

MEJO 252.3 - Introduction to Audio Journalism
Syllabus
Fall 2022

M/W 8:00-9:15 a.m. at Carroll (CA) 268

Instructor: Cole del Charco (he/him)

Phone: 828-244-8133

Office: Adjunct faculty suite

Office hours: Friday 1-3 p.m. or by appointment

Email: coledelcharco@unc.edu

Course Description:

In this class you'll learn to generate story ideas, report them out, and then script, voice and produce them. We will produce audio stories in their many forms, including: for radio or streaming on the internet, on-demand audio and podcasts. Throughout the class, you will learn interviewing and reporting techniques that will prepare you for higher-level courses.

It's highly recommended that you take MEJO 121 (Intro to Digital Storytelling) and MEJO 153 (Writing and Reporting) either before or concurrently with this course.

Course Goals:

- Learn what makes a good audio story, and the difference between reporting for audio and for print/online.
- Understand the basics of Adobe Audition, and be able to edit and produce stories with it
- Practice rigorous reporting through audio feature projects, and a group project podcast
- Learn audio script formats, and to write for audio
- Gain an understanding of the many ways audio journalism is shared with audiences
- Identify three newsrooms/podcasts/online news organizations you could see yourself working with, and why

Audio Editing Software

You'll need to download the latest version of Adobe Audition from the Adobe Creative Cloud which is licensed for UNC students. You can download the program by using your UNC email address and onyen and at the following website: <https://software.sites.unc.edu/adobe/>

Attendance/Punctuality

Punctuality and meeting deadlines are essential in the broadcast industry, and in this class. If you're sick or have a personal emergency, please email your instructor at coledelcharco@unc.edu in advance of class. Each class will be recorded and shared through Sakai in case you are sick, or

quarantining. You are allowed three unexcused absences, but additional absences will result in a 10-point drop in the participation category of your final grade.

Textbook

Kern, Jonathan, 1953-, Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
ISBN: 978-0-226-43178-9.

Assigned Readings and Listenings:

Will be available on Sakai.

Missed Quizzes and/or Midterm Exam:

If you miss a quiz, there will be no makeup quiz. The quiz section of your final grade will be an average of all the quizzes, excluding your worst quiz grade.

Grading Breakdown

You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade. Your final grade will be computed as follows:

Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Project #1	10%
Project #2	15%
Project #3	20%
Project #4	25%
Podcast	10%

Participation

This class will operate like many in the Hussman School of Media and Journalism. Part lecture, part training and part learning by doing. In a physical newsroom, on a podcast team or in an online news organization, working well with others is essential. Similarly, in this class, we will share ideas, feedback and advice, all with the goal of creating a stronger final product. In audio storytelling, we leave people with words and sounds. It's all we get. Hopefully, a piece of news, helpful context, or conveyed emotion will stick with a listener, but the only chance we get to do that is in the work itself. By creating a climate of support, engagement and constructive criticism in class, we will make better audio stories, and learn to make our own audio journalism better.

Class discussion will be a main form of participation for this course. You may disagree with something a classmate or the instructor says, but we must all agree to respect each other's views to have a constructive and positive class environment.

Please follow these discussion guidelines:

- Whether agreeing, disagreeing, or adding to the discussion, be prepared to give concrete and specific details. Backing up your ideas with evidence will benefit us all. Remember when we are giving feedback that we are not criticizing or praising each other, but the ideas or story draft we are discussing. We all want to improve the final product.
- Listen before speaking. By taking a second before speaking up, we can make sure we know what we are discussing and not share empty advice that could be clarified with a moment's notice.
- To critique and improve your own work, try to be an objective observer of your piece. This can be one of the harder parts of improving as a journalist. Try looking at your words in a different font or, better yet, step away from the computer for a few minutes to come back with fresh eyes and a more objective perspective.

Grading Rubric for Assignments

The rubric for grading assignments will be as follows:

100 points will be possible for each assignment.

