

WRRH201
Spring 2010
Podcast Project

DUE dates:

Script: Friday, March 5, emailed to me by midnight

Podcast: Monday, March 12 with electronic copy of the podcast.

By this time in the semester, you should have a thorough understanding of notions of hybrid literacy and the merging of visual and verbal texts. For this assignment, we will be moving into another form of hybrid literacy, that of the audio podcast.

Kress argues, "In [this] new communicational world, there are now choices about how what is to be represented should be represented: in what mode, in what genre, in what ensembles of modes and genres, and on what occasions. These were not decisions open to students (or teachers or textbook makers) some twenty years earlier. Of course, with all this go questions not only of the potentials of the resources, but also of the new possibilities of arrangements, the new grammars of multimodal texts" (49).

As a multimodal text, a podcast will enable you to explore new ways of making rhetorical choices to reach new audiences. This project will challenge you to incorporate a variety of ways using ethos, pathos and logos and most likely redefine how you perceive the purpose of a text.

For this assignment, you should not simply aim to record sounds for an end result. Rather, you should use your podcast to tell a story, make meaning, create a commentary, and relay a narrative. You should use this project to offer insight into a topic of interest that you want to share with an audience. Your goal is to connect with your audience and have them reflect on *what it is they hear*.

Your podcast should follow the conventions of the essay genre with an introduction and conclusion. You should aim to make claims, think critically and support your arguments. You should also have a clear thesis that is evident to your audience.

Because of the many parts that are involved in drafting, researching and producing the podcast, you will work in groups of 2 or 3 for this assignment. The first week of this project will be focused on getting your groups organized and choosing a topic of research.

Your group should aim for a 3-5 minutes sound recording that incorporates music or other aural elements in addition to the spoken word. The topic for your podcast is open; I want you and your group members to be as creative as possible and to consider researching a subject that is of interest for all involved.

The second week of this project will focus on learning Garage Band and how to capture sound using digital recording equipment. Members of IT will be in class to teach us the software and how to organize production information. All recording will take place with the cooperation of IT during pre-arranged sign-up times and through the third week of the assignment when we shift into production scheduling.

Information to get you organized:

Your podcast should include an introduction that sets up your narrative and prepares the audience for what is to come. This is a reflective frame for your project—some way of helping listeners understand what they are hearing, why it is significant, and what you are trying to convey.

The more podcasts you listen to the better you will become at understanding the structure of a podcast, its similarities and differences to a traditional text essay. I will supply you with numerous links to examples of podcasts in varying lengths with a variety of purposes.

Remember, this is your chance to be creative in a modality other than verbal / alphabetic writing. This project should be meaningful and exhibit your ability to adapt material to a new format.

There are five parts to the podcast process:

Choosing your group. Consider working with someone in a like major or someone that is interested in working with a topic of similar interest. I will give you plenty of time in class the first week to research and brainstorm the kind of podcast you are hoping to produce. Once *you* have an idea of what *you* want to do, finding a group member(s) will be much easier.

Drafting and brainstorming. This involves not only working as a group to research your topic of interest but also considering how you will construct your podcast. Which sources will you use? What different kinds of audio elements will you bring together? Are you using sound effects? Will you include music? Will you be interviewing people? You should also consider the sources you find most compelling and fitting for your project. As you conceptualize your podcast you may add more “sources,” like interviews.

Scripting. As a group, you will draft a script before you begin any production work. This will keep you focused and your time in the studio structured, affording your group the opportunity to assign tasks for each step of the project. Expect that your script may start out as a plan or outline that you refer to as you construct your podcast. Know that it will change during production and that the end result may be a different version of your original essay concept

Construction. A starting point for thinking about this assignment in its most basic form is to think of it as someone reading an essay aloud and recording it. Another way to think about it is like a speech. Though consider that your podcast will be different because it is audio and you will be using various texts/sources/sounds, not just one. This opens up whole new options for multimodality.

Production. This is the final stage of the project. Know that you may end up with multiple revisions of your podcast and you will probably be continually editing it down until it is due in order to make sure you're including the important parts and cutting out any unnecessary material. The editing step is key to the production because this is when you really define your podcast and make it concise.

The most important thing to remember about this project is to ask questions if you need help! This will be an adventure for everyone (including me) so please have an open mind. This project should be enjoyable and allow you to express yourself in a new way, learn a new piece of software, and create an audio track that shows your ability to construct a thesis and be analytical. I have purposely left our syllabus flexible in order to best adapt this project for our needs (including the requirements listed in this assignment). If we need to shift due dates around, and reformat criteria this is certainly something that we can discuss as a class so let's keep the lines of communication open so I am aware of your needs for this project.