

Technical & Professional Soundwriting

Level

Undergraduate professional writing course

Themes

- Professional Writing
- Multimodality
- Public Writing
- Sonic Rhetorics

Key Texts

Richard Johnson-Sheehan, *Technical Communication Today*

Robert Knight, *Writing Public Prose*

Jacqueline Rhodes & Jonathan Alexander, *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*

Jessica Abel, *Out on the Wire: The Storytelling Secrets of the New Masters of Radio*

Cheryl Ball, et. al., *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Multimodal Making*

Roland Barthes, “Listening”

Steph Ceraso, “(Re)Educating the Senses”

Kevin Brockmeier, “The Year of Silence”

Digital Resources

Transom.org

Freesound.org

Audacity

Writingtechnically.com



“Why Podcasting, Why Now,” Image via CommPartners

In recent years, podcasting has emerged as a popular media form. With their blend of audio content, mobile design, and wide variety of subjects, podcasts are an engaging and dynamic media. They employ the locative affordances of mobile media, giving users something to do while commuting, but they also tap into and create listening communities, such as with place-based series like *S-Town* and *Up and Vanished*. As writing professionals, we are constantly presented with new types of affordances, capabilities, and limitations of multimodal writing in new media.

Professional Soundwriting combines professional and public writing theories in a course focused on writing for podcasts. This course examines how podcasting offers opportunities for studying important concepts for the practice of professional writing. Readings connect public and professional writing to the emerging podcasting industry. Course assignments include writing proposals, elevator pitches, and delivering presentations as well as information design, content writing, and production for a podcast series.

Learning Outcomes

- Adapt modes of professional writing to various podcasting formats
- Identify professional writing techniques in print and audio media
- Classify basic structures of podcasting
- Define key podcasting terms
- Compare different podcasting formats
- Design, build, and write content for a website and podcast mini-series
- Critique, workshop, and revise audio texts

Major Assignments	Points	/100
<p>Discussion Posts, 1000 words (250 words each)</p> <p>Throughout the semester, I will ask you to write eight 250 word analytical responses to readings or case studies. These responses are focused, crafted, and carefully edited. These may be assigned in class or for homework. Check our detailed schedule on Canvas for homework dates for discussion posts.</p>	15	
<p>Introductory Email, 200 words</p> <p>Using a standard email format and an effective professional style, send a message to a teacher or professional working within your field (e.g nurse, teacher, engineer, etc.).</p>	2	
<p>Professional Correspondence, 500 words</p> <p>Using professional correspondence style, send a “letter from a nut” to an actual company or organization. Feel free to create any outlandish scenario and/or characters for your letter, just make sure that the content is not inappropriate. Check out Ted L. Nancy’s website for examples.</p>	5	
<p>Technical Description, 700 words</p> <p>Write a professional memo that either provides a clear description for a specific technical term from your field to a general, non-expert audience, or argues for the implementation of specific process or device in some technical aspect of your field.</p>	8	
<p>Application Packet, 700 words</p> <p>Produce an application packet with a job description analysis, cover letter, and a resume. Students will find and use a specific posting for a job, internship, graduate school, and/or professional organization and write an analysis of the job description that details requested materials and a characterization of ideal candidates. Students will craft materials in response to the posting with rhetorical savvy.</p>	20	
<p>Proposal, 700 words</p> <p>For the proposal assignment, students will write a detailed proposal for a podcast series which attempts to solve or explain an issue in the profession. These may be an issue facing a profession or field of study, problems facing students or young professionals generally, or an issue which overlaps several fields.</p>	15	
<p>Instructional Podcast, 1000 words per student</p> <p>Working in groups of three, students will create an instructional guide designed to provide advice or instructions for either the general student body at UF or a specific group of students. The instructional guide will take the form of a series of three podcasts and a Wix website to house the podcasts.</p>	20	
<p>Progress Report, 500 words</p> <p>This assignment refers to the instructional podcast assignment. Midway through the project, you will need to submit a progress report detailing the progress you have made, including what has been finished and what still needs to be completed. You may include a plan for finishing the assignment as well as a reflection on working with your group and any difficulties you have experienced.</p>	5	
<p>Usability Report, 700 words</p> <p>Develop a user test methodology for your instructional podcast. Using test groups from inside the class population, you will conduct user tests to measure the functionality and readability of your technical manual. Based on the data you gather and your evaluation of that data in the usability report, you'll then revise your instruction manual before submitting it for a final grade.</p>	10	