

DC 113 Audio in Podcasts and Other Media

Spring Quarter 2014 | Distance Learning

Location: Online Course

Instructor: Brian Mellen

Office hours: Th 1:30 to 3:00pm in **DePaul Center C106C By Appt. Only**

Email: bmellen@cdm.depaul.edu

Or Skype/iChat by appointment if you cannot make it in to the loop.

Course Description:

This class is an introduction to the uses and practical applications of sound for multimedia. Students will study various uses of sound and music on the Internet from creative to professional websites. Using free or inexpensive hardware and software, students will learn to create and edit podcasts and attach audio files to programs and web pages such as Facebook, iTunes, Keynote, PowerPoint and other sites. The course will cover both Mac and PC applications so all students will be able to work on projects from their home computers. The course will also cover current legalities of digital media. **Prerequisites:** None.

Domain Description:

DC 113: Audio Podcasting & Other Media is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Arts and Literature domain. Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts by developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning and through critical and/or creative activity to come to experience art with greater openness, insight, and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of literature, art, theatre, or music as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Students who take course in this domain choose three courses from such choices as literature, the visual arts, media arts, music, and theater. No more than two courses can be chosen from one department or program.

Learning Outcomes and How Learning Outcomes Will Be Met:

In **DC 113**, students will:

1. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of various podcasts in terms of its technical and storytelling aspects by writing analysis papers.
2. Record clean, professional-sounding dialogue at home using a USB microphone to be used in podcasts produced by the student. A total of five podcasts will be created through the quarter.
3. Edit, mix, and export professional, Internet-ready original podcasts.
4. Successfully navigate the basic functions of recording and editing software.
5. Upload and create an original podcast feed using podcast aggregators.
6. Have a basic understanding of the mechanics behind how sound works, and what affect that has upon recording dialog for podcasts.

Writing Expectations and How They Will Be Met:

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 5-7 pages of writing for this course. The papers will adhere to APA/MLA format for writing style. The research paper (Paper 5) will require proper citation; grammar and syntax are important and will be graded accordingly.

A total of six papers will be written through the quarter.

Course Management System: D2L

Textbooks and Printed Resources: None, but you are REQUIRED to have/buy a high quality USB microphone (see below)

Materials/Software/Equipment:

- USB microphone or microphone with audio interface, Blue Snowflake or better
ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT!!!! No headset mics, no on-board microphones
(Further recommendations will be provided during Week 1)

Personal computer

Audacity (free) or any other audio editing program you wish to work on such as Garageband

iTunes (free)

-You should also have Skype (it's free for Skype to Skype calls)

- iChat/Instant Messenger is also very helpful

Late Papers/Projects:

Late papers and projects are not accepted. In case of illness, please contact me prior to the due date. LEAVE LOTS OF TIME TO UPLOAD ASSIGNMENTS. The due dates/times are hard at 6:00pm, so no excuses of "I was in the middle of uploading and it got cut off."

Grading:

Podcasts: 48% of your total grade (Podcast #1 is worth 4%, Podcasts #2-4 are worth 8% each, and Podcast #5, the Final Project is worth 20%).

Papers: 22% of your total grade (Papers #1,2,4, and 6 are worth 3% each, and Papers #3 and 5 are worth 5% each).

Quizzes: 18% of your total grade (2% each). Quizzes will cover the weekly materials to make sure you are staying on top of the content.

Picture of you with your mic: 2% of your grade. You must take a picture of yourself with your microphone and upload it to the dropbox. Due Week 3 with your first recording.

Participation in Discussion Forum: 10% of your total grade (1% per week, 2% for week 9).

Discussion Forum Rubric (A weekly grade will be given):
100% = 1 posting and 2 replies to other posters per week
85% = 1 posting and 1 reply to other posters per week
75% = 1 posting and 0 replies to other posters per week
65% = 0 posting and 1 reply to other posters per week
0% = 0 posting and 0 replies to other posters per week

LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Grading Scale:

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82- 80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Class Schedule

** Syllabus schedule is subject to change*

Week 1 04/02

Overview of syllabus, discussion forum and class expectations.

