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JRNL 340.01: Intermediate Audio

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intermediate audio

JRNL 340 • FALL 2013 • MW • 11:10 – 12:30 • DAH 316

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Office hours: MT 2-4 p.m. and by appointment

You will never accomplish anything unless you start making stuff now. Plans are great, but making stuff is how you build an audience, get better, and most importantly, get closer to making a living.

--Jesse Thorn, host and producer of "Bullseye," a show about what's good in popular culture/
someone who does, actually, make a living in radio.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This class is about more than using sound in stories. You will do that right away and throughout the semester, but you'll also key in to elements of great public radio journalism. You'll figure out what makes a story a story – and that it is *not* just some cool nat sound. You'll get why writing for radio is unique and can make or break a story, regardless of what's on the tape. You'll get all kinds of comfortable sticking microphones in faces and other places. You'll learn how to voice stories so they sound like you. You'll edit and mix audio that sounds seamless, even to me. And, finally, you will produce radio news and features of professional, airable quality for real, actual listeners via KBGA, the Public Radio Exchange (PRX.org) and other outlets.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, successful students will:

- Demonstrate killer news judgment by knowing the key to radio stories is having a good idea in the first place.
- Understand the unique quality and importance of radio writing and be able to draft solid intros, scripts and web copy.
- Become proficient in gathering and editing audio.
- Improve voicing techniques.
- Produce several types of multitrack pieces that blend creativity and the rigors of good journalism.
- Complete all that's required to submit pieces for this class and also for outside outlets, including KBGA, PRX.org, Montana Public Radio and the Library of Congress, depending on the piece.
- Critically listen to radio news and features from a variety of sources, including stations, national shows and podcasts.
- Meet deadlines.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Students in good standing as Journalism majors are expected to know the basics of gathering sound and writing for radio. They should be familiar with Audacity audio editing software and be able to learn Adobe Audition.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- USB Flash Drive. So not kidding about this.
- Quality headphones.
- A crap-ton of AA batteries. Or even better: rechargeables.

EQUIPMENT ON LOAN

The J-school is graciously loaning professional-quality audio kits to this class for the semester, which you will share with at least one other person. That means you do not have to go through checkout. You're welcome. It also means you remain responsible for your team's kit. If it's damaged or lost, that's on you. A complete Marantz kit is \$1,000. You'll be signing checkout forms that will be kept on file by me and you must return all equipment in working order by **Tuesday, Dec. 3, 4 p.m.**

And here's a tip: In the basement of Don Anderson Hall are plenty of unused lockers. Get a combination lock. Share the combination! Text your teammate(s) when you plan to use the equipment. Once you're finished recording, load the audio files into your computer. Save them also to your flash drive. Then put the kit back and text that you've done so. This way you don't have to hunt each other down!

ABOUT MOODLE/UM ONLINE

I will use it for this class. **You should, too!** All reading, listening and production assignments and deadlines will be posted on our class page, which can be accessed by entering a Net ID at moodle.unt.edu. Grades will be there, too. If you miss class (more on that later), fail to check Moodle and then miss a deadline or an assignment, you can be confident that will be reflected in your grades.

TEXTBOOK AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

We'll be using **"Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production"** by **Jonathan Kern** as our text. Used and new copies are available at the bookstore. I'll also assign handouts. You will be quizzed on this material in class.

GUEST SPEAKERS

We're going to have a fair number this semester, in person and via Skype. I'm a big believer in bringing in working journalists and I'm also a big believer in you understanding their time is valuable. You'll need to come prepared, having listened to and read about each speaker in advance. Please know that I notice if you spend class time with me OR a guest looking at one of your devices. Treat guests as you'd like to be treated if you were an awesome, successful radio journalist asked to talk to undergrads.

LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

We'll do a lot of listening and talking about what we hear during class, but you'll also need to listen to pieces outside of class and come prepared to talk about them. These are also fodder for quizzes. In addition, we'll rotate among us as directors/curators for in-class listening sessions. Parameters of those sessions will be defined in class.

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENTS

This is a 300-level skills class, so expect to learn by doing. Here's a brief description of your production assignments. **But, first, take note on how to file: All final mixes must be emailed to me as an attached MP3. If a story has a script, that script must also be attached as a Word file. Deadlines are 9 a.m. on the date indicated.** Due dates may change and will be finalized in class and posted to Moodle. In most circumstances, a failure to meet deadlines will result in a failing grade.

- **Deep End of the Pool.** Due: Friday, Aug. 30
Jump right in and let's see if you can swim. 2-4 min radio story.
- **News Spot.** Due: Friday, Sept. 13
Adapt a complicated print story for radio. Include host intro and script. 60 sec.
- **News Wrap.** Due: Friday Sept. 20, 9 a.m.
Find some news. Interview someone. Write coherently into and out of one or two actualities. Include host intro. 60-90 sec.
- **News Feature.** Script Due: Monday, Sept. 30. Final Mix Due: Monday, Oct. 7.
Acts & Tracks. At least two sources. Best stories will air on KBGA. 4-6 min.
- **Narrated Feature.** Deadlines TBA
Must have an approved pitch for this sound-rich feature. At least two sources. Best stories will air on KBGA. 4-6 min.
- **Non-Narrated Feature.** Deadlines TBA
Must have an approved pitch. Storytelling without a script, but with music. Best features will be posted to UM Journalism's page on PRX.org. 5-10 min.

SPECIAL PROJECT

This class will participate in the Library of Congress Veterans History Project with work forever archived at the American Folklife Center in Washington, D.C. You'll work in teams of at least two to record the experience of UM students (past or current) who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Your team will do all that's required by the Library of Congress to become part of the project. Your work will also be archived on campus at the Mansfield Library. In addition, you'll take the raw tape and work with your team to produce a three-minute non-narrated professional-quality profile that will be considered

for air on Montana Public Radio. This will also be archived by the Mansfield Library. More details to come.

GRADING

Production Assignments: 70 percent

Vets Project: 10 percent

Quizzes, Attendance, Instructor's Assessment: 20 percent

Grades will be based on a scale of 100 percent. Letter grades will not be used except as the final grade (per requirement). The equivalents are as follows:

90 - 100 percent: A

80 - 89 percent: B

70 - 79 percent: C

60 - 69 percent: D

50 - 59 percent: F

UM's plus/minus system also makes the following distinctions:

A+: 97-100

A: 93-96

A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89

B: 83-86

B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79

C: 73-76

C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69

D: 63-66

D-: 60-62

F: 59 or lower

ATTENDANCE

Your job while in college is to come to class and do what people like me ask you to do. So do that. If you must miss class because you are really sick (more than sniffles) or you have an unmovable conflict, you must notify me at least an hour before class via email.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

- Students with disabilities and/or special needs should notify the instructor at his or her earliest convenience and contact Disabilities Services for Students, <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or x2243.
- Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code: All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course

instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321. And, more on academic honesty, is available here: http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php

- **PLAGIARIASM and ETHICS:** Have pride in your work and banish the idea of turning in something written or recorded by someone else and presented as your own. Writing a script, asking someone to read your words and then pawning it off as legitimate journalism is also a big, fat no. Penalties range from failing this class to expulsion from school.