Radio News
Syllabus Spring 2012

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Course description: Students will be given a strong grounding in radio journalism and radio production, and unlock the secrets of being a successful radio journalist – how to write for radio, how to conduct radio interviews, how to record, edit and mix sound, and how to produce radio features. Grades are final and non-negotiable.

Grading policy
Class participation/attendance: 20%
Written assignment 1: 10%
Written assignment 2: 10%
Interview assignment: 30%
Audio postcard (final assignment) 30%
Final: 100%

Schedule of classes

Week 1
13 February - Overview of course: what the students will be taught and what material they will be expected to produce. Explanation of grading policy. The life of a freelance stringer; how a foreign correspondent operates. Brief introduction to radio and how a radio journalist works.

15 February - What makes a good news story? What makes a good radio story? How does radio journalism differ from print? Overview of the different formats of radio journalism, with real examples.

Week 2
20 February - Writing for radio. How to write a radio news story, what information to include, what to leave out.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 1 - write a one-minute radio news piece about a news event in your home town. (due Mon Feb 27)

22 February - Visit to Czech Radio, the nation's public broadcaster, to see how a real radio station works.

Week 3
27 February – Writing for radio continued.

29 February – Writing for radio continued.
2 March – Makeup class – subject TBC

Week 4
5 March – feedback from Written Assignment. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT 2 – do another 1-min piece on an event in your home town (due Mon Mar 12)**

7 March – Writing for radio continued – points from style guide then voice training.

Week 5
12 March – Recording – overview of minidisc recorders, microphones, how to record an interview, saving, playback, track marking.

14 March – Basic Sound Editing – feeding in sound, introduction to SoundForge, volume levels, fading in, fading out, copying, pasting, cutting, shortening, removing breaths & ums & ahs, creating soundbites.

Week 6
19 March – Interviews – what is an interview? choosing interviewees, preparation, what to ask, how to ask it. Listening to and discussing radio interviews.

**INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT – record and edit a radio interview (due Fri Apr 6)**

21 March – Interviews (cont) - listening to and discussing real interviews. When – and how - to interrupt, follow-up questions. Choose suitable interviewees for assignment, discuss possible areas of questioning (students should have chosen someone to interview by Wed Mar 9).

Week 7
26 March – Discuss interview choices, areas of questioning. Check time and place for interview. Review recording/feeding in/editing.


Week 8
2 April - Field recording – recording natural sound, atmosphere, vox pops etc.

4 April - Packages, what they are, how to structure them, how to edit them.

Week 9
**Spring Break – no classes**

Week 10
16 April – Packages (cont) – listening to more examples, breaking them down into individual parts.

18 April - Visit to Radio Free Europe, behind the scenes of major US broadcaster (date TBC)

20 April – Makeup class – subject TBC
Week 11
23 April - Voice training 1 - Your voice, delivery, how to relax, posture, breathing. The dos and don’ts of how to read in the studio.

25 April – Voice training 2 - Developing a style, marking a text for stress etc.

Week 12
30 April - Voice training 3 - FINAL ASSIGNMENT – record an audio postcard capturing your favourite place in Prague (due Mon May 21)

2 May - Sound Editing – fine editing, difficult mixing, use of natural sound

Week 13
7 May - Sound Editing continued – fine editing, difficult mixing, use of natural sound

9 May - Visit to Radio Wave, Czech Radio's youth & new music station (date TBC)

Week 14
14 May – Mix and fading

16 May - News events - political meetings, demonstrations, accidents, cultural events – what to do, what not to do. Going out into the field to attend a news event.

Week 15
21 May - Final assignment (audio postcard) troubleshooting, tweaking

23 May – Summing up