SYLLABUS

JOU 330: The Art of Audio

(Spring 2019)

Where: Tribble Hall C3, WF 11-12:15
Instructor: Ivan Weiss, assistant professor of the practice
Email: weissij@wfu.edu
Office: B9 Tribble Hall
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-4PM
(or, preferably, by appointment)
Description

“The human voice is the organ of the soul”
— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

We are in a golden age of audio. Opportunities to capture, produce, and share audio stories are greater than ever before.

Yet we are living in a crisis of listening. Millions are clamoring to be heard; millions more are shocked at how deaf they have been to their fellow humans.

In this course we will, above all, learn to listen. We will recalibrate our ears. Through interviews, voice over, and the sounds of everyday life, we will chart the world in sound.

Along the way we will grapple with the ethical problems that come with presenting other people’s lives. We will question our own assumptions at every step, and seek new insights on ourselves. We will learn to open up about the creative process, listen to each other’s work, and provide sensitive, supportive, and imaginative feedback.

This course is focused on creating compelling audio stories, yet the skills presented are applicable beyond podcasting to writing, documentaries, and any profession where listening, comprehending, and communicating play a vital part — which is to say, all professions.

What you will learn...
- How to record audio and edit stories
- The art of interviewing
- The elements of story
- Documentary ethics
- Tools to approach strangers and feel comfortable in strange worlds
- A deeper sense of your voice and the kinds of stories you want to tell
- Above all... new ways of listening

Readings/Tutorials
In bookstore:
- *Sound Reporting* by Jonathan Kern
- *Out on the Wire* by Jessica Abel

*Other texts available as PDFs in Google Drive folder or as shareable links.*
Lynda.com tutorials shared in class:
https://www.lynda.com/Premiere-Pro-tutorials/Premiere-Pro-CC-2018-Essential-Training-Basics/624346-2.html

Attendance
● If you must miss a class due to illness or another reason, email or talk with instructor in advance.
● 2 unexpected absences will result in a lower grade.
● Missed in-class assignments and exercises must be made up promptly (this is your responsibility to arrange).
● More than 4 classes missed will result in a failing grade.
● 3 instances of lateness will count as 1 unexcused absence.

Equipment
Cameras and audio equipment are available through ZSR Library.
https://zsr.wfu.edu/technology/equipment/

The Journalism Program has audio equipment available for checkout. See instructor. You are also encouraged to use the One Button Studio in the Bridge at ZSR Library for interviews and voice over recording.
https://is.wfu.edu/services/one-button-studio/

Plagiarism
Plagiarism and any other form of cheating will result in an automatic zero for the assignment. Depending on your intent, consequences for plagiarism could include a failing grade in the course or worse. Be sure to read and use the online guide, Academic Writing at Wake Forest:
http://www.wfu.edu/Academic-departments/english/courses/writing_guide.htm

Class Conduct
The classroom is a community, and the strength of any community depends on how we treat one another. During lectures, you are expected to pay attention, not talk to your neighbors, and to put your laptops and phones away. Speaking up and being assertive are essential to the craft of journalism. So even if you are shy, you are expected to contribute at least one or two comments during any discussion, which will figure into your Participation Grade. Above all, you are expected to be kind, considerate and supportive of your classmates and instructor.
Pop Quizzes
I reserve the right to give pop quizzes throughout the semester on the assigned reading. Come to class prepared. These will figure in your Participation Grade.

Class Blog
There will be short exercises that you will post on the class blog. These are very important and will figure as part of your Participation Grade. In addition, you will be expected to post all of your main assignments on the blog the day they are due so that you can learn from your peers’ work.

The class blog can be found at: http://weissij.journalism.wfu.edu/. Posting instructions will be given in class.
## Assignments

1) **SOUNDTRACKERS**  
Due: February 7  
10 points

2) **INTERVIEW**  
Due: February 23  
15 points

3) **PERSONAL ESSAY**  
Due: March 8  
20 points

4) **FINAL PROJECT**  
Due: April 24  
25 points

5) **LISTEN & TELL**  
Due: N/A  
15 points

6) **CLASS PARTICIPATION**  
Due: N/A  
15 points

**Total: 100 points**
1) SOUNDTRACKER
Responding to the “Generation Anthropocene” podcast episode “The Soundtracker,” choose an outside space like a park, a city block, a public garden, Campus Garden, a market, a bus station — a place at the intersection of nature and civilization where you are free to study and observe. Try to capture as many different sounds in that space as possible. Record at three different times of day (at the least). The purpose of the assignment is to help you see, hear, perceive the world in a new way, to gain a greater awareness of the overlapping of natural and human sounds, to take what is familiar and make it strange, to sharpen your sensory perceptions, and to gain a greater awareness of the breadth and complexity of our environments. Turn in: A 2-3 minute audio portrait of your space, edited on Adobe Premiere. On the class blog, post a 300-400 word essay reflecting on this experience.

