: **Office:**

Office Hours:

Classroom Assistants:

Office hours by appointment.

Course Objectives:
To learn and practice making audio podcasts that convey a message or tell a story.

Course Description:
Podcasting is a way of communicating that has caught on everywhere: universities, tourist offices, community organizations, big businesses, radio and TV stations, magazines. Podcasts can be audio or video. We will focus on audio podcasts, though by the end of the course, you may choose to integrate digital pictures with the sound. Your work may go on our itunes site 'iPopping Podcasts'.

Past students of this course have gone on to intern at Fox TV, commercial radio stations and other media outlets and the media department of a motivational speaking company. Other students have used podcasting in their paid work at ASU or as a component of a master' degree.

Students' features have appeared in Grist's sustainability newsletter "Sustainable Sun Devil". Others have appeared on department websites such as http://humancommunication.clas.asu.edu/content/podcasts

For most projects, you will work in pairs.

Skills you will practice

☐ Researching Interview topics
☐ Interviewing
☐ Finding the story within the interview and background material
☐ Using your judgment to select audio material to tell the story
☐ Audio Editing
☐ Analyzing your work
☐ Writing snappy introductions

What makes a good podcast?

1) Its got to be interesting
2) Must be fair and accurate
3) It should have the best possible audio quality.

Required Course Materials
• A comfortable pair of headphones that fit over your head (not the bud type – these often don't feel secure and you need both hands for editing)
• 2GB (or greater) Memory Stick/thumb drive
• Headphone splitter (1 between 2 people)

If allocated M-Audio equipment, you will need
• 1.0 GB (or greater) compact flash card (1 between 2 people)

If allocated the Sony recorder, you may want to buy Memory Stick Micro TM M2 TM (1 between 2 people). *Other memory sticks MAY work with the recorder but check recorder instruction guide before buying.* Memory stick reader (1 between 2 people if you are working in pairs)

NOTE: Anyone who misses class 1 or class 2 *must* see me during office hours to catch up before they attend the next class. The first 2 classes are very important and you will be unable to cope with the work without going over the content you missed.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of each student to save their work – do not rely on your partner. Preferably save in 2 different places.   As soon as possible after recording the interview, transfer it to your computer and share it with your partner. It is more than frustrating when a student with the only copy of a recording is absent from class and their partner cannot get on with the project. This is unacceptable. If you are sick, please notify your partner so that they can make arrangements to continue with the project in your absence.
Check that your equipment is in good working order before doing an interview. Contact me if there are any problems.

Keep a copy of your original interview/s and completed project until it is graded by the instructor. As you edit, save your changes regularly (approx every 5-10 minutes) to your memory stick. Do *SAVE AS* and rename the file occasionally. This will be your back up if a later file gets corrupted.

NOTE: Transfer your original recording to the computer desktop then safely disconnect your Compact Flash or Memory stick Micro. Changes made on the desktop can corrupt your original file if the 2 remain connected.

NOTE: For most projects, you will work in pairs. Each pair will share recording equipment with another pair. It is essential that you cooperate and pass the equipment to fellow students when they need it. Bring allocated equipment to every class. If this doesn't happen, points will be deducted from one or both members of the offending group and the equipment will be returned to me and held in my office. This also applies when you are absent – you must notify your partner and arrange for them to collect the equipment.

NOTE: Each member of the pair should be equally involved in projects. If one member feels they are doing the bulk of the work, they should inform me and I may suggest that they each work alone.   Though people working in pairs will generally receive the same marks for shared projects, I may give different marks depending on the effort and achievement of each individual.

There may be a check on your basic skill levels towards the end of the course.   The results may modify your overall grade.

* A sign-in sheet will circulate in the class each week, sometimes twice during the class . It is your responsibility to sign it. This is how you get attendance points. No name – no points.

** Take care of the equipment. It is on loan to you without charge**

Course Structure:

For most assignments, you will normally be working in pairs. Anyone who finds it difficult to work with their partner should tell me.