A possible maximum of 40 points for Reporting based on:

- a.) Interviewing a variety of sources, each with knowledge of the focus of your story
- b.) Researching and using primary sources and documents to provide context and background
- c.) Doing original reporting for the assignment

A possible maximum of 40 points for Writing

- a.) Clear writing
- b.) Concise writing
- c.) Following style rules from your instructor and the textbook (*Kern*)
- d.) The story flows smoothly

And a possible 20 points for Production Quality

- a.) Your story is broadcast quality, has clear narration, quotes and good use of natural sound

The Stylebook of the Hussman School of Journalism and Media will be our style guide, along with the most recent version of the AP Style Guide. <https://jschoolstylebook.web.unc.edu/>

A numerical grade scale will be used on all papers and tests. Here are the letter equivalents:

FINAL GRADES

95 - 100 A

90 - 94 A-

87 - 89 B+

83 - 86 B

80 - 82 B-

77 - 79 C+

73 - 76 C

70 - 72 C-

67 - 69 D+

60 - 66 D

59 and below F

Late Assignments

Assignments that are not turned in by the specified date and time will be considered late. Each late assignment will result in a 10 point deduction per day that the assignment is late.

Assignments turned in more than 7 days after the deadline will earn a grade of zero.

Additional Considerations

Mispronunciation of proper names is the audio equivalent of misspelling someone's name, and must be treated with the same rigor. Ask sources to say their full name for you, so you have a record of the correct pronunciation. It's also essential that you get interviewees permission to record and potentially broadcast any audio you record of them.

Along with significant factual errors, mispronunciation (or misspelling in your script) of source's names, will result in significant point reduction in your assignment. Each misspelling of a proper name in the script will result in a 10-point deduction, each mispronunciation of a proper name will result in a 15-point deduction. A major factual error may result in a failing grade for the assignment. These are deal-breakers for a story in the broadcast industry.

Fabricating a source, quote, or sound bite is a violation of the UNC Honor Code. So is plagiarism, the act of passing off another's words or ideas as your own.

We will discuss fair use of audio, where to find free-to-use music and more audio recording questions. When in doubt, you may ask me by email. When using archival audio, make sure you have permission from the owner of the file (that may not just be the website or library you access it), you can check with me to make sure it's okay.

Where possible, I will try to inform you of potentially disturbing content. Please inform me if an upcoming assigned reading or listening could trigger you and I will find a comparable story to

learn from. You will not be in any way punished for this, we will simply find a substitute that will work for you.

Journalism and documentary work often cover traumatic and painful subjects, and it's important that each journalist learn to care for their own emotional, mental and physical well-being while in the field. We will discuss best practices for reporting in dangerous and traumatic situations, treating sources with respect, and using trauma-informed practices to minimize the harm to all involved.

Stories that get high grades often push both the reporter and listener to learn something new, share a story from a creative angle or perspective, show originality and use sound creatively.

Course Calendar:

Date	Subject	Assignment	Reading
Aug. 15	Course Intro	<i>Get Sound Reporting</i> by Jonathan Kern & Download Adobe Audition	
Aug. 17	Introduction to Adobe Audition	Download Adobe Audition	Read Chapters 1 & 2 <i>Sound Reporting</i>
Aug. 22	The basics of fairness, Adobe Audition <i>and discuss Chapters 1-2 of Kern</i>	Project #1 pitch due Tuesday, Aug. 30, by 11:59 p.m.	Read Chapter 3 - Writing for Broadcast
Aug. 24	Writing for Radio is different <i>and discuss Ch. 3</i>	Project #1 pitch due Tuesday, Aug. 30, by 11:59 p.m.	Read Chapter 4 - Reporting
Aug. 29	Reporting: Sources <i>and discuss Ch. 4</i>	Listen to three hourly newscasts by the BBC, NPR or ABC between Aug. 29 and Sep. 2. These are available on 91.5fm WUNC, NPR.org (https://www.npr.org/podcasts/500005/npr-news-now) BBC	

