CIEE Berlin, Germany

Course title: Radio Production and Digital Storytelling in Berlin (in English)
Course code: COMM 3010 BRGE (ENG)
Programs offering course: Global Architecture and Design, Berlin Open Campus Block
Open Campus Track: Communications, Journalism, and New Media
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Fall Block II 2020

Course Description

This intensive, hands-on course teaches students to use audio as a medium to tell stories that explore the history, places, and people of Berlin. Storytelling through sounds and interviews is our theme. A vibrant, creative city is our playground. Producing radio stories and podcasts is our goal. Students sharpen research and reporting skills, develop interview techniques, and learn or improve their editing and production abilities. The assignments in this course require students step outside their comfort zone and engage with Berliners to uncover interesting pieces of the local society and tell captivating stories. We learn about the role of radio storytelling in contemporary German society, and conduct on-location production experiences to improve our audiocollecting skills. Throughout the course, students will have opportunities to use equipment available on campus and acquire basic audio editing skills using dedicated software.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Differentiate and compare three distinct uses of radio broadcast across German history.
- Critique how German radio began and how modern German radio operates.
- Generate an audio project using basic audio-recording equipment and editing software.
- Produce thoughtful and well-researched questions and conduct personal interviews with Berlin residents.
- Distinguish between varying storytelling techniques, methods to pitch story ideas, and script structures.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

This course employs radio storytelling as a vehicle for gaining cultural and historical knowledge of Berlin. Students will be actively engaged in preparing and executing a series of short features. Faculty-led discussion covers the preparatory material. Students will do their own field recordings and interviews, leading up to a final radio feature that will be considered for showcasing online and for broadcast on KCRW Berlin, NPR's local Berlin station.

This course includes occasional lectures on topics such as media ethics, but the majority of our time will involve discussions and group work. Site visits and guest speakers will also augment the teaching and learning. Students are expected to apply themselves rigorously and independently and to work collaboratively, listening and offering comments, support and constructive criticism to their peers. The expectations and challenges of this class are high. Most feature assignments ask students to step beyond their comfort zone.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Homework Assignments 10%
2. Sonic Portrait 15%
3. Outline of Final Project 10%
4. Exam 20%
5. Final Project 25%
Course Requirements

Homework Assignments

Throughout the course students will be assigned small production tasks and writing assignments. These will culminate in a final project and will be graded according to criteria detailed in the weekly schedule.

Sonic Portrait

Students create a 2 to 3-minute sonic portrait of a place or person in Berlin just using sounds and speech, without narration. This piece should tell listeners a story about a place or person in Berlin, and take listeners on a journey. These are not a collage of sounds, but rather sounds purposely stitched together in a meaningful sequence.

Outline of Final Project

Feature idea and outline will be presented and discussed at a pitching session with a KCRW Berlin editor in week 4.

Exam

A written exam will also cap their experience and provide an opportunity to show all they have learned, testing their factual and historical knowledge.

Final Project

The focus of the course is the final 3-minute feature, either done independently or in groups of two. The feature should give the listener a flavor of Berlin. It should focus on either a Berlin character, place, event or experience. The feature should include one or more interviews and really immerse the listener in the city with lots of location sound recordings. It may also include music and/or sound design. The story must include some tension, ideally following an action or event, so the listener feels they are experiencing something in real time. Students must submit a log, script and photos. The grade will be based on the inclusion of all of the above.

Participation

Students must attend and actively participate in all scheduled classes and site visits. The expectations and challenges of this class are high. Students are to apply themselves rigorously and independently to their production work. Several assignments ask students to be a step beyond their comfort zone. Offering comments, sharing your ideas, and giving each other constructive criticism are a key part of this course.

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.

Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the
requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; 3% grade penalty &amp; written warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
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N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, and local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: 1.1  **Introduction**

- Listening to and identifying differing styles in an eclectic mix of radio features.
- The radio pioneers - listening to excerpts of the first radio features, learning about the humble beginnings of radio.
- Experimenting in sound and sound design - learning about the central role of sound and music in today's radio.
- Getting to know your recording kit and the basics of the sound editing program Audacity.
- First simple recordings.

