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JRNL 440.01: Advanced Audio

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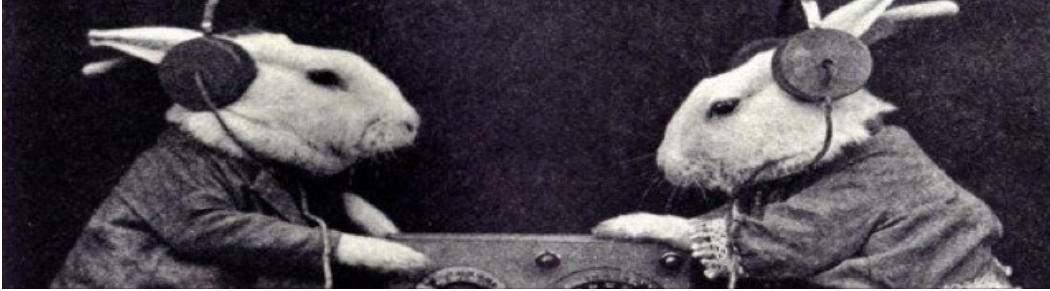
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Advanced Audio



JRNL 440 / SPRING 2015 / MW / 12:40-2 p.m. / DAH 114

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Office hours: Friday 9-noon and by appointment

We're all of us just sitting here waiting for some sound that will help us figure out how to be.

--Jad Abumrad, host of Radiolab

Course Description And Objectives

Possibly, there has never been a more exciting, opportunistic time in the history of radio production than now. In this course, you'll begin to understand that thorough a crazy amount of listening, as well as through required study and discussion of the changing radio industry. You'll also become a part of that industry via a partnership with Reveal, a Peabody-award-winning radio show and podcast produced by the Center for Investigative Reporting and the Public Radio Exchange. In addition, you'll produce separate high-quality features to post to PRX.org, where they could be licensed and aired by stations, shows and podcasts. You'll also produce a news feature to be considered for air by Montana Public Radio. This is a class designed to give you professional-level experience. It's tailored to those who are serious about developing professional-level audio skills. Those who are not now radio nerds will become radio nerds by the end of the semester. Those who resist that term will likely not enjoy this class.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, successful students will:

- Produce complex, air-worthy features that blend creativity and the rigors of good journalism.
- Meet all deadlines.

- Participate fully in a precedent-setting collaboration with the Center for Investigative Reporting and the Public Radio Exchange.
- Present and participate in both student- and instructor-led discussions about topics, chosen by the professor, related to the evolving radio industry.
- Complete with enthusiasm all listening and reading assignments.
- Get that radio is probably the greatest medium, still, to tell stories and connect to other humans.

Prerequisite Skills And Knowledge

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

About Moodle/Um Online

I will use it for this class. You should, too! Reading and listening assignments will be posted on our class page. It will also be where you'll find deadlines, class announcements and links to audio played in class. I'll also email you on your university account through Moodle. We'll also use graded Moodle forums to further class discussion of listening assignments. Your grades will post there as you receive them. So, check it, is what I'm saying. Be aware that, as the instructor, I have knowledge about when and how often you check the class page. Also be aware that you need to check Moodle by the end of the business day if you miss a class. Do not email me and ask what you missed. I freaking hate that.

Other Things I Hate

- Coming late to class. Be here on time. It's not fair to anyone in the class, including me, if I need to repeat myself to get you up to speed.
- Not turning in your assignments and expecting to pass. You can't not do the work. Be an adult. If something drastic in your life happens, come and talk to me.
- 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 participation grade.
- Checking your phone and social networking in class. You pay to be in my class. So be in my class and quit clicking around on that thing when someone in the class, including me, has something to say. Also true when we are listening to stories in class. We need to be listening intelligently, not clicking around. Got it?

Textbook And Reading Assignments

We'll be using "Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound" by John Biewen as our text. It's at the university bookstore. Used copies are available from Amazon.com and other outlets. The essays in the book will correlate with listening assignments and Moodle forums I'll discuss in class. Other materials assigned by the instructor are also required reading. All are fodder for unannounced quizzes.

Listening Assignments

In addition to reading about radio, you'll need to listen to it. At several points during the semester, I'll post a listening assignment and ask you to talk about it in a Moodle forum. I'll also ask you to go and find your own radio stories, post them and write a bit about them in a forum. The forums will be graded.

