

Sam Houston State University
Department of Mass Communication
MCOM 5050 Podcasting, Spring 2018
Thursday 5:00-7:50 p.m. TWC #203

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Office: Dan Rather Communications Building, Room 308A

Office hours: Huntsville: 1 – 3 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, or by appointment
The Woodlands Center: 2 – 4 p.m. Thursday, or by appointment

Course Description & Objectives

Students in this class design, launch, and maintain regularly-updated podcasts on non-fiction topics of their choice. These professional podcasts are accessible through popular platforms and applications like iTunes, Stitcher and Podcasts. Students develop audio editing techniques on free, multi-platform software; they also learn to balance personal sharing and professional standards on a growing and pertinent audio medium. Credit 3.

Required Textbooks

All required texts and videos will be conducted through BlackBoard. Podcasting is a rapidly evolving medium; the most pertinent and current resources are available online, although Amazon does have relevant available books on the subject. These texts and videos will all be free.

You are, however, required to subscribe to a podcasting hosting service to broadcast your podcast. Costs and subscription plans vary, and you may choose any hosting service that publishes your podcast across appropriate feeds and applications. Do not purchase a subscription plan before class begins – we will discuss hosting in class, along with hosting options.

Course Requirements

The course requirements and grading structure are as follows:

Podcasts:	40%
Professorial Review:	20%
Peer Reviews (Received):	20%
Peer Reviews (Given):	20%
Assignments:	10%
Initial Plan:	3.33%
Mid-Semester Review:	3.33%
Final Review:	3.33%
Interview with a Professional Podcaster:	10%
Class Lecture:	20%

Podcasts: 40%

You will publish a weekly podcast, on a non-fiction topic of your choice, once a week for 11 weeks. You will receive feedback from the professor for your first podcast episode, due February 8, but it will not be graded. After that, you will alternate between receiving a grade from the professor and a grade from one of your anonymous classmates. Half your grade (20 percent) will be from the professor, and the remaining half will be from peer review (20 percent). The professor reserves the right to adjust or reject peer review grades, particularly when peer reviews are conducted lazily or hastily. The goal is to provide input from your professor and cohort.

Grades will focus on audio and recording quality, specificity of topic, depth of conversation and levels of external and internal community.

Peer Review: 20%

You are responsible for anonymously grading your peer's podcasts on a random, rotating schedule. You will be graded for the quality of your peer review; of particular focus are your attention to detail and the volume and depth of your feedback. Particular focus should be given to audio and recording quality, efforts to solicit internal and external community, depth of conversation and specificity of topic.

Assignments: 10%

You will write three reports on your podcast. The first, an initial plan, will focus on plans for your podcast; you should consider your niche and subject matter, target audience, structure, format, other podcasts covering the same topic, microphones and equipment, recording location and methods to express internal and external community. Your mid-semester review and final review of your podcast will cover the same topics, but with an eye toward what your podcast is doing well and what needs improvement. There is no word limit for these assignments, but do not take them lightly. You will be graded on your level of detail and the depth of your assessment.

Podcast Interview: 10%

You will pursue, schedule, conduct and record an interview with a professional podcaster working in your niche or area of interest. You should discuss podcasting, their experiences both generally and regarding the subject matter, and what advice they would offer or convey. Too, you should discuss levels of personal sharing (internal community) and community outreach (external community) utilized by the podcaster. How do they determine how much of their personalities to share with listeners? How do they engage feedback from their audiences? This assignment corresponds with the week seven discussion of personal sharing, so discussion of internal community is particularly relevant. You may record the interview as a podcast episode, or incorporate the interview into an episode of your podcast, but you are not required to do so; you could also potentially conduct the majority of the interview in your podcast and ask additional questions off-mic. You will write a short introduction to the discussion and annotate the major points of the conversation in question-and-answer format; we will also discuss the interviews at length in class.

Class Lecture: 20%

The first two-thirds of the course will be led by the professor. Readings, class discussions and presentations will all originate from the professor's syllabus and course plan. Following Spring Break, students will be tasked with designing and conducting a class lecture and discussion on a podcast-related topic of their choosing. This empowers students to pursue their interests and present them in a classroom setting; too, it allows the exploration of new and diverse podcasting trends. Students will be responsible for researching a topic, curating and circulating assigned readings, leading a class presentation and discussion, and ensuring a thorough class understanding of the subject matter. Topics are flexible, but must be approved by the professor. Possibilities include feminism and gender dynamics in podcasting, race issues and dynamics in podcasting, issues and inequalities in sports podcasting or activism in and around podcasts. You may also incorporate theoretical approaches, including exploring spiral of silence or framing theory regarding podcasts.

