

SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
CTPR 404 - Practicum in Podcast Production

SYLLABUS



Semester: Fall 2023

Location: Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts, Studio C

Instructor: Ranell Shubert, rshubert@usc.edu

SA: Ryan Kolderup, kolderup@usc.edu

Tech Coordinator: Vince Gonzales, vgonzales@cinema.usc.edu

Course Coordinator: Harrison Merkt, merkt@usc.edu

Office Hours: Zoom by request by email

Class Meeting time: Wednesday 4:00PM - 6:20PM

Units: 2 or 4

This class is open to all students from any school or department in the university.

Students enrolling in CTPR 404 do not require television production experience. All the skills needed to successfully complete this course are taught in class.

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

This course introduces students to each component of podcast production and the essential skills required to develop and produce an original podcast episode with creative and technical intent.

Students work in teams to develop ideas and present a pitch, then research, write outlines or scripts, recruit guests and present their work for feedback in class. Following instruction on equipment in the Trojan Vision studio facilities, they serve as crew members for other teams to record and post produce their shows for distribution.

The finished podcast episodes are promoted and archived as a production of Trojan Vision, the USC campus television station, and released to stream on the station's YouTube channel. Through the semester, guest speakers offer students a window into professional podcast production, trending shows, marketing, sponsorship, and the future of the industry.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the technical components of recording in a studio setting
- Learn how to recruit guests and prepare for interviews with research and multi-draft question development
- Produce essentials for podcasting with scheduling and formal guest correspondence
- Write essentials for podcasting from question development to transcript editing to VO and ADR
- Develop best practices for editing Adobe Premiere (data management, workflow, peer-based feedback)
- Marketing materials, distribution, and promotion in podcasting.

HOW DO STUDENTS REGISTER FOR A CLASS?

Each 404 section introduces students to a different format of podcasting. This semester we offer:

- A panel-based, unscripted video podcast featuring guests representing different points of view on a current subject of interest to students. (18519).
- An interview-driven scripted audio podcast featuring multiple interviewees contributing to a fully realized story. (18520)

For students who wish to register for a 4-Unit option (both sections in one semester), email your request to the Trojan Vision Program Manager, Harrison Merkt, merkt@usc.edu.

PREREQUISITES

This class is open to students from any school or division of the university. Students are not required to have any podcast, audio or video experience. A laptop or mobile device with a Wi-Fi/Internet connection is required. Access to recording and editing software needed for assignments will be provided.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

All students are required to watch the SCA General Safety Webinar, available online. The instructor will provide links to these recordings during the first week of classes.

This course has a production insurance fee of \$50 per semester. You can expect billing shortly after the last day of drop/add.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Grades are based on the timely submission and quality of assignments, preparation for class, engagement in class discussions, individual initiative, professional behavior and team collaboration.

Personal Podcast - 15%
Segment 1-Sheet - 10%
Segment Outline - 15%
Segment Rough Cut- 10%
Final Podcast - 15%
Final Summation Essay - 10%
Participation and Collaboration - 25%

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT) *This schedule is based on classes beginning the week of August 21, 2023, and ending the week of November 30, 2023.*

Week 1: August 23rd

- Visual Description Introductions
- Skills Survey
- Community Agreements
- Review Syllabus and Expectations
- A Brief History of Podcasts and Types of Podcast Formats
- Discuss Audience, Format, and Identify Main Topic for our Class Show

Assignment due next week:

- Submit Updated Resume to Google Drive
- Listen to *Bughouse Square* with Eve Ewing “Ep. 1 James Baldwin & Darnell Moore”
- Listen to *This American Life* “Ep. 126 Do-Gooders”
- Listen to *Twenty Thousand Hertz* “Handbook for Sonic Happiness”
- Listen to 1 additional podcast episode (some recs: *Dreamtown: The Story of Adelanto, S-Town; Allen v. Farrow Podcast, The Gateway, Ear Hustle, Code Switch, Dolly Pardon’s America*, etc.)

