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Spring 2-1-2022

JRNL 440.01: Advanced Audio

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advanced audio 2022

JRNL 440 and 499/ SPRING 2022

Class: TT 12:30-1:50 / DAH 316

Lab: TT 2-3:20 / DAH 114

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2-4 and by appointment

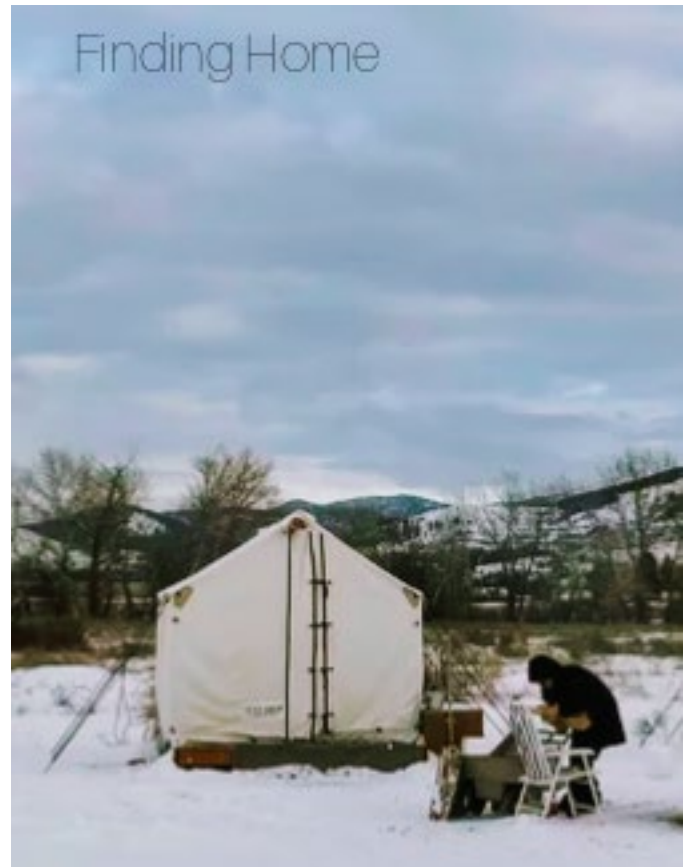
COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This project-based class is a collaboration with Montana Public Radio and will be publicly available to share and license through the [University of Montana School of Journalism's page on the Public Radio Exchange](#), or PRX. Students will file professional-quality audio and web stories exploring Montana's housing crisis, with specific focus in Western Montana and on the so-called "underhoused." Our stories will explore the overlap between housing and poverty.

You will produce smart, sound-rich, well-reported stories that focus on people and their experiences, even in stories that also explain complicated issues and policies. Along the way, you'll also learn narrative skills applicable to longform audio reporting and journalistic podcasts.

Assignments will include two audio portraits, about 3 minutes in length, that each focus on one person. Your semester-long project will be one deeply reported, multi-sourced, narrated news feature, about 5 minutes in length. It will go through multiple edits at each stage and will include voice-coaching. Each story you produce in this class will require a polished, approved pitch.

The final product of your work may take several forms: Airing on Montana Public Radio during local cut-ins to NPR's flagship shows if it meets MTPR's standards; running on MTPR's website; running as a project on PRX.org akin to 2020's [Project Little Shell](#); running on KBGA; running as a stand-alone podcast we produce as a class; and/or running on other national shows or podcasts that you pitch (with my instruction and encouragement).



In addition, you'll go beyond production to critically consume and thoughtfully discuss journalism, written and heard, especially journalism about housing and poverty. While it's unlikely this class will produce an episodic narrative podcast, I will teach you about in-depth narrative journalism and podcasting and the industries and job opportunities in that field. Your interest and engagement in smart discussions is expected.

If you choose to stay here, in a 400-level audio class, I work on an assumption you're serious and not just dabbling. Doing advanced-level audio stories and launching an ambitious project takes dedication and time. I will challenge you. I will make you better. You will do work you're proud of. But you should be prepared to either meet my high expectations or fail the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, successful students will:

- Produce complex, air-worthy short and long features that blend creativity and the rigors of good reporting.
- Meet all deadlines.
- Complete all assigned tasks that come with launching and feeding this project, including photos and transcripts.
- Present and lead discussion on assigned podcast episodes and/or other journalism.
- Get better at editing flawless audio mixes.
- Voice stories like a pro.
- Read, listen and research in advance of both student- and instructor-led discussions.
- Get that audio is probably the greatest medium, still, to tell stories and connect to other humans. Because it is.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Students in good standing as Journalism majors or Journalism grad students must have passed Intermediate Audio or received permission from the instructor. Students are expected to know Adobe Audition editing software, how to gather quality audio and how to write and format scripts.