Lecture:

What's a podcast? How does sound (music, dialogue, sound effects) inform these narratives? What can sound communicate?

Homework due 04/07:

Download Audacity (You can use Gargeband or other software if you have it and are comfortable with it) and Itunes.

Audacity (Windows 1.2.6, Mac 1.25 [Intel], Mac 1.2.6 [PPC]):
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

Audacity Plugins (LADSPA Plug-Ins [Mac and PC hyperlinks on this page]):
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/plugins>

LAME MP3 encoder (Mac and PC hyperlinks on this page):2
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/faq?s=install&i=lame-mp3>

Listen to/watch the following assigned podcast episodes. You can download the zipped file of the tracks from the link provided, or you can find them by searching in the itunes store.

*This American Life: **The Super** (this episode not available for free on itunes)
GeekBeat.TV: **232 Self-inflating Bicycle Tire!**
Pop Culture Happy Hour: **Our Favorite Moments Of 2011**
The BS Report: **3/19 Peyton Manning**
Onion News Network: **Meet The Man Inside The Nicolas Cage Costume, Redskins Accidentally Trade Away Second Overall Draft Pick For Washed-Up Veteran Parents Honor Dead Son's Memory By Keeping Up His Awful Blog, Pop Star's Single, 'Booty Wave', Most Likely Civilization's Downfall**

Paper #1 (500 word minimum) What are your initial thoughts after listening to these podcasts? Break down each podcast into what it does well, and what you feel could be improved. Which ones are appealing to you? Which ones do not interest you and why?

Your papers should be structured, spell checked, double spaced, and have good grammar. Have a thesis and expand on it.

Quiz #1

Discussion Site: Introduce yourself and let us know why you are taking this class.

Week 2 04/09

Lecture:

- Audio basics. What is sound? What is a microphone? USB mics. How is sound used creatively?
- Audacity Basics 1 and Recording Demos
- What is involved in producing a Podcast?

Homework due 04/16:

Listen to/watch the following assigned podcast episodes. You can download the zipped file of the tracks from the link provided, or you can find them by searching in the itunes store.

*The Moth Podcast: **Matteson Perry & Jeff Simmermon_ GrandSLAM Stories** (this episode not available for free in itunes)
WNYC's Radio Lab **A 4 track mind**
Sound Opinions: **#315 The Best Albums of 2011**
Planet Money: **#355: The 14-Year-Old Who Bought A House**
99% Invisible: **99% Symbolic**
Stuff You Should Know: **How Yo-Yos Work**
The Sporkful: **SF045: Cocktail Philosophy (w/Rachel Maddow)**

Paper #2 (500 word minimum) What are your initial thoughts after listening to all of the podcasts this week (including Doctors Unplugged)? Break down each podcast into what it does well, and what you feel could be improved. Which ones are appealing to you? Which ones do not interest you and why?

Your papers should be structured, spell checked, double-spaced, and have good grammar. Have a thesis and expand on it.

Quiz #2

Reading:

- Audacity Tutorials
 - 1. Basics
- Why do Podcasts Suck?

Discussion Site: Out of all the podcasts you have listened to, (week 1 and 2) which one is your favorite and why? Which one is your least favorite and why?

Week 3 04/16

Lecture:

- Audacity Basics 2
- What is freeware? An overview of free software for audio.
- Planning/creating a podcast. What are you communicating? What response are you trying to elicit?

Homework due 04/23:

Podcast #1 Set up your project so you are recording at 48khz, 32 bit float, MONO.

Record and edit one minute of dialogue. You can talk about what ever you want. You are the talent. This is to get your familiar with your recording program, and how to use your microphone.

Export the file as an MP3 at 128 kbps and upload to Dropbox. Your file must be an MP3. Do not upload your Audacity project file, I cannot hear it in that format.