2) INTERVIEW
Find someone who challenges the way you think about the world. This could be someone who you’ve observed on campus and always been curious about, a professor with provocative views, a student politician or local representative with different views than you hold, a fellow student who you have disagreed with in class, a friend or family member whose lifestyle you are intrigued or troubled by. You will use the opportunity of this interview to gain insight into this person’s life — why they think the way they do, why they are who they are, why they challenge your own ideas about life. In the One Button Studio in ZSR, record an interview with your subject for 6-8 minutes. 8 minutes is the maximum length. After the interview, write an Intro and Outro, and record it in the One Button Studio. The interview must be one unbroken clip — in other words, no chopping up and rearranging — so you have to plan it carefully. On the class blog, post a short essay about how you prepared for the interview, how it unfolded, and three interviews you listened to for inspiration and how they influenced your work.

3) PERSONAL ESSAY
Thinking about your experience making the “Soundtracker” assignment, write a personal essay about a place or space that has played a pivotal role in your life and shaped your relationship to world, other people, and the environment. This place could be anything from your old house to a restaurant to a country you visited, to a public park, to a forest or jungle, to a shopping mall where you and your friends hung out… Through the power of recollection, brainstorm all the physical details you can of this space, all the people associated with it, all the feelings you can remember, and in
particular, all the sounds. What stories come out of those recollections? How did it shape how you relate to the environment? From your most vivid recollections, fashion a 400-600 word audio piece. It is important not just to flatly read a piece you wrote, but to perform in a way where the story comes alive and feels present. Feel free to include additional sounds to augment your telling. The final piece must be 3-6 minutes — quality over quantity. You are free to submit a longer version, but you must submit a version conforming to the 6-minutes or less format. In addition, turn in the written script. On the class blog, post a short reflective essay about how you chose your subject, what the writing process was like, and discuss how at least three podcast episodes inspired/influenced your work.

4) FINAL PROJECT — CURIOUS WINSTON-SALEM
This is the capstone project of this course, the project where you bring together all the skills you have developed over the semester. Find a subject off campus that you are passionate about. Interview at last 3 people about this subject. Conduct at least 3 non-interview audio shoots that relate to the project. Include at least 1 “scene” (as defined in class). Incorporate the elements of storytelling discussed in class, with a beginning, middle, and end, mood shifts, and change. There must be a voice over component to this project — ie you talking directly to your listeners. The final product must be between 4-6 minutes.

5) LISTEN & TELL
Select an episode from a podcast featured on the Atlantic’s Monthly’s list of the best podcasts of 2018—
https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2018/12/best-podcasts-2018/578899/ — or that you learned about from the books Reality Radio or Out on the Wire. Your selected episode must tell a story — in other words, not an interview (even if it’s on the Atlantic list). Sign up for a date to lead a 10-15 minute presentation about your selection. Send out a link a week before your presentation, so we all have time to listen and think about it. In your presentation, discuss the idea of the podcast as a whole, what technical elements you were drawn to, how the story unfolded, the parts that were most effective. End with a discussion with the class.

6) CLASS PARTICIPATION
Show up to class on time. Complete in-class exercises. Work well with classmates. Listen attentively when instructor and classmates speak. Complete assigned readings and
screenings. *Only use laptops when specified!* Actively and enthusiastically partake in class discussions. *(See Class Conduct above)*
# Schedule

## January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Readings/Listenings/Activities</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/16, 1/18</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>RR: Intro by John Biewen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/23, 1/25</td>
<td>Elements of audio stories and how to edit them</td>
<td>Read: OOTW: Ch.4, SR: Ch.1</td>
<td>Environment Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/30, 2/1</td>
<td>Using the five senses; place and environment; story ideas; discuss Proj. 1</td>
<td>Premiere tutorial SR: Ch.4 RR: Ira Glass Listen: Soundtracker</td>
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## February

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/6, 2/8</td>
<td>Reporting, Production; Discuss Interview Project</td>
<td>SR: Ch.5 Lab time during office hours</td>
<td>2/8: Final Project Proposal 2/8: Soundtrackers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/13, 2/15</td>
<td>Interviewing; discuss personal essay</td>
<td>OOTW: Ch.1; RR: TBD Peer Review Project 1</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/20, 2/22</td>
<td>Voice, Character</td>
<td>OOTW: Ch.2 Soundtrackers: Peer Review</td>
<td>2/23: Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2/27 3/1</td>
<td>Personal Essay</td>
<td>RR: TBD; SR: Ch. 8 Interview: Peer Review</td>
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# March

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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<th>Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/6, 3/8</td>
<td>In-Class Workshop</td>
<td>RR: TBD Peer Review: Interview</td>
<td>3/8: Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/13, 3/15</td>
<td>Spring break!</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/20, 3/22</td>
<td>Story Structure: Beginning, Middle End - dramatic Arc</td>
<td>Peer Review Essay Read: RR: Jad Abumrad; Revisit OOTW Ch. 1. OOTW: Ch.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3/27, 3/29</td>
<td>Story Structure: Scenes and Sections</td>
<td>OOTW: CH.4</td>
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# April

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/3, 4/5</td>
<td>Story Structure: Music, transitions, attribution; voice over revisited</td>
<td>OOTW: Ch. 1 RR: Kitchen Sisters</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/10, 4/12</td>
<td>Ethics, Editing</td>
<td>Read: OOTW: CH.5; SR: Ch.13; Lab time during office hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/17, 4/19</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Lab time during office hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/24, 4/26</td>
<td>Peer Review; Course Evals</td>
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<td>4/22: Final Story</td>
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# May

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>Have a good time</td>
<td>Everything!</td>
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