SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS
CTPR 404 - Practicum in Podcast Production

SYLLABUS
VISIT: **https://trojanvision.usc.edu**

Semester: Fall, 2021
Location: Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts
Instructor: TBD
Instructor email: TBD
Office Hours: TBD
Meeting times: TBD
SA: TBD
Units: 2

Course Description
The rise in podcast popularity began over a decade ago and shows no sign of abating, with over 1.5 million shows and over 34 million episodes available. In this course, students are introduced to podcast production and learn the essential skills required to create their own podcasts. This includes pitching ideas, writing a script, casting talent and finding guests, hosting, interviewing, audio and video recording, editing, podcast distribution and promotion.

After an overview and analysis of existing podcasts, students form teams to collaborate on their original podcast productions. Each team has 3 students: writer, producer and director (although all duties will be shared among the team). Each week, teams develop content, present their work in class and receive notes from the instructor and students. In the second half of the semester teams record their podcasts in the Trojan Vision studio facilities, then edit, review and refine their podcast into a completed podcast episode.

Guest speakers offer students a window into professional podcast development including audience building, using demographic metrics, sponsorship, monetization and podcast-to-television adaptations. Students' finished podcasts are promoted and archived as a production of Trojan Vision, the USC campus television station, and distributed to top tier directories like Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher and YouTube.

Learning Objectives
Students learn to:
- Develop content for a specific podcast format.
- Operate basic recording and editing equipment and software.
- Collaborate with team members, crew and production staff.
- Produce, distribute and promote their podcast episode.

Prerequisites

This class is open to students from any school or division of the university. Students are not required to have any podcast, audio or video experience. A laptop or mobile device with a Wi-Fi/Internet connection is required. Access to recording and editing software needed for assignments will be provided.

Weekly Course Schedule

Week 1

Overview of podcasting: history, emergence of genres and formats, listening, not watching.
Review of current top-rated podcasts.
Overview of class requirements, assignments and the podcast formats for this course.

Week 2

Discussion and analysis of a podcast.
Discussion of course's podcast format and genre, breakdown of sample excerpts
Students are divided into Podcast Production Teams.
Instruction: Writing a podcast idea pitch.
Assignment: Teams prepare an idea pitch.

Week 3

Student Podcast Production Teams pitch podcast ideas. Discussion and notes.
Instruction: Writing the script, podcast voicing and moderating, booking hosts and guests.
Assignment: Teams prepare the first draft of script.

Week 4

Podcast Production Teams present first draft of script. Discussion and notes.
Instruction: Casting, balancing divergent and informed points-of-view, pre-interviewing guests.
Assignment: Teams prepare second draft of script and notes on pre-interview of guests. **(10% of grade)**
Guest: Podcast Producer.

Week 5

Teams present second draft of script. Discussion and notes.
Teams present guest pre-interview summary and notes.
Instruction: Choosing talking points for podcast, anticipating progression, timing and surprises.
        Introduction to audio recording and mixing, crew roles and responsibilities.
Assignment: Finalize script using pre-interview notes. **(15% of grade)**

Week 6

Teams present revised script with talking points, show timing,
        moderator and guest expectations. Discussion.
Preproduction for Team 1. Students are assigned to production positions.
Instruction: Introduction to editing.
Assignment: Preparation to record Team 1 Podcast
Guest: Podcast Interviewer

Week 7
Record Team 1 Podcast in class. **(20% of grade, Team 1)**
Post-mortem review Team 1 Podcast
Preproduction for Team 2 Podcast. Production positions assigned.
Instruction: Editing continues.
Assignments: Preparation to Record Team 2 Podcast.
                  Team 1 Podcast edits (through Week 10).

Week 8
Record Team 2 Podcast in class. **(20% of grade, Team 2)**
Post-mortem review Team 2 Podcast
Preproduction for Team 3 Podcast. Production positions assigned.
Instruction: Editing continues; includes music, sound design.
Assignments: Preparation to Record Team 3 Podcast.
                  Teams 1 & 2 Podcast edits (through Week 10, 11).