		(https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p002vsn1)	
Aug. 31	Reporting: Getting good sound, <i>and discuss pitches for Project #1</i>	Project #1 due Sep. 7, 7:59 a.m.	Read Chapter 5 - Field Producing
Sep. 5 – No Class, Labor Day holiday	Project #1 due by Sep. 7 at 7:55 a.m.	Project #1 due by class Sep. 7, and choose and listen to a daily news podcast and bring a brief piece of feedback to class.	
Sep. 7	Reporting: Ethical dilemmas, and critiques of daily news podcast episode & <i>Project #1 due</i>	Listen to this long feature from WBUR https://www.wbur.org/news/2021/01/21/kitchen-cafe-boston-closes-doors-covid-economy	Read Kern Ch. 6 - Story Editing
Sep. 12	Share news stories and class feedback, Briefing on Project #2 <i>and in class Quiz on Ch. 1-5 & other assigned readings and audio stories so far</i>	Pitch for Project #2 due at 7:59 p.m. Sunday Sep. 18. You can get earlier approval for pitch.	Read Kern Ch. 7 - The Reporter/Host Two-Way
Sep. 14	Going live on air, and discuss Project #2 more extensively	Pitch for Project #2 due at 7:59 p.m. Sunday Sep. 18.	Read Kern Ch. 8 - Reading on Air
Sep. 19	Voicing an audio story and exercise in class. Discuss Pitches for Project #2	Listen to ‘Hang a Picture in Front of the Mic’ and two feature stories it’s based on TW: domestic abuse https://transom.org/2018/hang-picture-front-mic/ ; https://www.npr.org/2	Read Kern Ch. 9 - Hosting

		018/03/29/595610152/3-photographers-who-captured-the-undersides-of-life and https://www.npr.org/2006/07/14/5552204/rembrandts-unsparing-eye	
Sep. 21	The art of the interview, and in class work time for Project #2		Read Ch. 10 - Newscasting for class Sep. 28
Sep. 26 - Well-being day, no class		Project #2 due at 7:59 a.m. on Sep. 28	
Sep. 28	<i>Guest Speaker:</i> WFAE's midday newscast host Nick deLaCanal & Project #2 due	Project #3 assigned: Medium length feature, due Oct. 12	Read Ch. 11 - Booking
Oct. 3	The different roles in audio journalism: Hosting, reporting, producing	Create pitch for Project #3, due by 11:59 p.m. Oct. 5	
Oct. 5	What makes a good host? Telling stories you know. In class time to work on pitch for Project #3 due by midnight	Listen to Suave podcast Episode 1, winner of the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in audio journalism https://www.futuromediagroup.org/suave/	Read Ch. 12 - Producing
Oct. 10	Principles of Audio production, Discuss Suave episode 1 and class time to work on Project #3	Project #3 due by 11:59 on Oct. 12	
Oct. 12	Intermediate Adobe Audition practices, time to work on Project #3	Project #3 due by 11:59 on Oct. 12. Project #4 Individual podcast assignment due 11:59 Nov. 4	Read Ch. 13 - Production Ethics

Oct. 17	Production Ethics Pt. 1	<p>Listen to this episode of Millennial https://www.millennialpodcast.org/season-i-blog/4-nothing-to-loose this piece by Radio Diaries https://www.radiodiaries.org/walter-backerman-seltzer-man/ And read this piece in the Columbia Journalism Review: https://www.cjr.org/roll/podcasting-is-the-new-personal-essay.php</p>	
Oct. 19	Production Ethics Pt. 2	<p>Listen to episode 688 of <i>This American Life</i> and bring feedback and critiques to class. https://www.thisamericanlife.org/688/the-out-crowd</p>	Ch. 14 - Program Producing
Oct. 24	Other methods of doing audio journalism: Personal essay, gonzo-journalism, and beyond	<p>Project #4 Individual podcast assignment due 11:59 Nov. 4</p>	
Oct. 26	The power of podcasting	<p>Listen to this episode of a podcast by Reveal from the Center for Investigative Reporting. TW: Racism, violence https://revealnews.org/podcast/mississippi-goddam-chapter-1-the-promise/</p>	
Oct. 31	Form Podcast teams	Make a list of five	

