Course Description:

In NMC 356, students will develop, launch, distribute, and maintain a professional-quality podcast on the topic of their choice.

Prerequisites:

NMC 260 New Media Futures and NMC 255 Introduction to Sound Design must have been completed with a final grade of at least C- before taking this course. Exceptions to the NMC 255 requirement will be considered based on outside experience with sound production.

Learning outcomes:

Students who finish this class will have demonstrated an ability to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the technical and performative requirements of podcast production and distribution. (Assessed through Week 4 quiz)
- Develop a production plan for a fully original podcast season. (Assessed through Week 5 Podcast Plan)
- Establish a professional network presence for their podcasts, including hub page and social-media accounts. (Assessed via performance on Podcast Plan Execution, at end of term)
- Build a hand-coded XML feed suitable for submission to iTunes and Google Play Music. (Assessed via performance on Podcast Plan Execution, at end of term)
- Produce at least three regularly scheduled episodes comprising no less than one full hour of podcast programming, available on iTunes, Google Play Music, and YouTube. (Assessed via performance on Podcast Plan Execution, at end of term)

Introduction:

The goal of this course is to equip you with a podcast-centered franchise that you can, if you wish, make a part of your creative life. We will start with a review of types of podcasts that are out there right now; then we’ll discuss equipment and resources for the technical aspects of production; and planning for a successful podcast rollout. Then we’ll develop detailed podcast rollout plans -- individually or, for those who plan to work in teams, in teams; and implement those plans.

Grades:

Attendance: 30 percent.

This class is also a publishing enterprise -- in other words, a workplace. If you don’t show up for work and don’t call, you might get one second chance, but after that, goodbye -- right? Same thing here, only instead of getting fired after your second no-show, you lose 10 of these 30 points for each incident. If you lose all 30 points, there are no further penalties, but it’s going to be hard to pass the class if the best you can do is a C-minus.

To avoid losing points, it’s very simple: Text or e-mail me AND text or e-mail ALL the other members of your publishing team (if you’re on a team) BEFORE CLASS. Briefly explain why you can’t make it. No proof or doctors’ notes or anything like that will be necessary; we just need to know in advance that you won’t be in.
Technical/Production Quiz (Week 4): 15 percent.

During the first three weeks, everyone will be exploring the podcasting world and getting familiar with the tools of production. In Week 4 we will pivot to actual podcast development. This quiz marks the border between learning by observing, and learning by doing.

Podcast Production Plan (Week 5): 10 percent.

A written plan, using a provided format, due on Wednesday of Week 5, outlining what your podcast will be, how frequently it will drop, what support content you plan to produce, etc.

Podcast Plan Execution: 25 percent.

This portion of your grade is for execution of the podcast itself, along with its hub page with show notes, social-media accounts, XML (RSS) feed, visual assets, and optional accompanying blog. It is assessed at the end of the term.

Participation and teamwork: 20 percent.

We’re one big team made up of many small teams. Everyone wants everyone else to succeed. The biggest thing that can make that happen is a helpful, can-do attitude and a corporate culture of being generous with your time and expertise. Be in that space and you’ll nail this portion of the grade.

Expenses:

There are no textbooks in this class, but there are some equipment purchases that you will likely have to make. Save at least $50 of your textbook money for class expenses, but don’t buy anything until the first day of class.

However, here’s a general overview of stuff you are going to want:
Stuff you MUST have access to:

Software:

**ADOBE CREATIVE CLOUD:** You probably have this anyway, but if you don’t, you’ll have to get it. Student pricing is $20 a month, so $60 over the course of the term. I use Adobe Audition, and that is the digital-audio workstation (DAW)/audio editor I know my way around; so I recommend that you use it too. You can use ProTools or StudioOne or Tracktion or even Audacity (don’t use Audacity unless you already know it very well) -- but if you don’t use Audition I probably won’t be able to help you troubleshoot.