COVIDTIMES

- **Mask Up In Class:** Students are required to properly wear a mask in class, no exceptions. The University of Montana's policy for the Spring 2022 instructs us to ask you to leave class if you do not heed a reminder to wear a mask properly; if you choose not to leave, I am instructed to end the class.
- **Zoom Labs:** Occasionally, our lab class will include a guest who joins via Zoom, whether that's because of infection rates or physical distance from Missoula. You'll join Zoom for those labs also, from wherever you like and with advance notice.
- **Sickness:** If you are sick or required to quarantine via CDC and UM guidelines and policies, you must let me know via email. Unless required to do so, I won't teach simultaneously in-person and on Zoom and prefer you show up masked when you are able. If you must miss because of Covid or other sickness/excusable reasons, keep up with the course on Moodle/UM Online and be responsible by reaching out to me.
- **Reporting:** You are expected to always wear a mask properly when reporting in-person. In-person tape for audio storytelling is always better than remote tape. Interviewing outside is a solid option, depending on weather. If you are uncomfortable with in-person reporting,

please communicate with me regarding accommodations and pitch stories that will allow for this accommodation.

LAB CLASS

It's required. Please count on being available 2-3 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. Occasionally, class in DAH 316 will end early and you'll have a break before we reconvene for the lab in DAH 114. The lab serves three primary purposes:

- Dedicated time for group and individual work on your stories.
- Guest talks – other journalists and housing experts will be scheduled for this time.
- Appointments with me for one-on-one edits and voice coaching.

When in-person, the lab meets in DAH 114 (on the first floor by the stairs).

ABOUT MOODLE/UM ONLINE

I use it ALL THE TIME and it is the running record of this course. Listening and reading assignments will be posted on our class page. It will also be where you'll find deadlines, grades, important announcements and links I use in class. I'll also email you regularly on your university account through Moodle. Be aware that you need to check Moodle by the end of the business day if you miss a class. Also know that as the administrator, I can tell when you don't check Moodle. **DO NOT EMAIL ME AND ASK WHAT YOU MISSED. I FREAKING HATE THAT.** Not checking Moodle will not suffice as an excuse for incomplete work.

OTHER THINGS I HATE

- Coming late to class. When we're meeting in-person, be here on time. If we meet online, log in on time, as well.
- Not turning in your assignments and expecting to pass. Students in my classes who don't do the assignments fail the course. In this class, I act as your editor. Practice now how to be a newsroom professional and figure out when and how to communicate with me if something drastic happens in your life and your reporting.
- Skipping classes. This is a small, 400-level seminar-style class. You need to be here for it to work. Repeated unexcused absences (more than two) will be reflected in your final grade.
- Checking your GD phone and clicking around on your laptop when I **know** you're not taking notes. You pay to be in my class. So BE in my class and pay attention when someone in the class, including me, has something to say. This is also true when we are listening to stories in class. We need to be listening intelligently, not checking Slack, email and social.

LISTENING AND RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS

The bulk of your "textbook" for this course will be listening and research assignments. You'll be taking time outside of my class to listen to, read and learn things I can't get to in our limited time. Listening assignments will include the podcast series, [According to Need](#), which we'll study extensively; also: episodes of [HowSound: The Backstory to Great Audio Storytelling](#) and various stories and podcasts as assigned.

QUIZZES AND MINOR ASSIGNMENTS

Quizzes and minor assignments will be graded accordingly: Did you do the listening or reading, as evident by your answers on a short quiz or your engagement in class? OR: Did you do tasks I assign and identify as minor assignments? You get a 100. Did you blow it off? You get a zero.

STUDENT-LED DISCUSSIONS

Each of you will introduce and lead at least one class discussion. I'll help you, but you'll guide it. Topics will be announced and assigned in class following the turmoil of the first week. This will be 10 percent of your grade. You'll identify and play shortish clips from listening assignments and engage other students with good questions. It's a discussion you lead, not a formal presentation.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

This is a 6-credit, 400-level class and lab, so expect to produce. You should always be working on one or more stories for this class. Deadlines and minor assignments will be multiple, set for all stages of reporting and story production.