All project durations include the use of music/sound effects.

Make a transcript of all your finished projects (apart from Assessment 1, Vox Pops). The transcript will make it easy to spot repetition or other problems with the interview or feature. Place your audio in the relevant folder on my computer on the due date. Give me a hard copy of your transcript if possible – if not possible, place with audio in relevant folder.

Assessment #1 - Vox Pop Interviews on a topic of your choice. Include mixed sound effects. Music may be used in addition to sound effects. Record and edit individually, though you can share the decision making. 1' total duration, with at least 45" speech.

Assessment #2 - Interview #1:   Interview a family member or another student about a specific topic with which they are concerned. Add music or sound effects and make it is truly interesting. After editing, this interview, with introduction and conclusion, should be no longer than 5 minutes.

Assessment #3 - Interview #2: (linked interviews) Produce a 4-5 minute linked interview with interviewees who are not well known to you. Choose a good (important/interesting to general audience) topic, incorporate music and or sound effects, an introduction and conclusion and a sentence linking the 2 interviewees.

Assessment #4 - Sound story. **Record and edit individually**. Find a sound around the campus, record it and talk about it and mix together for total duration 60" (Your words, strung together should be at least 75% of total duration). The result should be personal, evocative and interesting. **Be original – don't let your work be clichéd**. (Each person will do this – 2 per group).

Assessment #5 - Feature #1: Focus on any controversial aspect of student life.   Final duration 4 -5 minutes. Use at least two speakers (in addition to yourself). Log them. Decide on the appropriate clips to tell a story. Isolate. Write around the audio clips. Record and put it all together. Add introduction and conclusion.   You will need other elements in your feature and it is your responsibility to be creative. .

ADVICE: Don't record more than 20 minutes of unedited material with a single interviewee – preferably keep the interviews between 10 – 20 minutes. Interviews may be conducted in pairs or individually.

As the course progresses, I will expect the standard of your work to improve. Therefore the marking will become more rigorous. Ensure that your work keeps to the specified duration and is handed in on time. If you hand in work late, I may agree to mark it but deduct points for lateness. Also, I will be marking it against the improved standard of class work as the course progresses so you may be further disadvantaged.

Grading and Assessment:

☐ Attendance and punctuality: **25%** Includes point for having the correct headphones and memory stick by L2

☐ Assessment 1: Vox Pops :   **15%** Due L 3
☐ Assessment 2: Interview #1 **:**   **10%** Due L 6
☐ Assessment 3: Interview #2 :   **10 %** Due L 8
☐ Assessment 4: Sound story :   **20%** Due L 9
☐ Assessment 5: Feature #:1   **20%** Due L 12

☐   **All work will be assessed on**:
- Compelling listening
- Logical discussion
- Technical Merit
- Appropriate audio levels
- Significance of the topic
- Artistic Achievement
- Introduction that captures the listeners' attention
- Body of the podcast
- Conclusion
- Typed transcripts. Layout should be neat and enhance clarity for reader. Make sure spelling of names is correct. Add web links if appropriate.
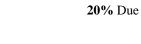
Course Outline:
The first two classes will be introducing the course and getting to know the equipment. Thereafter, the classes will be mostly practical. You will be editing the interviews, playing them to the class, and participating in discussions about the techniques you have used to put the interviews together.

Schedule
Some variation may occur as the course progresses but assessment dates must be adhered to *unless I suggest otherwise*. You have several weeks to complete each project but if you get behind towards the end of the course, you will struggle to complete your work.

As with all 3 credit classes, you are expected to complete up to 6 hours/week of homework. The Adobe Audition editing program is available for you to use in any of the computing commons areas on the Tempe campus (apart from in the engineering building).

Always arrive in class with audio to work on. If you don't, you may find yourself with nothing to do! The schedule has been carefully constructed to allow plenty of time to complete your projects successfully so please follow the schedule carefully. If you get ahead of other members of the class and would like extra projects, see me.