COMM 354: PODCASTING AND RADIO PRODUCTION (3 credits)

Spring 2022

Course Description and Delivery | Blackboard Login Instructions | Course Reading Materials | Course Learning Outcomes | Technology Requirements | Course-specific Hardware/Software | Instructor-Student Communication | Course Policies | Course Schedule | Assignments Description and Grading | Grading Scale | University Policies and Resources

Instructor: Rodger Smith
Office Hours (via Zoom and to be announced in Horizon Hall 5171): Thursdays 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Visit Office Hours Information on the class website for the office hours Zoom link.
Email: rsmith6@gmu.edu

Safe Return to Campus Statement

• All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university’s public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (https://www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus).
• Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check prior to coming to campus.
  o The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, Red, or Blue email response.
  o Only students who receive a “green” notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing.
  o Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.
• Students are required to follow Mason's current policy about facemask-wearing. As of August 11, 2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An appropriate facemask must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom. If this policy changes, you will be informed; however, students who prefer to wear masks will always be welcome in the classroom.
• Click here for the latest COVID updates for students.

Course Description and Delivery

This course is designed to give the student an understanding of the theory and practice of podcasting and operational radio broadcasting. Students will learn and critically analyze the components of radio and podcast production, including interviewing, story development, script writing, interview techniques, remote and digital audio recording, editing of sound, mixing, and final production for broadcast. The course includes a lecture component and lab time where the instructor will consult with students
on their practice and production assignments, including short and longer formats. Topics include programming, production, and promotion aspects of commercial and noncommercial radio. You will learn how to write and produce pre-recorded material for the medium of radio. This will be accomplished via lectures (online, in the classroom and in the studio), quizzes and audio production projects. Using Blackboard, students are expected to complete assignments weekly and be engaged in course activities throughout the semester. Please check daily for updates.

**Blackboard Login Instructions**

Access to MyMason and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check the IT Support Center website. Navigate to the Student Support page for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

**Course Reading Materials**

  - DIGITAL RADIO PRODUCTION: PROGRAMMING AND PERFORMANCE, third edition, offers:
    - An explanation of the role of the production person in the broadcast industry.
    - Easy-to-understand, cutting-edge presentations about digital audio, recording, storage, manipulation, audio processing, and special effects.
    - Critical elements of commercial writing and production techniques that recognize the role the sales department plays in production.
    - Chapters about station promotion, imaging, and the station on location.
    - Digital audio transmission methods for everything from transferring a commercial to another station to high-definition radio.
    - A no-nonsense approach to how sales, programming, and production go hand in hand.
    - The key role radio plays in the development of rich content for the web and the expansion of radio's interactive role and reach in the community.

**NOTE:**

- There will be lectures covering topics not mentioned in the class textbook.
- More resources will be added to Blackboard.

**Course Learning Outcomes**
By the end of this course, students will gain:

- An understanding of the basic equipment, terminology and production techniques used in radio production and podcasting.
- The skills needed to produce podcasts and radio programming.
- A basis for critical evaluation of production techniques used in radio and podcast production.
- An understanding of the nature of production and its relationship with program formats.

**Technology Requirements**

**Hardware:** You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to the [Patriot Tech e-Store](#). Under Students/Faculty/Staff, click Log into the e-Store, enter your Mason username and password, then under Recommendations click Incoming Students, then scroll to your major, click your major then click Submit. This page will allow you to see recommendations. **It is strongly recommended to use wired instead of wireless connections to complete exams and quizzes and upload assignments.**

**Software:** Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Java](#), and [Windows Media Player](#), [QuickTime](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of anti-virus software. Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software, so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](#) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.
Course-specific Hardware/Software

Download and use audio recording software to complete production assignments. Here are links to editing advice on Audacity, Adobe Audition and Garageband. Hardware or software required for your course or program may be available for purchase at Patriot Computers (the University’s computer store that offers educational discounts and special deals).

Soundcloud account: You will create your own account to upload content you produce in this class. To create an account, read how to set up an account and upload your podcast.

Instructor-Student Communication

- **E-mail**: It is strongly recommended that the student activate and/or use their George Mason University sponsored e-mail account (ex: rsmith6@gmu.edu) to communicate in this class. You can check your e-mail [here](#).
  - The instructor will use the GMU e-mail account to contact the student and class. If the student wishes to have their GMU mail forwarded to another e-mail account, visit the mail.gmu.edu link above for more information.
  - Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.
  - *Keep up to date on the Class Announcements link on the class website.* From time to time, there will be important class information posted through this link.
  - I will respond to your emails within 48 hours (longer if during a semester break). I am not as consistent in checking over the weekend, so you should be patient for a response. If I will be away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder.

Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) **unless the email is of a personal nature**:

1. Syllabus
2. On-demand Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features, and Technical Requirements.

Contact with Classmates. Make sure you obtain an email address and phone number from one or two classmates, so that you can consult with a classmate if you would like to do so.