FOR ALL THE ABOVE: consider the background research, interview questions, producing required, the style/tone, sound design, the archival materials; assets - please be prepared with 3 notes on each podcast

Week 2: August 30th

Discuss Assigned Podcast Episodes
Defining Our Podcast Style: Interviews, Tone, and Sound Design Elements Phases of Podcast Production, Our Podcasting Format, and Our Roles & Responsibilities (Producer, Host/Interviewer, Editor)
Begin Tech Training with Iphone Recording> Audition/Premiere > Music and ADR/VO
Outline 5-minute Personal Podcast Exercise

Assignment due next week:

- Submit Updated Resume
- Read “Radio: An Illustrated Guide” by This American Life
- Listen to 2 additional episodes of *This American Life* (your choice) 3 notes on each episode on the google drive*
- Identify 1 Audio Podcast (besides *This American Life*) we can borrow from in our format (describe what we’d borrow) to the google drive*
- Listen to last semesters episode of *It Takes A Trojan Village*, after listening add 3 notes and/or questions you have about the episode*
- Identify Format and Podcast Topic for Personal Podcast, add to drive

Week 3: September 6th

Discuss the reading “Radio: An Illustrated Guide”
Listening Reflections and Lessons
Audience and Developing a Listener Persona.
Podcast Teams Get Assigned– segment pitch development ideas and brainstorming potential

guests to interview within teams
Demos on Studio Equipment

Assignment due next week:

- Create a title for your personal podcast
- Meet in your group and determine roles. At least 1 audio editor per group and max 1 host per group.
- In your groups brainstorm 3 theme ideas for our group podcast to pitch in class
- Email rshubert@usc.edu if you wanna be considered for the host of the episode

Week 4 September 13th

Group Podcast Theme Pitches
Theme Selected
Developing a Logline
Podcast Pitch Process
Elements of a Podcast Introduction

Assignment:

- Pitch story and interview potential within your teams, remember to focus on stories where you have access to interviewees that are available to come to our in-person studio and relate to our selected theme.
- Group Podcast create Story Segment Pitch 1-sheet due next class- add to drive. Be prepared to pitch 1-sheet in class.
- Personal Podcast create Pitch 1-sheet due next class- add to drive.
- Record the intro to your personal podcast
- Email rshubert@usc.edu if you wanna be considered for the host of the episode

Week 5 September 20th

Present and Review Pitches
Discuss Booking Process and Guests
Production Calendar
Pre-Production: Research, Questions, and Booking

Assignment due next week:

- Draft Production Calendar-Based on Production Calendar Plot Points in drive
- Send ask emails to your interview guests, and send follow up to confirm dates and get appearance release signed- templates in drive
- Schedule pre-interview
- Draft Interview questions for pre-interview
- Conduct pre-interview
- Finalize 1-page pitch sheet for Story Segment

Week 6 September 27th

Listen to Personal Podcast Intros
Elements of a Trailer
Overview of Scripted Hosting/Interviewing and Voice Over

Turning an Outline into a Recording Pro-Tools Editing Tutorial

Assignment:

- Get Appearance Release Signed add to drive
- Send Reminder Email About Guest Arrival Details and Map
- Final Prep For Next Week's In-Studio Recording
- Finalize Questions and Interview Outline
- Listen to 2 Trailers from your favorite podcasts and add 3 reflections about them to the drive
- Draft VO for Segment Trailer

Week 7 October 4th

IN CLASS Production Day #1
Record Team 1 and 2 Interviews
Teams 3 and 4 Crew (IF NEEDED)

Assignment due in Google Drive next week:

Team 3 and 4 Preparation to Record Interviews
Teams 1 and 2 Write (or Record) a Reflection (3 wins, 3 learns, 3 changes) due in Google Drive
Next Week
Begin Editing Podcasts

Week 8 October 11th

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT Production Day #2
Record Team 3 and 4 Interviews
Teams 1 and 2 Crew (IF NEEDED)

Assignment due next week

Teams 3 and 4 Write (or Record) a Reflection on the Experience due in Google Drive next
week Begin Editing Podcasts

Both Groups

Develop Episode Outline Draft

Week 9 October 18th

Review Outlines, Transcripts, and Making Selects
Podcast Editing
Guest Lecture: Overview of Working with a Composer

Assignment due next week:

