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JRNL 340.01: Intermediate Audio

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intermediate audio

**JRNL 340 • FALL 2014 • MW •
11:10 – 12:30 • DAH 316**

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Office hours: MW 3-4:30 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 popular culture, and 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 sound contributes to news and how to write radio news that's accurate, conversational and concise. And speaking of writing, you'll be doing that and focusing on that in this class because writing is what makes or breaks most audio stories, regardless of what's on the tape. You'll also get all kinds of comfortable sticking microphones in faces and other places. You'll learn how to voice stories so they sound like you and not like anyone else. 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 and scripts.
- 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.
- Card readers for the Marantz recorder.
- A crap-ton of AA batteries.

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 **Wednesday, 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 bike all over Missoula to hunt each other down!

ABOUT MOODLE/UM ONLINE

I *will* use it for this class. **You will, 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.umt.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's not my fault. **IF YOU MISS CLASS, DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK ME WHAT YOU MISSED.** Wait until the end of the business day and check the freaking site. In addition, you'll have listening assignments where you'll be required to listen to

pieces online, post links to stories you find and post comments. Instructors can easily tell when and how frequently you check Moodle. I will call you out. You've been warned.

TEXTBOOK AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

We'll be using parts of **"Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production"** by **Jonathan Kern**. I will provide you with hard copies of chapters. You are welcome to but not required to buy the book. I'll also assign other handouts. You will be quizzed on this material in class.

LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION

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. As mentioned, you'll also complete listening assignments through Moodle. You may also be asked to share audio stories with the class and should be prepared to lead discussions about them. **I CAN'T TALK ALL THE TIME. DON'T MAKE ME.**

QUIZZES

We'll have them on both reading and listening assignments. I'll warn you in class. So you'll have to come to 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. 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.

- **Voxpop.** Due: Friday, Sept. 5
Jump right in and let's see if you can swim. We'll define and go over examples of voxpops in class and you'll record and mix your own well-paced blend of voices. 2 minutes. We'll listen to several in class on Sept. 8.
- **News Reader (Script only).** Wednesday, Sept. 17.
Adapt a complicated print story for radio. Must include host intro. 60 sec. Must file by 9 a.m. and bring hard copy to class on 9/17 for an exercise on voicing.
- **News Wrap.** Deadline Monday, Sept. 29.
Find some news. Get tape. Write coherently into and out of one or two actualities. Include host intro. 60-90 sec.

- **News Story (with approved pitch, multiple sources, edited script).** Script and Mix deadlines TBD. Must include numbers/stats and other hard facts. 2-4 minutes.
- **Narrated Program Feature.** Deadlines TBD. 5-7 minutes.
You'll do a story about a program that involves people doing something for other people in Montana. We'll go over examples in class. You'll need an approved pitch, an edited script and a final sound-rich mix. Scripts will need intros and must include at least one tape-to-tape transition and documentary sound beyond interviews.
- **Jule's Choice.** Deadline TBD.
Based on skills that need the most work, I'll come up with your last assignment for the semester as the end draws near. Parameters and requirements will be discussed in class.

SPECIAL PROJECT

This class will participate throughout the semester in the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project with work forever archived at the American Folklife Center in Washington, D.C. This project is in partnership with the Mansfield Library, which will also archive the interviews.

You'll work in teams of at least two to research and record the experience of UM students (past or current) who served in combat, most likely in Iraq or Afghanistan, but possibly in Vietnam. Your team will do all that's required by the Library of Congress and the Mansfield Library to become part of the project, including filling out paperwork, completing waivers, providing audio files burned to a disc and *filing a complete, typed-out transcript of the full interview*. In addition, you'll take the raw tape and work with your team to create a 3-minute, non-narrated feature that meets professional standards and will be uploaded to our series page on PRX.org. (<http://www.prx.org/series/33500-combat-stories-montana-veterans-on-iraq-afghanis>)

This project is worth 15 percent of your final grade. Different steps will have different deadlines announced in class.

GRADING

Production Assignments: 70 percent

Vets Project: 15 percent

Quizzes: 5 percent

Attendance and Participation: 10 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. Those who have three or more unexcused absences will get a zero for Attendance and Participation (10 percent of final grade).

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, 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. 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.

ACCESS

If you are a JRNL graduate student OR undergraduate student admitted to the professional program, your security code has already been generated for the semester and your GrizCard has already been activated to enter the front doors of DAH. You will have continual access (during the semester) to DAH until you graduate or drop from the Professional Program. If you have forgotten or misplaced your six-digit code, please see Andrew in DAH201 or call him at 243-4001 to obtain it.