		audio jobs that fit your interests and skills.	
Nov. 2	Next steps: Aligning your skills with jobs in the field	Podcast roadmap for individual assignment due Nov. 8, 8 p.m.	
Nov. 7	Podcast workshop	The basics of podcast/audio story critique and advice from writer's workshops: https://blog.pacific-content.com/help-i-need-to-give-feedback-on-a-podcast-episode-but-i-never-given-feedback-on-a-podcast-9fac2f78a5e1 & https://burlingtonwritersworkshop.com/2014/08/08/on-giving-feedback/	
Nov. 9	In-class critique of podcast ideas		Read Ch. 15 - Program Editing
Nov. 14	Podcast workshop	Listen to rough cuts of other team's podcasts for class Nov. 16	
Nov. 16	Podcast workshop: Workshop ongoing drafts	Listen to this episode of the BBC Sounds' Short Cuts for next class https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0017th9	
Nov. 21	Principles of Sound Design (potential guest speaker), world of audio documentary and beyond		Read Ch. 18 - Beyond Radio

Nov. 23 - No class, Thanksgiving holidays			
Nov. 28	Final Podcast workshop	Turn in group evals by 11:59 p.m. Nov. 30	
Nov. 30 - LDOC	Podcast presentations, and final podcast due at 7:59 a.m.	Turn in Project #5 (podcast) and assignment materials	
Final Exam:			

Assignments and tentative due dates:

Project #1: News spot *due at 7:59 a.m. on Sep. 7*

Project #2: Short audio feature *due at 7:59 a.m. on Sep. 28*

Project #3: Medium length feature *due at 11:59 on Oct. 12*

Project #4: Individual podcast assignment *due at 11:59 on Nov. 4*

Project #5: Group project, podcast pilot episode *due for presentation at 7:59 a.m. on Nov. 30*

Quizzes (topics subject to change):

Quiz #1: on Ch. 1-5 Kern and assigned readings and audio stories through Sep. 12

Quiz #2: on Ch. 6-10 Kern, and assigned readings and audio stories through Sep. 28

Quiz #3: on Ch. 11-14 Kern, and assigned readings and audio stories through Oct. 24

Additional Resources:

- WUNC <https://www.wunc.org/> and NPR <https://www.npr.org/> carry state and national news that's broadcast on air, and can be streamed online. NPR's newscasts also populate to this podcast feed on the hour: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/500005/npr-news-now>
- Transom.org is a website with invaluable knowledge about audio storytelling in most formats, but especially longform and podcasting. There are interviews with the best audio producers, gear reviews and more techniques on the website here <https://transom.org/topics/techniques/>
- *Out on the Wire* by Jessica Abel is a cartoon on the process *This American Life* staff uses to create its Pulitzer-winning radio show and podcast. It's available in hardback, and also

as a PDF online. Free excerpts in online news outlets are linked to on this website <https://jessicaabel.com/out-on-the-wire/>

- HowSound is a podcast by audio storytelling educator Rob Rosenthal. It's a must-listen for audio veterans and newcomers alike. <https://transom.org/topics/techniques/>
- *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* by John Biewen and Alexa Dilworth, "...celebrates today's best audio documentary work by bringing together some of the most influential and innovative practitioners from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia." It's available to read through UNC library free online <https://catalog.lib.unc.edu/catalog/UNCb9023118>
- NPR Training has resources online about audio storytelling, photography, videography, and online journalism. <https://training.npr.org/category/audio/>

THE HONOR CODE

Each exam, project and written work must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code. Fabricating a source, quotes, or committing plagiarism could qualify as violations of the Honor Code.

The Honor System forms a bond of trust among students, faculty, and administrators. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill operates under a system of self-governance, as students are responsible for governing themselves. As such, our University is transformed into a powerful community of inquiry and learning. The Honor Code embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship, and governs the performance of all academic work a student conducts at the University. Acceptance of an offer of admission to Carolina presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in our century-old tradition of honor and integrity.