Week 9
Record Team 3 Podcast in class. **(20% of grade, Team 3)**
Post-mortem review Team 3 Podcast
Preproduction for Team 4 Podcast. Production positions assigned.
Instruction: Editing completes.
Assignments: Preparation to Record Team 4 Podcast.
                  Teams 1 - 3 Podcast edits (through Week 10, 11 & 12).

Week 10
Record Team 4 Podcast in class. **(20% of grade, Team 4)**
Post-mortem review Team 4 recording
Preproduction for Team 5 Podcast. Production positions assigned.
Instruction: Podcast distribution and publishing.
Assignments: Preparation to Record Team 5 Podcast.
                  Teams 1 - 4 Podcast edits (through Week 10, 11 & 12).

Week 11
Record Team 5 Podcast in class. **(20% of grade, Team 5)**
Post-mortem review Team 5 recording
Preproduction for Team 6 Podcast. Production positions assigned.
Instruction: Creating the podcast publication and promotional campaign.
Assignments: Preparation to Record Team 6 Podcast.
        Teams 2 - 5 Podcast edits (through Week 11, 12 & 13).
        Team 1 begins promotional trailer.

Week 12
Record Team 6 Podcast in class. **(20% of grade, Team 6)**
Post-mortem review Team 6 recording
Instruction: Creating the podcast publication and promotional campaign completes.
Assignments: Team 6 Podcast edits (through Week 13).
        Teams 3 - 5 Podcast edits (through Week 12 & 13).
        Teams 1 & 2, continue promotional trailer.

Week 13
Review Podcasts 5 - 6 edits-in-progress
Assignments: Teams 1 & 2, finish promotional trailer
              Teams 3 & 4, plan Podcast Show Week promotional campaign

Week 14
Instructor review and final notes on individual teams' podcasts and promotional materials.

Week 15
Podcast Show Week. Completed podcasts are published. **(30% of grade)**
Track 5-days following publication, audience analytics, social media comments and responses.
Final: Written assessment of podcast episodes by each team.

Finals Week
Students write a 1-page essay on the class, team collaboration and what they learned. Roundtable discussion. **(10% of Grade)**

Reading and Listening Assignments
Students read chapters from books and articles that provide context or details for in-class instruction.
Books
- *[Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination](#)*, by Susan Douglas
- *[Podcast Solutions: The Complete Guide to Audio and Video Podcasting](#)*, by Michael Geoghegan and Dan Klass

Articles
- [Inside the Podcast Brain: Why Do Audio Stories Captivate?](#) The Atlantic, April, 2015
- ['Serial,', Podcasting's First Breakout Hit, Sets Stage for More](#), New York Times, Nov. 23, 2014
- [Podcasting is the New Personal Essay](#), Columbia Journalism Review, December 12, 2017

Newsletter
- Follow *[Hot Pod,](#)* provides analysis, insight and commentary on the growing podcast industry.

Podcast Listening is self-directed. Here are a few aggregators:
- [NPR Podcast Directory](#)
- [PRX](#)

Grades
Grades are based on the timely submission and quality of assignments, preparation for class and engagement in discussions, individual initiative, professional behavior and team collaboration.

Grading Criteria

Participation and collaboration	15%
2nd draft of script, guests pre-interview notes	10%
Final script	15%
Podcast recording (per team)	20%
Podcast quality & promotion	30%
Final summation essay	10%

Attendance

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. This course is performance oriented and attendance is extremely important. Two absences will result in a grade being lowered by one full letter (example: A becomes B). A third absence will result in a grade being lowered by one additional, full letter grade (B becomes C). A student's grade will be lowered by one full letter for each additional absence. Two late class arrivals equate to one full absence. Students must contact the instructor in advance if they are going to be absent.

Cell Phone and Online Class Policies

Cell phones, laptops, tablets and other personal devices may not be used during class unless they are necessary for class exercises. Out of respect to students, SAs and instructors, please bring a courteous and professional attitude to all classes.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710
Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.
https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu
Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support & Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
ombuds.usc.edu
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.