

HLTH385-8/ENG380-1: PODCASTING ON HEALTH
Spring, 2018
Mondays and Wednesdays 10-11:15 a.m.
Callaway N203

INSTRUCTOR: Sheila Tefft, Senior Lecturer, The Emory
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appointment

“We have two ears and one mouth so we may listen more and talk less.”
--Epictetus, Greek philosopher

THE COURSE

About Podcasting

Health challenges and choices shape our lives every day. Amid important strides in medical science and technology, efforts to advance disease prevention, wellness and quality of life require an involved public. The savvy communicator with skills to distill scientific complexities, utilize new media and tell captivating stories plays a key role in reaching broad audiences. For many health and science writers, the podcast—audio and video—is the popular digital tool of choice to examine science up close and explore compelling aspects that can capture imaginations and inform people’s decisions.

This course will focus on researching, writing and producing podcasts that report science with precision and incorporate robust, well-structured narratives. Amid the growing popularity of podcasting, you will find this an ideal platform to involve consumers in health topics that matter. Research firms report that almost one in four Americans now listen to at least one podcast per month. Whether we are listening to them or viewing them, the best podcasts combine clear, conversational writing and the texture of sound, visuals and voices. You will learn ways to write and use technology to create podcasts that are intimate, thought-provoking and entertaining. You also will develop your own website to publish and present your podcasts. This project will prepare you for digital citizenship, teach you best practices for online publication, and create a digital identity that will last beyond this course. The class does not assume any background in writing for non-expert audiences or knowledge of audio and video technology.

Each student will choose a relevant topic for the semester and fully investigate it. Strong writing is grounded in thorough research and reporting. Most of your writing this semester will focus on your chosen subject. This is an opportunity to expand your

horizons and develop in-depth knowledge in a health specialty. As a health writer, you will have the important task of translating scientific research and engaging the public in issues. Beyond rendering science, you will be expected to understand articles, events and developments and to explain their meaning and significance. Critical judgment is an important quality of successful writers. The class will work on developing these attributes by assessing professional podcasts and scripts and focusing on the writing process through stages of writing, fact-checking, critique and revision. I will be available to meet with you regularly to discuss your work. Additionally, we will work on interviewing techniques and professional approaches to speaking and delivering podcasts with clarity and flair.

I expect you to be an involved participant. Students must come to class prepared to discuss readings, podcasts and assignments and will be asked to submit questions for guest speakers ahead of presentations. You also will be expected to attend some special events outside of class time. Good science writers are well-informed readers, listeners and viewers. You should be regularly following health and science developments in the news.

This class will enable students to learn side by side. Our goal as a class is to gain insight across medicine and health and learn from each other's strengths.

Course Goals

- Students will learn to interpret and distill scientific research for non-expert audiences and write in ways to engage the general public in crucial scientific and health issues of the day.
- Strong writing is grounded in thorough research and reporting. Students will choose a scientific issue of the day and develop the in-depth knowledge and critical judgment to write about their chosen topics effectively and accurately.
- The course will help students grasp how new media technology is altering the communications landscape. They will hone technology skills to produce audio and video podcasts in various podcasting formats.
- Students will develop a comprehension of digital citizenship and best practices and build a website to showcase their work and create a networked course community.
- In the course, students will broaden their knowledge of scientific issues in public discourse and become critical, perceptive consumers of health-related developments and news.

Course Texts and Materials

Course readings will be available on the Internet or posted on Course Reserves. Please check the course Canvas site daily for updates and additions.

Special Events

Health and Humanities event

Thursday, February 8, 4:15-5:30 p.m.

Guest speaker: Rebecca Palpant Shimkets, associate director, Mental Health Journalism Fellowship Program, the Carter Center.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

This is a research, writing and production course in which you will create podcasts in four formats: a podcast explaining a scientific study; an interview podcast incorporating sound bites from others and your own narration; an animation podcast explaining a health concept or process; and an educational videocast on a pertinent health topic. You also will complete research on your semester topic and learn to evaluate sources.

We will emphasize clear, concise writing, solid research and interviewing, and the accurate presentation of facts. We will pay close attention to the mechanics of good writing: grammar, spelling, punctuation, precise word choice, strong sentences and well-organized paragraphs and stories. We will use these building blocks to develop ease in writing for the professional world.

For each of the podcast assignments, you will submit rough drafts of your scripts and final drafts of your script and produced podcast. You will fact-check and peer-edit each other's rough drafts on Canvas; you are required to submit a rough draft and peer review for each of the major assignments and will lose a half-grade if you fail to do so. I will then critique the drafts and be available to meet with you; after the critique, you will rewrite and submit a final draft for grading. You will post your final versions on your websites.

All assignments must be submitted on the designated due date and time. Deadlines are taken seriously in this course and late assignments will not be accepted, except in the case of a documented personal or family emergency.

1. Class topic research project, 5 percent.

This assignment will include the following parts to be submitted on Canvas:

- Five assessments of sources for your semester topic;
- A 500-word summary of your topic, including the main issues, recent developments and sources you might use in your writing;

Choose a topic for the semester and fully research the subject. Select at least five sources and analyze them for your research, including a news article, opinion piece or op-ed, a scientific study, a report, and a newspaper feature or magazine article. You will complete an assessment handout for each article and submit the five assessments with your report.

Write a 500-word summary of your topic, including the main issues, recent developments and sources you might use in your podcasts stories. The project will lay the groundwork

for your writing this semester. I expect you to stay current on your topic throughout the semester and share news and insights about your topic via our Twitter class feed.