Members of the University community who wish to report possible violations of the Honor Code should contact the Office of Student Conduct at (919) 962-0805 or fill out the online form. The Office of Student Conduct will review the report and refer it to the appropriate Student Attorney General for action.

Office Hours and Additional Help

If you find you are not satisfied with your performance in the class and need one-on-one help, please reach out to me over email, after class, or at office hours. My schedule is flexible and I will prioritize meeting and helping you improve your performance in this course, whether it's having difficulty with class material, audio production or reporting.

It's best if you seek help as early as you can, or as soon as you identify that you may need it. As the semester wears on, there is only so much that can be done, with fewer assignments left to potentially improve your grade.

Syllabus Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. I will attempt to announce all changes as early as possible.

ARS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> (<https://ars.unc.edu/>) or email ars@unc.edu (<mailto:ars@unc.edu>). (source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Title IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu), to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu (<https://safe.unc.edu/>).

Policy on Non-discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are

based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media Diversity Statement

The UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media recognizes our leadership role in the University, academia and our professions. We developed diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying working goals to reflect an ongoing commitment to diversity in fulfilling teaching, research and service missions among faculty, staff, students and citizens of North Carolina. Our diversity and inclusion efforts reflect the Hussman School's overarching strategic plan and criteria of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

Any point of difference among individuals, variety; especially among different types of people. It includes a recognition and appreciation of differences and finds value in these differences because they are necessary for promoting growth and learning for all community members. Diversity can be measured across many variables — age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic group, geography, religion, thought, philosophy, perspective, disability and veteran status.

MISSION

The UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media's mission is to train the next generation of media professionals and ultimately to ignite public conversation. Because meaningful and productive public conversation depends on the inclusion of diverse perspectives, the school is committed to providing an environment for teaching, learning and research that includes individuals from diverse backgrounds and with differing interests, lived experiences and goals; that reflects the diversity of the state of North Carolina and the world beyond; and that supports intellectual inquiry, dialogue and opportunities for lifelong learning and growth necessary to successfully engage in public conversation in a global marketplace of ideas.

VISION

The UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media cares deeply about diversity and inclusion. We recognize the influence our school has on future and current media professionals and scholars, and in doing so, will make diversity and inclusivity efforts an active part of our community, our curriculum and our goals.

The diversity and inclusion commitment is rooted in the knowledge that diversity and inclusion benefit all faculty, staff, students and alumni who engage with and practice these tenets. For us, this means we will:

Create and maintain an environment that promotes civic participation, values understanding of each other's backgrounds and experiences, and practices inclusion of all individuals.

Create and maintain a climate that offers equality of opportunities and plurality of thought and that supports the First Amendment's commitment to the marketplace of ideas.

Cultivate mindfulness of the unconscious biases we all have and of institutional inequalities that can threaten progress within the school.

Recruit, hire, promote and retain diverse faculty and staff.

Provide classrooms that are and remain accessible to all students and faculty.

We will show our leadership in the community and on the issues associated with diversity and inclusion by exploring innovative ways to realize this mission within our school and University.

Our working goals focus on these areas:

- To clearly define and publicize the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- To recruit and retain underrepresented populations to ensure the educational benefits of diversity and inclusion in faculty, staff, students, and executive, administrative and managerial positions.
- To make high-quality diversity and inclusion education, orientation and training available to all members of the school.

To create and sustain a climate in which respectful discussions of diversity and inclusion are encouraged; take leadership in creating opportunities for interaction and cross-group learning.

To support further research to advance alignment of the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion with the school's commitment, to support innovative research and professional activity, and to become recognized thought leaders at the intersection of media, journalism and diversity and inclusion.

Faculty and staff members serving on the school's diversity and inclusion committee include:

Nori Comello, Chair

Rhema Bland

Lois Boynton
Livi Freeman
Barbara Friedman
Monica Hill
Chad Heartwood
Angelena King
Trevy McDonald
Lisa Villamil