Student-Led Discussions

Each of you will be responsible to lead at least one, likely two, class discussions on topics chosen by me. You will be graded on your ability to engage your fellow students for at least 20 minutes. A formal presentation is not necessary, but preparation is. You'll need to research and do your homework on your topic so that you can inform and educate each other. Topics will be announced and assigned in class following the turmoil of the first week.

Production Assignments

This is a 400-level class, so expect to produce. The way you learn radio is to listen to a lot of radio and then do a lot of radio and experiment. You should always be working on at least one story for this class. Most of your assignments will be uploaded to an account you're encouraged to establish at PRX.org. The good ones will be uploaded and linked to the university PRX account I manage. I will also work with you to find places to pitch your pieces.

Creativity is rewarded. Deadlines must be met. For scripted stories, you'll have a separate deadline in advance of mixing your piece. Scripts must be sent in an editable format. Word docs are preferred. Mixes must be sent via email as an attached mp3. After you get edits, *you'll get a new deadline to finalize your mix*. You need to incorporate my edits before getting a final grade.

Deadlines are approximate and will be finalized during class and posted to Moodle.

Music Feature

This story is broad in interpretation, but must be about music or musicians. It must incorporate recorded music directly related to the subject of the story.

Pitching me and getting approval is required. Length will depend on the story and will be finalized during the pitching process.

Tentative First Deadline for MP3: Monday, Feb. 9, midnight.

Those writing scripts will have an earlier script-only deadline. Everyone will have a second deadline for the final piece that incorporates mix edits.

Scored Feature

Different from the music feature, this will be a story that will incorporate music as a storytelling element. The music, chosen by you, will pace your story, perhaps lift it, perhaps underscore the emotions speakers and sounds in your story convey. The feature must be pitched and have at least two

relevant sources. Length will depend on the story and will be finalized during the pitching process.

Tentative First Deadline for MP3: Tuesday, March 3, midnight.

Those writing scripts will have an earlier script-only deadline. Everyone will have a second deadline for the final piece that incorporates mix edits.

News Feature

This will be a story where the goal is to do the best, newsiest piece you can for consideration by Montana Public Radio. It will be scripted, multisourced, timely, pitched. Length for consideration by MTPR is 3:30 to 4 minutes. Other requirements will be discussed in class.

Deadline: TBA

“Reveal” Partnership

As a member of this class, you’ll be expected to take part and do all tasks assigned as part of a still-forming and precedent-setting partnership with Reveal Radio, a new show produced by the Center for Investigative Reporting and PRX. Details are still being worked out, but you’ll be assigned research and production tasks in service of the show, which focuses on investigative journalism and airs on stations throughout the country. Your work could entail conducting and editing interviews aired as part of a larger piece on the show or you might do research to aid a specific story. Also possible: producing an entire story that airs on either the show or its podcast. In February, representatives from the show will visit our class in person to talk more about details. Get pumped!

Deadlines: TBA

Grading

Production Assignments: 80 percent

Student-led Discussion(s): 10 percent

Moodle Forums and Quizzes: 5 percent

Attendance and Participation: 5 percent

Grades will be based on a scale of 100 percent and will use the University of Montana's plus/minus system. Letter grades will not be used in this course, although the final grade (per requirement) will be given as a letter grade. 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

Equipment

You may choose to purchase/use instructor-approved personal audio equipment. Professional-grade Marantz kits will be issued to you individually or as part of a two-person team (depending on size of class). You are responsible for damage or theft of equipment and for picking it up/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. Upgrade from earbuds.

A note about batteries: We don't provide them. Procure a crap ton of them.

Attendance

This is a small(ish), upper-division, seminar-type class. Your absence will be obvious. If you must miss class because you are really sick (with more than the sniffles) 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 final grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in an F for the attendance portion of your final grade.

Additional Course Policies

- The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, contact your instructor during the first week of the semester so that proper accommodations can be provided. Please contact [Disability Services for Students](#) if you have questions, or call Disability Services for Students (DSS) for voice/text 406.243.2243. You may also fax the Lommasson Center 154 for more information 406.243.5330.
- 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

http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php. And, more on academic honesty, is available here:

http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php

- **Plagiarism 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. Also note: Coaching someone to act as a legitimate source is against the standards and practices of journalism and will not be tolerated. Penalties range from failing this class to expulsion from school.
- **Class Work:** You may not submit for this course any assignment that was, or will be concurrently, submitted for another class unless you receive prior approval from the professor for this course. To do so without permission will result in an F for the assignment and could 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.