Please name your podcast as "Your Name_Podcast1"

Picture of you and your Mic: Upload a picture of you with your microphone as if you were recording yourself. You should have good mic placement, focusing on your distance from the mic and the positioning in terms of height and axis. You also must have some sort of windscreen-professional or makeshift such as a nylon sock. Please do not use cotton it, cuts off too many frequencies.

Also list the model and the specs for your mic with your submission. You **MUST** have at least a Blue Snowflake (or better) microphone. No headset/gaming mics no on-board computer mics. Consider this your textbook for the course. Upload your picture to the dropbox folder "Recording Technique". Please save it as a jpeg, and name it "Your_Name_Your_your_mic_type" Example "Brian_Mellen_blue_snowflake."

Paper #3 (750 word minimum): Choose a podcast of your choice and listen to at least three episodes. Each episode must be at least 15 minutes long- So not three onion podcasts that are 2 minutes each. Define its functions, content parameters, use of creative expression, length, audio quality and audience. Does it need improvement? How and why? Does it serve its audience? How and why? Does the narrative flow naturally? Is it long enough or is it too long? What makes this podcast unique among other podcasts in its genre (sports, comedy, news, storytelling, tech etc.) Why did you choose this podcast?

Quiz #3

Reading:

- Audacity Tutorials
- 2. Editing for Beginners

Discussion Site: How was your experience in recording your one minute of dialogue?

Week 4 04/23

Lecture:

- Audacity Basics 3/ Recording exercises.
- Basic acoustics to achieve optimal recording and listening conditions.
- What is a Self- Portrait?

Homework due 04/30:

Record Podcast #2: Set up your project so you are recording at 48khz, 32 bit float, MONO. If you bring in music, you will most likely get a stereo track. This is fine, as long as the dialogue you record and edit is mono. Make sure to check that your project settings do not change after importing music or sound effects.

Record and edit a three minute self-portrait. You may use music and/or sound effects but are not required to do so. See this weeks lecture for specifics on this assignment.

Export your project at 128kbps, MP3 and upload it to dropbox. Please name your podcast "Your Name_Podcast 2."

Paper #4 (500 word minimum): Podcast #3 plan: What will be the content of the podcast? Who is your intended audience? How long will it be? How many people will participate? How will you use music to set the tone of your podcast? What will your introductory music sound like? Will the credit music mirror the introductory music?

Note: This paper does not have to be in a narrative format. It can be lists, bullet points, or whatever format will help you organize your thoughts when preparing to record your podcast.

Quiz #4

Reading:

- Audacity Tutorials
- 3. Common Editing Mistakes
- 4. Effects for Beginners
- 5. Selecting and Aligning

Discussion Site: How was your experience in recording your self-portrait?

Week 5 04/30

Lecture:

- Listen to self-portraits
- Podcast creation and delivery: What's RSS? Metadata? How do I upload my audio to a server? What's the happy medium of mp3 resolutions?

Homework 05/07:

Record Podcast #3: Set up your project so you are recording at 48khz, 32 bit float, MONO.

When you bring in music, you will most likely get a stereo track. This is fine, as long as the dialogue you record and edit is mono. Make sure to check that your project settings do not change after importing music or sound effects. Check this BEFORE you record your dialouge or you will run into problems when you try to change it back to 48KHz. Record at least Three minutes with introductory music (intro) and credit music (outro) and good fades. You may use music as an underscore and/or sound effects but are not required to do so. The topic and format is up to you.

Export your project at 128kbps, MP3 and upload it to dropbox. You can export as mono or stereo as long as you recorded your voice in mono. Please name your podcast "Your Name_Podcast 3".

Quiz #5

Discussion Site: What are your thoughts on listening to the self-portraits?

Week 6 05/07

Lecture:

- Digital media rights and responsibilities.
- Acquiring royalty free music.
- Editing music basics.

Homework due 05/14:

Paper #5 (750 word minimum) Current trends in Digital Media legalities. The topic is of your choosing. Examples: The current state of the RIAA and P2P networks, copyright fair use, domain name disputes, music law (there are many subcategories), podcasts and the FCC, the First Amendment and podcasts, Podcast guest waivers, etc. These are very broad topics and need to be narrowed down for an effective 750 word paper.