Course Policies

- **Late Work Policy:**
  - Unless otherwise announced, all assignments are due on the day and at the time they are due. Late work will not be accepted except in the case of a documented personal emergency or excused absence, and students will not be allowed to make up assignments or exams unless they have third-party documentation of an excused absence or
emergency. It is the student’s responsibility to provide written documentation from a third party that details the emergency or university-excused absence. Except in the very rare case of last-minute emergencies (e.g., getting hit by a car walking to class and being taken to the emergency room), students should let their instructors know about any excused absences, provide documentation, and plan for making up any missed work in advance of missing class. When the nature of the emergency makes it impossible to make up work in advance, students will be given a deadline to complete missed work, usually within one week of the original deadline. Technology failures, work-related absences, work in other classes, oversleeping, or meetings with other professors are not considered a personal emergency.

- In addition, please read Professor Smith’s Class Rules on the class website.

- An upper division course in the University carries with it an expectation of a significant time commitment. Each course should be allotted 7.5 hours per week in the student’s personal schedule. This means that a full load of five courses, or 15 credit hours, will require 37.5 hours. The specific rigor of the course as well as the academic and organizational skill set of the student will determine the exact number of hours needed to find success in each class.

In traditional face to face courses, this time is typically comprised of 2.5 hours of lecture and 5 hours of research and study and assessment work each week (the completion of assignments, exams and quizzes).

- **You are responsible for the accuracy of your own schedule.** Check PatriotWeb regularly to verify that you are registered for the classes that you think you are.

- **Important dates:**
  - Last Day to Add a class: Monday, Jan. 31, 2022
  - Last day to Drop a class with no tuition penalty (Full-Semester Course): Monday, Feb. 7, 2022
  - Last Day to Drop (Last Day with 50% tuition refund): Monday, Feb. 14, 2022
  - Unrestricted Withdrawal Period (100% tuition liability): Tuesday, Feb. 15-Tuesday, Mar. 1, 2022
  - Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only - Full-Semester Course – 100% tuition liability): Wednesday, Mar. 2-Monday, Apr. 11, 2022

- **Media Use:** Any use of video clips, audio clips, graphics, files or texts for class assignments must meet copyright requirements and give full and proper attribution.

- **Student Use of Electronic Devices:** Cell phones and other communicative devices are not to be used during class. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only.

- **Course Recordings:** All of our synchronous meetings in this class will be recorded to provide necessary information for students in this class. Recordings will be stored on Blackboard [or other secure site] and will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester.
Please note that submission of content for all audio and written assignments will be made through the class web site.

*Respect.* All communication and discussion in this course should exhibit respect for other class participants and the instructor.

**Course Schedule**

**Campus Closure or Emergency Class Cancelation/Adjustment Policy:**
*If the campus closes, or if a class meeting needs to be canceled or adjusted due to weather or other concern, students should check Blackboard [in particular, the Class Announcements link] for updates on how to continue learning and for information about any changes to events or assignments.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULES</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>WHAT TO READ AND ATTEND</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Connelly Ch 1-2</td>
<td>Practice Quiz (ungraded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 24-31</td>
<td>Podcasting Growth, Trends, Landscape</td>
<td>Class sessions January 24, 26 and 31</td>
<td>Assignment #1: Podcast review by Monday, January 31 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Microphones, Recorders, Filters; Best Practices for Sound Recording</td>
<td>Connelly Ch 3-6</td>
<td>Quiz #1 (Connelly Ch 4) by Monday, February 14 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>February 2-14</td>
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<td>Class sessions February 2, 7, 9 and 14</td>
<td>Assignment #2: Podcast pitch by Monday, February 14 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Interview Preparation, Listening, Ending; Scripting, Opens, Bumpers, Outros</td>
<td>Connelly Ch 10</td>
<td>Quiz #2 (Connelly Ch 10) by Wednesday, February 23 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>February 16-23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Class sessions February 16, 21 and 23</td>
<td>Assignment #3: Produce and edit podcast open by Wednesday, February 23 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 4</td>
<td>Voicing Tips, Exercises, Script Marking</td>
<td>Class sessions February 28 and March 7</td>
<td>Quiz #3 (Connelly Ch 5) by Monday, March 7 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>February 28-</td>
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<td>Assignment #4: Descriptive writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Take mid-term exam through class website</td>
<td>by Monday, March 7 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Exam, available 9-10:15 am Wednesday, March 9</td>
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<td>March 14-16</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Module 5</td>
<td>Commercial Production, Achieving an Effect, Writing for the Ear</td>
<td>Connelly Ch 7-9 Class sessions March 21, 23, 28 and 30</td>
<td>Quiz #4 (Connelly Ch 7) by Wednesday, March 23 11:59 PM EST Assignment #5: Outro, the final mixdown by Wednesday, March 30, 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>March 21-30</td>
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<td>Module 6</td>
<td>News Production, Remote and Sports Production</td>
<td>Connelly Ch 11 Class sessions April 4 and 6</td>
<td>Quiz #5 (Connelly Ch 11) by Wednesday, April 6 11:59 PM EST Assignment #6: PSA production by Wednesday, April 6 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>April 4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 7</td>
<td>Publishing Hosts, Transcription, Promotion; How Do You Measure Audience?</td>
<td>Class sessions April 11 and 13</td>
<td>Quiz #6 (Connelly Ch 9) by Wednesday, April 13, 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 11-13</td>
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<td>Module 8</td>
<td>Live, On-air Production</td>
<td>Connelly Ch 14 Class sessions April 18 and 20</td>
<td>Quiz #7 (Connelly Ch 14) by Wednesday, April 20 11:59 PM EST Assignment #7: Promo production by Wednesday, April 20 11:59 PM EST</td>
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<td>April 18-20</td>
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| Module 9  
April 25-27 | Drama and Dramatic Effects; Getting Your First Job in Radio | Connelly Ch 15  
Class sessions April 25 and 27 | Quiz #8 (Connelly Ch 15) by Wednesday, April 27 11:59 PM EST  
Assignment #8: 8-10-minute podcast by Wednesday, April 27 11:59 PM EST |
| Module 10  
May 2-4 | Computer Driven Technology; Radio & the New Digital Infrastructure; Avoiding Legal Trouble | Connelly Ch 13  
Class sessions May 2 and 4 | Quiz #9 (Connelly Ch 13) by Wednesday, May 4  
Assignment #9: Podcast trailer by Wednesday, May 4 11:59 PM EST |
| May 16 | | Take final exam through class website | Final Exam, available 7:30 am-10:15 am Monday, May 16 |