You'll produce individual stories, individually voiced and graded, but may work in reporting pairs and help each other if that's preferred. It's not required.

All scripts will need a final edit from me **prior** to voicing and mixing a piece. If you push your deadline beyond that being possible, you will fail the assignment.

All production assignments **must include a photograph**, either taken by you or contributed by a source with permission to publish. It must also include an accurate transcript of the full story.

- **Portrait I**

You'll first produce one of two sound portraits of a person living in the overlap of housing and poverty. It will include an intro and an outro voiced by you, but might have little to no narration beyond that. It's a chance to learn the art of non-narrated storytelling and a chance for people to tell their own stories in their own voices. You'll re-edit after getting feedback on your first mix. Must include a photo.

- **Portrait II**

Do it again with someone else. These portrait sources might contribute to, but do not have to be included in, your longer reported feature.

- **Reported Feature – Multiple Grades**

You'll pre-report, pitch, develop, fully report, script, voice, mix and then remix one multisource story related to the housing crisis in Montana. You may be expected to create multiple versions of this story. For example: a 1-minute version, the full version (5-6 minutes) and one you cut in half. Professional audio reporters do this all the time and you'll learn how to make a piece both longer and shorter. You'll get several grades on this story, including but not limited to:

- The Pitch: You'll get examples of a polished pitch. If yours is not complete or it's in any way sloppy or contains errors, that will be reflected in this grade.

- The Script: Write a good one that's clear and correct, that understands character, flow, information for people's ears, good narration leading into and out of great tape.
 - The Mix(es): Make it smoooooth. No audible edits, no "up-cuts." You'll get instruction on good mixing and then you'll be expected to do that.
- **Overall Teamwork and Class Attendance**
Your overall willingness to pitch in beyond your individual stories to put this project out to the world will be a major grade in this class. You'll need to show up to class and work as a team. If you check out of this project and its process, your grade here will reflect that. If you do a lot of heavy-lifting to make this happen, that will also be reflected here.

All deadlines: TBA. They will be announced in class and posted to Moodle.

GRADING

Major Assignments: 75 percent

Student-led Discussion: 10 percent

Minor Assignments and Quizzes: 15 percent

Grades will be based on a scale of 100 percent and will use the University of Montana's plus/minus system.

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

EQUIPMENT

You may choose to purchase/use instructor-approved personal audio equipment. Professional-grade Tascam DR-40 kits will be issued to you individually. I'll instruct you on how to use and

equip your kit. You are responsible for damage or theft of equipment and for returning it on time. You will be charged for damaged/lost equipment and will fill out a checkout form that acknowledges your understanding of that.

A note about headphones: Procure some good ones. Cans (over the ears) are best. Upgrade from earbuds.

A note about batteries: Procure a crap ton of them.

A note about memory cards: You can install your own into your machine, but please *plug in* your machine via the USB cable to download files. Yanking the cards in and out of the recorders has taken its toll, so please do your part. Please also remember to remove your cards and replace with the original, if there was one, before you turn in your kit.

ATTENDANCE

This is a small, upper-division, seminar-type class. Your absence will be obvious. If you must miss class because you are sick or you have an unmovable conflict, you must notify me at least an hour before class via email. Unexcused absences will be reflected in your overall grade.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

- **Diversity Initiative:** The School of Journalism has undertaken an initiative to create opportunities for students to tell stories of varied and diverse groups of people. You will need to integrate one of these groups into one or more of your final audio assignments. We will discuss the groups of people and some possible story ideas during the preparation of the assignments.
- **Disability Equity:** This course is accessible to and usable by otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. The Office of Disability Equity will assist the instructor and student in the accommodation process. For more information, visit umt.edu/disability.
- **Academic Honesty:** Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a 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/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php
 - **Plagiarism and Journalism 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. Also note: Coaching someone to read a prepared script or misrepresenting someone as a legitimate source when that person is acting a part is against the standards and practices of journalism and will not be tolerated. Penalties range from failing this class to expulsion from school.
- **Double-Dipping:** You may not submit for this course any assignment or variation on an assignment that was, or will be concurrently, submitted for another class unless you receive prior, documented approval from the professor for this course. To do so without permission will result in an F for the course. That said, you may and are encouraged to submit any work you do in this class for any outside outlet.