Course Guidelines

Deadlines – Deadlines are absolute in newsrooms and media corporations, and are largely inflexible elsewhere in the so-called “real world.” Course deadlines are strict to reflect those priorities. Missing a deadline by up to 24 hours will result in a 10 point penalty on the assignment. After 24 hours, the student will receive a zero on the assignment. Exceptions can be granted for reasonable absences or uncontrollable events, including illness or family emergencies.

Attendance Policy – SHSU Student Handbook of University Policies states that regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University and that it is expected that each faculty member will keep a record of student attendance. A student will not be penalized for three absences or six tardies (defined as entering class after roll has been taken) when examinations or other assigned work has not been missed.

The Department of Mass Communication has adopted the policy that every absence or two tardies over the allotted three absences or six tardies will result in the loss of one letter grade. For example, if your class grade is a B and you have five absences your final course grade will be a D.

Additionally:

- Exceptions are for documented illnesses or family emergencies or for students attending SHSU activities in an official capacity. Documentation for illness or emergency should be presented upon the student’s return to the classroom. Documentation for activities should be presented prior to the absence and contain the signature of the SHSU employee sponsor.
- Each semester hour of credit entails at least two additional hours of work outside the classroom per week: so for this 3 credit course, you should expect to do at least an additional 6 hours of work a week beyond class time. This is on average; some weeks may require more, others less.

Grading scale

A	90% and above
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% & below

E-mail – You must be able to receive e-mail via your “@shsu.edu” account. You will be responsible for any messages you miss if you do not use this university-assigned address. Class announcements may also be posted on Blackboard.

Academic Dishonesty – All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[Dean of Student's Office](#)

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy – Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be

penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

Students with Disabilities Policy – It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

Campus Carry Policy – Texas law allows the concealed carry of licensed handguns on certain parts of campus. Sam Houston State University policy allows the concealed carry of licensed handguns in university classrooms. Both state law and university policy require handguns be concealed at all times. If at any time a firearm becomes visible, the student will be asked to leave and given an absence for that class day. If the student becomes disruptive, University Police Department staff will be notified. If a firearm is discharged for any reason, deliberately or accidentally, UPD staff will be notified.

Class Schedule:

Unit I: Professorial Lectures

Week 1: January 18

Topic: What is podcasting? Comparisons to terrestrial radio

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: None

Assigned: A1: Initial Plan

Return: None

Week 2: January 25

Topic: Imagined Community + Internal vs External Community + Podcast Mechanics, Formatting & Editing

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: A1: Initial Plan

Assigned: Research Hosting Websites and Options

Return:

Week 3: February 1

Topic: Gatekeeping in Podcasting + Mics & Hosting Services

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: Research Hosting Websites and Options

Assigned: Podcast Episode 1

Return: A1: Initial Plan

Week 4: February 8

Topic: Advertising in Podcasts + Branding Your Podcast

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: Podcast Episode 1

Assigned: Podcast Episode 2

Return:

Week 5: February 15

Topic: Political Polarization in Radio & Podcasts

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: Podcast Episode 2

Assigned: Interview 1, Podcast Episode 3

Return: Podcast Episode 1

Week 6: February 22

Topic: Hobby Podcasts + Decline in Social Capital

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: Podcast Episode 3

Assigned: Podcast Episode 4

Return: Podcast Episode 2

Week 7: March 1

Topic: Learning to Share – How Much is Too Much?

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: Interview 1, Podcast Episode 4

Assigned: Podcast Episode 5

Return: Podcast Episode 3

Week 8: March 8

Topic: Spanish-Language Broadcasting & Podcasting

Readings: See Blackboard

Due: Podcast Episode 5
Assigned: Podcast Episode 6, A2: Mid-Semester Review
Return: Podcast Episode 4

-- Spring Break --

Unit II: Student-Led Lectures

Week 9: March 22

Topic: Student Presentation 1
Readings: TBD
Due: Podcast Episode 6
Assigned: Podcast Episode 7
Return: Podcast Episode 5, Interview 1

Week 10: March 29

Topic: Student Presentation 2
Readings: TBD
Due: Podcast Episode 7
Assigned: Podcast Episode 8
Return: Podcast Episode 6

Week 11: April 5

Topic: Student Presentation 3
Readings: TBD
Due: Podcast Episode 8
Assigned: Podcast Episode 9
Return: Podcast Episode 7

Week 12: April 12

Topic: ISOJ
Readings: ISOJ
Due: Podcast Episode 9
Assigned: Podcast Episode 10
Return: Podcast Episode 8

Week 13: April 19

Topic: Student Presentation 4
Readings: TBD
Due: Podcast Episode 10
Assigned: Podcast Episode 11
Return: Podcast Episode 9

Week 14: April 26

Topic: Student Presentation 5
Readings: TBD
Due: Podcast Episode 11
Assigned: A3: Final Review
Return: Podcast Episode 10

Week 15: May 3

Topic: Student Presentation 6
Readings: TBD
Due: A3: Final Review
Assigned: None
Return: Podcast Episode 11