Quiz #6

Discussion Site: Post the topic that you chose for Paper #5 and let us know why. What one interesting thing did you learn from researching and writing the paper?

Week 7 05/14

Lecture:

- Social media and sound
- Listen to and critique student podcasts.
- How to most effectively use your voice to record a podcast.

Homework due 05/21:

Record Podcast #4: Set up your project so you are recording at 48khz, 32 bit float, MONO.

Record at least Three minutes with introductory music (intro) and credit music (outro). You may use music as an underscore and/or sound effects but are not required to do so. You should edit out any extraneous material, ums, noises, etc. and use good fades for your intro/outro music.

The topic is up to you. However, this episode you must have someone else join your podcast. It can be in the form of a co-host, or you interviewing someone etc. Just remember to make sure that whomever you have in the room needs to be "on mic" as well. If you only have one microphone make sure you position the other person in front of the mic properly when they are speaking. If you must "pass the mic," leave time to cut out the sound of the mic being passed when you are speaking.

Export your project at 128kbps, MP3 and upload it to dropbox. You can export as mono or stereo as long as you recorded your voice in mono. Please name your podcast "Your Name_Podcast 4".

Quiz #7

Discussion Site: How does the role of sound affect social media?

Week 8 05/21

Lecture:

- Working with Keynote and PowerPoint.
- How to most effectively use your voice to record a podcast continued.

Homework due 05/28:

Paper #6 (500 word minimum): Podcast #5 Plan (Final Project): What will be the content of the podcast? Who is your intended audience? How long will it be? How many people will participate? How will you use music to set the tone of your podcast? What will your introductory music sound like? Will the credit music mirror the introductory music? Note: This paper does not have to be in a narrative format. It can be lists, bullet points, or whatever format will help you organize your thoughts when preparing to record your podcast.

Quiz #8

Discussion Site: Summarize your plans for your final podcast (topic, form, guests, etc).

Week 9 05/28

Lecture:

Listen to and critique student podcasts.

Homework due 06/04 (*Project 5 Due Finals Week 06/11*):

Record Podcast #5 Final Project, 5 minute minimum with introductory music and credit music at proper levels and with good fades. You may also use sound effects but are not required to do so.

This project is **not due till finals week** so you have plenty of time to work out any issues. It is also worth 20% of your grade so use the time to create something great.

You should have worked out most recording issues by this point and should focus on content, editing and professionalism.

If you do not have the following settings you will lose points. (4 points each, so this is pretty big)

- 48KHZ project setting, 32 bit float
- Correct and complete Metadata on export (Track title, Artist, Album, Genre)
- You can submit either a mono or a stereo track.
- If you are using a substandard mic you will also lose points.
- If you submit anything other than an MP3 set to at least 128kbps you will get a 0.
- Please name each of your podcasts as "Your Name_Final Project"

Quiz #9

Discussion Site: What are your thoughts on listening to everyone's podcasts?

Week 10 06/04

Lecture:

Listen to and critique student podcasts (continued).

Final Project/Podcast #5 due 06/11 by 6:00pm:

Final Project, 5 minute minimum with introductory music and credit music at proper levels and with good fades. You may also use sound effects but are not required to do so.

This project is not due till finals week so you have plenty of time to work out any issues. It is also worth 20% of your grade so use the time to create something great.

You should have worked out most recording issues by this point and should focus on content, editing and professionalism.

If you do not have the following settings you will lose points. (4 points each, so this is pretty big).

- 48KHZ project setting, 32 bit float
- Correct and complete Metadata on export (Track title, Artist, Album, Genre)
- You can submit either a mono or a stereo track.
- If you are using a substandard mic you will also lose points.
- If you submit anything other than an MP3 set to at least 128kbps you will get a 0.
- Please name each of your podcasts as "Your Name_Final Project."

DePaul University Policies

Online Course Evaluations

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

Academic Policies

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment.

Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: csd@depaul.edu.

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