2. Website, social media posts on the class Twitter feed, homework and in-class work, 10 percent.

3. A 1-2 minute animation podcast explaining a recent and timely health science development, concept, process or study and its significance, related to your semester topic; you will write the podcast and produce it using PowToons, 10 percent.

4. An 2-3-minute interview podcast related to your semester topic in which you interview three sources, write a script incorporating sound bites from your interviews and your own narration, and produce and record the podcast, 20 percent.

5. 4. An 8-10 minute multi-host podcast on a health topic from your research, in which you and a classmate will work together to prepare and record a discussion of a health topic with a guest interview, 20 percent.

6. A 1-minute educational videocast in which you will shoot, write and edit a video presentation on an issue related to your semester topic, 25 percent.

7. Class participation, 10 percent

We live in lively and challenging times. A significant part of your grade will rest on active, thoughtful and consistent participation in class. Attendance is only part of your class participation grade; I expect you to engage fully in class discussions and activities. By this I mean researching and completing assignments; speaking up and contributing to the class; and listening to and respectfully responding to others in your midst. When you are reading and responding to personal email, you are not listening and participating. This will count significantly against assessment of your participation. Exceptional engagement and participation will improve your final grade while a lack of involvement will hurt the course outcome.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

I place great emphasis upon these responsibilities:

1. Absences and Tardiness

Attending every class and arriving on time is essential. Everyone's input is important to a rich and beneficial experience. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class and expect everyone to be present. Late arrivals are disruptive and disrespectful to your classmates and to me; habitual tardiness will hurt your final grade.

I consider more than two unexcused absence excessive and will reduce your grade in proportion to the number above this limit. Other absences for illness or personal emergencies need to be documented in writing. In-class participation represents a

significant portion of your grade. It is important for you to attend every class meeting and be engaged.

2. Honor Code

Plagiarism undermines a writer's credibility, integrity and abilities. It will not be tolerated. All work must be original and references and quotes from any source properly cited. Should I suspect that you engage in academic dishonesty in this course, I will refer the case to Emory's Honor Council. You may also receive an F on the assignment(s) in question.

The Honor Council says about academic misconduct:

The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have duty to report them to the honor council.

Please review Honor Council requirements:

<http://www.college.emory.edu/home/academic/honor-council/index.html>

3. Accuracy

Getting the information right is the first job of any writer. Your credibility depends upon it. A major factual error on a paper, such as the misspelling of a name, will result in a significantly lowered grade.

4. Deadlines

Assignments are due on the stipulated deadline. Late papers, without a valid excuse, will not be accepted.

5. Electronic Devices

Cell phones should be silenced and stowed during class. I also ask that you store all electronic devices when I ask you to and when we have class guests or make field trips so that you can give speakers your undivided attention. I allow the use of laptops for class-related work but not for checking personal email. If you have compelling personal business to conduct, please leave the classroom and take care of it. Checking personal email during class time will hurt your grade.

Student Success Resources

Access and Disability Resources

I strive to create an inclusive learning environment for all. I am invested in your success

in this class and at Emory, so please let me know if anything is standing in the way of your doing your best work. This can include your own learning strengths, any classroom dynamics that you find uncomfortable, ESL issues, disability or chronic illness, and/or personal issues that impact your work. I will hold such conversations in strict confidence.

Students with medical/health conditions that might impact academic success should visit Access, Disability Services and Resources (<http://www.ods.emory.edu/index.html>) to determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students who receive accommodations must present the Accommodation Letter from ADSR to me at the beginning of the semester, or when the letter is received.

Peer Tutoring Writing Support

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center and the ESL Program are available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. Writing Center and ESL tutors take a similar approach as they work with students on concerns including idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. Students seeking ESL support should see ESL tutors, as they are specifically trained to support students in ESL Program courses. To learn more about ESL tutoring or to make an appointment, go to <http://tinyurl.com/eslemory>. All other students in the college should see Writing Center tutors who are trained to work with this broader population. Learn more and make an appointment at <http://writingcenter.emory.edu>. Please review tutoring policies before your visit. The Writing Center is located in Callaway N-212.

Emory Counseling Services

Free and confidential counseling services and support are available from the Emory Counseling Center (404) 727-7450. This can be an invaluable resource when stress makes your work more challenging than it ought to be. <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/>

MEET THE INSTRUCTOR

Sheila L. Tefft, a senior lecturer in The Emory Writing Program specializing in composition, multimedia journalism, and science writing about health and climate change, was a reporter, editor and foreign correspondent for almost 25 years. She served as Emory Journalism director 2000-2009 and has been involved in developing science-writing programs and teaching workshops and courses for undergraduate and graduate science writers for more than a decade. Prior to joining Emory, she taught journalism, English and composition courses at Louisiana State University. She spent 12 years in Asia where she was a correspondent and bureau chief for *The Christian Science Monitor* in Beijing, Bangkok and New Delhi. She attended Marquette University and holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin. She received a M.Sc. degree in economic history from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1977. She also worked as a reporter and editor for *The Chicago*

Tribune and *The Atlanta Constitution* and freelanced for many other publications, including *BusinessWeek*, *The Washington Post* and *Smithsonian Magazine*.

Did I Plagiarize?

Source: The Visual Communications Guy

<http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/2014/09/16/did-i-plagiarize-the-types-and-severity-of-plagiarism-violations/>