Class: 1.2 .

- Journalism ethics and cultural/religious intercultural sensitivity
- Planning begins of a sonic portrait of a Berlin location of students' choice. This will be a short feature without narration, discovering a location purely through sound.

Reading:

“That Jacky Kennedy Moment” by Scott Carrier in Reality Radio, pp. 27-35

“Harnessing Luck as an Industrial Product” by Ira Glass in Reality Radio, pp. 54-66

“Cigarettes and Dance Steps” by Alan Hall in Reality Radio, pp. 96-107

**Week 1 assignment:**
Students will listen to KCRW Berlin and a local NPR member station in the U.S. via live stream and come prepared in the next session to discuss a story and the station. Each student will come prepared to tell the class about the station they listened to and contrast it to Berlin's local NPR affiliate. Students will submit written thoughts about the station and any stories that stood out to them.

Week 2

Class: 2.1

- What’s a story? Exploring the key elements of a story and the art of storytelling.
- Learning interview techniques.
- Talking to strangers: Students will plan and record their own vox pops, choosing locations and planning questioning strategies to create a street story which will be edited into a short feature.

Class: 2.2

- Radio across cultures: What makes radio so different in Germany and the US?

Reading:
Brecht, Bertolt. "The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication".

Assignment:
Sonic Portrait

Class: 2.3

Site Visit to Flux FM, award-winning Berlin radio station.

Week 3

Class: 3.1

- Learning techniques for interviewing, logging and structuring features.
- A class feature will be researched, recorded, scripted and edited together in class.

Reading:
Joe Richman’s “Diaries and Detritus” in Reality Radio, pp. 128-134.
"Talking to Strangers” by The Kitchen Sisters in Reality Radio, pp. 38-46.

Class: 3.2

- Exploring the online radio art memorial site, Soundloops.
- Listening to the sounds of the Nazi era and the English-language broadcasters who broadcast to the US. Discussing propaganda techniques in radio.

Reading:
Gombrich, E.H. Ideals and Idols. Essays on Values in History and in Art.
Zimmermann, Clemens. “From Propaganda to Modernization: Media Policy and Media Audiences under National Socialism.”

Week 3 Assignment:
Class feature. Students will create one feature together. After a class of brainstorming, research and planning, students will go out to record the different elements in groups - and take photos. Each group will then log their interviews and bring them back to class to script, edit and voice together.

Class: 3.3
**Week 4**

Class: 4.1

- Final story idea pitching to KCRW Berlin editors.
- Learning about the essentials of a good radio feature. What works? What makes a good listen?

Listening:


https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/579/my-damn-mind

Class: 4.2

- Researching, planning and first recordings for the final feature.
- Learning about the vital role of radio and music in the post-war era and as a weapon in the cold war.

Feature ideas will be presented and discussed at a pitching session with an KCRW Berlin editor in week 4.

Reading:


**Assignment**

Outline for Final Project/Pitch

**Week 5**

Class: 5.1

- Learning how to write for radio and how to structure interviews and recorded material.
- Recording, logging and scripting your final features.

Class: 5.2

- The incredible re-birth of radio in figures. Who listens to radio, how, when and where?

Reading:


Class: 5.3

Site Visit to ARD, German public broadcaster.

**Exam**

**Week 6**

Class: 6.1

- Recording, structuring and editing final projects.
- Learning about voice and experimenting with narration techniques.
- Hands-on workshop to address any technical challenges in the final projects

Class: 6.2

- Presenting final projects to a panel of KCRW Berlin editors.

Reading:
Course Materials

Readings


Chignell, Hugh. Key Concepts in Radio Studies (Sage, 2009)


Gombrich, E.H. Ideals and Idols. Essays on Values in History and in Art (Phaidon, 1979)


Ross, Corey. Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany (Palgrave, 2011)