**Assignments Description and Grading**

**Blog: Student Introduction (10 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #1 – Podcast Review (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #2 – Podcast Pitch (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #3 – Produce and Edit Podcast Open (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #4 – Descriptive Writing (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.
**Assignment #5 – Outro, the Final Mixdown (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #6 – PSA Production (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #7 – Promo Production (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #8 – 8-10-Minute Podcast (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Assignment #9 – Podcast Trailer (100 points):** View the assignment details through the Weekly Module.

**Quizzes (9 quizzes, 10 points each):** Nine quizzes will be administered in this online course. You should be prepared for a quiz on the chapter(s) discussed in modules. YOU MUST TAKE THE QUIZ WHEN ASSIGNED. NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES WILL BE ADMINISTERED. These will be timed quizzes, so plan for enough time in your schedule to take a quiz. Take the quizzes in a quiet room or location. During the first module, there will be an ungraded practice quiz. This helps you practice with the quiz software and prepare for quiz #1. I would strongly suggest you take the practice quiz to avoid technical glitches that may occur.

**Grading for the Course:**

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<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>970-1000</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>930-969</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-929</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>870-899</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>830-869</td>
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<tr>
<td>600-699</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>0-599</td>
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**Questions on Graded Assignments:** You have up to seven calendar days after assignments are returned to you to discuss with your instructor the grade you earned on the assignment. To discuss the grade, please send an e-mail to the instructor.

- After the restricted time period for each assignment, questions on assignments can be entertained BUT no appointments to discuss grades for those assignments will be scheduled.

**University Policies and Resources**

A. [Here is a full list of student support services at Mason](https://www.gmu.edu/student-support). Some of these resources are explained more in depth below.
B. **Academic Honesty:** You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University’s Honor Code. The Code can be found [here](#).
   a. Mason is an Honor Code university. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.
   b. Some kinds of participation in online study sites violate the Mason Honor code. These include accessing exam or quiz questions for this class; accessing exam, quiz, or assignment answers for this class; uploading of any of the instructor’s materials or exams; and uploading any of your own answers or finished work. Always consult your syllabus and your professor before using these sites.

C. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#).

D. **Student services:** The University provides a range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).

E. **Religious Holidays:** As a student, it is your obligation, within the first two weeks of the semester, to provide your instructor with the dates of major religious holidays on which you will be absent due to religious observances.

F. **Student Privacy:** [The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)](#) is a federal law that governs the educational records of eligible students. Please read for more information.

G. **The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students’ personal experience and academic performance.**

   Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.

H. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS)](#) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester.

I. **Online Education Services, University Libraries:** The George Mason University Library offers several services online to assist you with research and assignments.

J. **The George Mason University Writing Center** staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.

K. George Mason University is dedicated to preparing staff and students in the event of an emergency. All students in this class are encouraged to register for Mason Alert, a system that allows university officials to contact the community during an emergency by sending a text message to cell phones, emails, or PDAs If you are not currently registered for Mason Alert, please visit [this website](#).
L. **Diversity**: George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

M. **Name and Pronoun Use**: If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and indicate how best to address you in class and via email. I use he/him/his for myself and you may address me as Prof. Smith in email and verbally.

N. **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence and stalking**: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703-993-2380, 32380 on campus). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Office by calling 703-993-8730 (38730 on campus).

O. **The Mason Student Services Center** is the first stop and the central resource for information and solutions related to registration, enrollment, financial aid, billing, academic records and other student support services. Click the link for more information.

P. You can find out more about Mason campus groups at the [Mason 360 website](#).