Hardware:

**LAPTOP:** You probably want a laptop, either a Windows or a Mac. Chromebooks won’t work for this. You can get by without a laptop; but it will really cramp your style.

**MICROPHONE AND AUDIO INTERFACE:** Here is where you will want to spend pretty much as much as you can afford to, because in the $30 to $150 range you can really hear the improvement every dollar buys. The minimum rig you want is a Blue Snowball; nothing cheaper than that is worth a damn. The optimal podcasting rig would be a PreSonus TubePre V2 ($130) and a Shure SM58 dynamic mic ($99). You can spend more -- but unless you have a truly dead-silent place to record or are willing to invest in a soundbooth, you really shouldn’t. But we’ll talk more about this in Week One.

Accessibility:

**Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities:** Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at [http://ds.oregonstate.edu](http://ds.oregonstate.edu). DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.
Diversity:

The School of Arts and Communication strives to create an affirming climate for all students including underrepresented and marginalized individuals and groups. Diversity encompasses differences in age, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, physical or mental ability, religion, socioeconomic background, veteran status, sexual orientation, and marginalized groups. We believe diversity is the synergy, connection, acceptance, and mutual learning fostered by the interaction of different human characteristics.

Religious holidays:

Oregon State University strives to respect all religious practices. If you have religious holidays that are in conflict with any of the requirements of this class, please see me immediately so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Expectations for Student Conduct:

For details of expectations for student conduct in this and other classes, including official policies when cheating is suspected, please see http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/code.
Schedule:

Week 1: Types of podcasts.

**MONDAY:** Introduction, class plan, The Readin’ o’ th’ Syllabus
**WEDNESDAY:** Fiction, nonfiction, gabcasts: Pick your poison
**FRIDAY:** Surveying and sampling the most successful podcasts

Week 2: Podcasting tools.

**MONDAY:** How lo-fi spoken-word recording works
**WEDNESDAY:** Mics, preamps, audio interfaces, recording spaces
**FRIDAY:** Software and services

Week 3: Podcasting techniques.

**MONDAY:** Mic technique, signal monitoring, working with guests
**WEDNESDAY:** Audio editing
**FRIDAY:** Mastering and sweetening

Week 4: Pivoting to production

**MONDAY:** Flex day (or, for winter term, move to cover MLK Day)
**WEDNESDAY:** Technical/Production Quiz; project brainstorm I
**FRIDAY:** Project brainstorm II

Week 5: Developing your podcast plan

**MONDAY:** Overall franchise planning, copyright issues, Creative Commons licensing
**WEDNESDAY:** Tactical planning: Launch Day and beyond. *Podcast Production Plan Due.*
**FRIDAY:** Building your hub page

Week 6: Building your support structure

**MONDAY:** Show notes and optional complementary blog
**WEDNESDAY:** Social Media management
**FRIDAY:** Plug-n-play podcast services: Should you?
Week 7: XML, RSS, iTunes, and Google Play Music

**MONDAY:** How XML works, and using it to make your own free RSS feed  
**WEDNESDAY:** Coding XML  
**FRIDAY:** Submitting your feed to iTunes and Google Play Music

Week 8: Podcast scripting

**MONDAY:** Flex day (or, for Fall, move to cover TG; spring, move to cover Memorial Day)  
**WEDNESDAY:** Scripted podcasts vs. unscripted gabcasts  
**FRIDAY:** Writing for spoken-word, from simple scripts to complex radio dramas

Week 9: Monetization strategies and opportunities for synergy

**MONDAY:** The vital importance of dogfooding and horizontal networking  
**WEDNESDAY:** Sponsorships, crowdsourcing, “Donate” buttons, Patreon  
**FRIDAY:** Podcasts as marketing and discovery tools

Week 10: Other spoken-word opportunities

**MONDAY:** Pivoting to other VO work: Audiobook production, ACX, Spoken Realms  
**WEDNESDAY:** Taking your production to the next level: Smart mic upgrades, booths, etc.  
**FRIDAY:** Podcast presentation day