Teams 1-2 Turn In Rough Draft and Outline for Scripted VO for Episode, Trailer, and Bonus
Material for next class (post on Google Drive)

All Teams Listen to Promotional Trailers and Make Outline For Your
Segment
Draft VO for Episode and Trailer
Complete Episode Outline and Post Into Google Drive

Week 10 October 25th

IN CLASS Production Round 2:
Teams 1 and 2 Record Voice Over for Episode and Trailer
Material Teams 3 and 4 Crew (IF NEEDED) or Pick-ups

Assignment due next week:

Teams 3 – 4 Turn In Rough Draft and Outline for Scripted VO for Episode and Trailer for next class (post on Google Drive)
Team 1-2 begin editing Trailer

Week 11 November 1st

IN CLASS Production Round 2:
Teams 3 and 4 record Voice Over for Episode and Trailer Teams 1 and 2 crew (IF NEEDED)

Assignment due next week:

Group Podcast Rough Cut Due
Upload Rough Cut Podcasts to the Google Drive.
Begin Listening and Preparing Listening Notes and Critiques

Week 12 November 8th

Critical Feedback for Rough Cut
IN CLASS Production Round 3- Episode VO and Pickup Recordings

Assignment due next week:

-Make Edits to Group Podcast Rough Cut
-Bring Questions for the Guest Speaker: Listen to at least one episode of their show

Week 13 November 15th

Summation Essay Guidelines
Critical Feedback on Episode Segment

Assignment due next week:

-Finalize Podcast Trailers
-Listen to the first and last episode of your favorite podcast. Provide a written (or recorded) reflection on the differences and recurring themes in the reviewed episodes, due in the Google drive.
-Final Version of Group Podcast Segment due to Post Supervisor

Week 14 November 22nd

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Assignment due next week:

Personal Podcast 1-Sheet
Prepare Final Pitch for Individual Podcast

Week 15 November 29th

Class Activity: Pitch Individual Podcast with finalized 5 minute sample to Guest Speaker
Podcast Show Week Completed Podcasts Ready to Publish. .

Assignment due December 6th: Submit Final Podcast Summation Essay to Google Drive

READING, LISTENING AND VIEWING ASSIGNMENTS

Students read chapters from books, articles, watch videos and listen to podcasts that provide context, samples and background for in-class instruction and practice.

Books

- [Radio: An Illustrated Guide by This American Life](#)
- [Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination](#), by Susan Douglas
- [Podcast Solutions: The Complete Guide to Audio and Video Podcasting](#), by Michael Geoghegan and Dan Klass

Articles

- [An Oral History of the Podcast by Richard Benson](#) Esquire, September 11th, 2019 - [Inside the Podcast Brain: Why Do Audio Stories Captivate?](#) The Atlantic, April, 2015 - [‘Serial,’ Podcasting’s First Breakout Hit, Sets Stage for More](#), New York Times, Nov. 23, 2014 - [Podcasting is the New Personal Essay](#), Columbia Journalism Review, December 12, 2017 **Newsletter**
- Follow [Hot Pod](#), provides analysis, insight and commentary on the growing podcast industry.

Podcast Listening, self-directed. Here are a few aggregators.

- [NPR Podcast Directory](#)
- [PRX](#)

SUMMATION ESSAY

Students assess where they started in August (expectations), how they progressed through the semester (course conclusion), and what shifted their knowledge, skills and perceptions along the way. Students may deliver this assignment in their chosen media - podcast, video, PowerPoint.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. This course is performance oriented, and attendance is extremely important. Two absences will result in a grade being lowered by one full letter (example: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a grade being lowered by one additional, full letter grade (B becomes C). A student’s grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence. Students must contact the instructor in advance if they are going to be absent.

CELL PHONE AND ONLINE CLASS POLICIES

Cell phones, laptops, tablets and other personal devices may not be used during class unless they are necessary for class exercises. Out of respect to students, SAs and instructors, please bring a courteous and professional attitude to all classes.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct,

policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

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Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

FOOD AND DRINKS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX.

THIS SYLLABUS DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT RESTRICTIONS OR REQUIREMENTS THAT MAY BE IN PLACE DUE TO THE CORONA VIRUS.