Course Syllabus

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Instructor

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Office Hours: Appointment Only

Introduction

History has long been called a "book-based discipline." And while this has likely never been true (see, museums), it has certainly expanded in the decades since the advent of the internet. Historians now research, interpret, and share their work in a variety of media and on a variety of platforms. This class will serve as an introduction into how new media can advance the work of history.

Our focus for the semester is on podcasting. Throughout this class you will learn both how to make a podcast as well as how to critically evaluate how podcasts share, tell, and make history. The class involves not only reading material, but also listening material. While podcasts are often cast as a form of entertainment, we are going to approach them as serious objects of study. What this means is that if you are assigned to listen to a podcast for this class, you cannot simply have the podcast on in the background as you do chores or go for a drive. You should be as attentive to a podcast as you would be with a reading. Listen to it carefully, preferably with headphones so you can hear all of the sonic nuances. Moreover, every time you encounter a new podcast, you should do some work "reading" the show as well. For example, nearly every episode or piece we listen to comes with accompanying written material in the show's notes. You should be reading this material too as it will help you figure out who is making the podcast and why. Also take a brief look at the podcast's website (and they all have websites) and ask yourself these questions:

1. Who is producing this podcast? And for what purposes? Who is the podcast's intended or presumed audience?
2. What are the backgrounds of the podcast's hosts? Are they historians? Journalists? Storytellers?
3. What are the podcast's core components? Is it an interview show? Do they focus on narrative? What kind of genre would you give this podcast?
4. Does audio serve as an effective medium for the story they are telling? Or are there changes you would make to bring the piece in line with the standards of the historical profession?

"Reading" these podcasts closely will be just as important, if not more so, than the texts we read, as your final project for this course is also a piece of audio.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade for the course will be based upon your completion of each of the following assignments and requirements. In order to pass this class you must participate in some form in all of the graded assignments.

- *Participation* (25%): Though this class is taught online, we will have a weekly synchronous meeting on **Collaborate Ultra**. Attendance at these session is required. Unexcused absences or failure to participate in discussions will result in a reduction of your grade.
- *Podcast Review* (15%): In order to understand the current podcasting ecosystem as it relates to the historical profession, everyone will write an in-depth review and give a brief presentation on one history-related podcast. More info to come.
- *Audio Assignments* (3 x 5% for %15 total): To prepare you to produce a compelling piece of audio scholarship for your final project, you will complete three assignments asking you to experiment with both the tools and methods of audio storytelling. More details to come.
- *Final Project* (45%): Your final project for this class will be a 15-20 minute piece of audio scholarship on the history of public health and pandemics in Milwaukee. The points will be made up of the following material:
  - Pitch (5%)
  - Draft One (10%)
  - Draft Two (10%)
  - Final Draft (20%)

Course Material and Information

The following are available for purchase through UWM's eCampus bookstore.

- Abel, Jessica. *Out on the Wire: The Storytelling Secrets of the New Masters of Radio*. New York: Broadway Books, 2015. ISBN: 978-0385348430.
- Abing, Kevin. *Crowded Hour: Milwaukee During the Great War, 1917-1918*. Mount Pleasant, SC: America Through Time, 2017. ISBN: 978-1634990226. (Note this book is available for $10 on Kindle.)
- Hethmon, Hannah. *Your Museum Needs a Podcast*. Self Published, 2018. (Note, this books is free via KindleUnlimeted. **https://www.amazon.com/Museum-Needs-Podcast-Step-Step-ebook/dp/B07HL9TNCP** **(https://www.amazon.com/Museum-Needs-Podcast-Step-Step-ebook/dp/B07HL9TNCP)**)

- Spinney, Laura. *Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How it Changed the World*. New York: Public Affairs, 2017. ISBN: 978-1541736122.

Other readings are posted in their respective modules on Canvas.

Other Resources

Below are a list of publications or other resources on both the art and the nuts and bolts of podcasting. We'll be consulting items from some of these publications throughout the semester. But you should also feel free to explore them more broadly, especially as you work on your final project.

- **Transom.org**   (http://transom.org/) . A nonprofit organization that trains people how to tell audio stories, Transom's website is full of resources on podcasting. Everything from equipment recommendations, to how to guides, to manifestos on audio humanism can be found on the site. This really is a go-to resource for this class.
- **H-Podcasts**   (https://networks.h-net.org/h-podcast) . H-Net is an early messaging board site for academics that has since evolved into a platform for nearly every academic field in existence. And there is one devoted to academic podcasts. The forum is relatively new, but it already has a robust list of academic podcasts as well as some good discussions. Consider this a place to post questions or look for answers.
- **Hot Pod**   (https://www.hotpodnews.com) . A weekly newsletter on the podcasting industry by journalist Nick Quah. A good deal of the newsletter is devoted to Quah's take on the latest news in the podcasting industry--which producers are moving to which companies--but occasionally there are also deep dives into the art of audio storytelling and interviews with podcasting masters.
- **How Sound**   (http://transom.org/topics/howsound/) . Hosted by Transom co-founder Rob Rosenthal, How Sound is a podcast about podcasting. And it's good. Real good. Each episode features a particularly stellar piece from another podcast, and then Rosenthal interviews the podcast's creator about their methods. We'll be consulting some of these episodes in class.

UWM COVID-19 Information

https://uwm.edu/cetl/covid-19-syllabus-statements/   (https://uwm.edu/cetl/covid-19-syllabus-statements/)

Course Summary:

Date	Details

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Wed Oct 7, 2020	📝 **Vox Pop** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2185645)**	due by 4pm
Wed Oct 21, 2020	📝 **Montage** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2187185)**	due by 9am
	📝 **The Pitch** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2195428)**	due by 9am
Wed Nov 18, 2020	📝 **Writing Assignment** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2187322)**	due by 9am
Wed Dec 16, 2020	📝 **Final Project Draft 2** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2204010)**	due by 11:59pm
Sun Dec 20, 2020	📝 **Final Project Guidelines** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2200736)**	due by 11:59pm
	📝 **Final Project Draft 1** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2204008)**	
	📝 **Participation Grade** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2219987)**	
	📝 **Podcast Review** **(https://uwmil.instructure.com/courses/312126/assignments/2184459)**	