

Opinion Podcast Assignment

Introduction:

In the previous assignment, the Podcast Analysis, you considered what makes effective communication, exploring one podcast episode in detail to identify techniques to engage your audience. In this assignment, you will be applying those techniques to your own communication. **You will create your own 8-10 minute podcast in which you put forth an *argument* on a topic of your choice.**

Your episode should include three segments: an introduction, a central section that contains at least one interview, and a wrap up. When you upload your podcast, you should also upload a Works Cited in Word that includes any sources that you used for information as well as any music or other sound material that you did not develop yourself.

Purpose:

The goal of this assignment is to help you develop a persuasive argument, consider what evidence might sway your audience most effectively, and apply the techniques that you found to be successful in the podcast that you analyzed (while avoiding the ones you found less successful). For example, do you want to use humor to address a potentially tense issue? Give brief anecdotes to bring your points to life? And so on. Every academic discipline requires the development of an effective argument, not to mention the many times that we use persuasion in day-to-day life, and so these are skills that will be useful to you whatever path you may take. I also hope that you will enjoy the production of the podcast itself as a creative outlet for your ideas.

Deadlines:

- The **rough draft** of your podcast is due by **8 PM** the night before **Class Day 1**, to be submitted on Sakai. The structure of peer editing will be different for this assignment, since it would be difficult to listen to the episodes in class. You will listen to the podcasts of your workshop group by class time on **Class Day 1**, and you will workshop your podcast in class that Friday.
- On **Class Day 2**, I will give you individual feedback, and we will discuss general patterns and issues.
- The final version of your podcast, along with a revision reflection, is due on Sakai on **Class Day 3**.

Writing Process:

Step 1: Picking your topic

Your first task is to identify a topic. For example, you might decide to focus on whether college athletes should be paid, or the issue of climate change. You may respond to one of the podcasts that we have listened to or one of the articles that we have read, but that is not required. Try to choose a topic that is important to you - remember that if you are interested in your topic, it is much more likely that your audience will be, too. Keep in mind, too, that your peers will be

listening to your podcast. While you are welcome to choose topics that others might disagree with, please address opposing views in a respectful manner and avoid hurtful or inflammatory language.

Step 2: Developing your argument

Next, you need to come up with a **thesis**, an argument that you are making about your topic that reasonable people could disagree with. Your argument should be specific enough that you can explore it in a 10-minute podcast. For example, you might argue that college athletes should be paid because they bring prestige to the university, or that climate change is the single greatest threat to biodiversity.

Step 3: Gathering evidence

Your evidence might come in the form of statistics, anecdotes, and analogies, but you should **include at least one interview**. This could be an interview with an expert, or with someone affected by this issue, or even someone who has the opposing view, as long as you treat their viewpoint (and them) with respect. For example, if you are writing about college athletes, you could interview athletes at Duke. If you are writing about climate change and biodiversity, you could track down a biology professor who works on this topic. We will discuss techniques for conducting an ethical interview, but please make certain that your interviewees understand that they are being recorded and have given consent. Interviews are easier to record than you might think - most laptops and smart phones have recording capability. For a more professional sound, you can borrow mics and other recording equipment from [Duke Link](#).

Step 4: Planning your podcast

Once you have gathered evidence, you should plan out your podcast, identifying the order and amount of time you would like to devote to each element, as well as any background music, sound effects, and interviews, etc. that you would like to include. We will work on storyboards together, and remember to consult the planning guides that we discussed in class. We will also work together on drafting the narration for your podcast – the script for what you will say as a frame for your material. As you work through these steps, think about the aspects of the episodes that we have listened to that worked well to engage the audience, as well as any issues that detracted from those episodes.

Step 5: Recording and editing your podcast

If you have a Mac, you should already have the application GarageBand, which you can use to create your podcast. [Here](#) is a link to a video tutorial on creating a podcast with GarageBand. If you have a PC, you can download Audacity, a free application. [Here](#) is a text guide for creating a podcast with Audacity, and [here](#) is a video tutorial for Audacity. You can find more tutorials for either program through YouTube or through Google Searches. Additionally, as a Duke student, you have access to online training through [Lynda](#) for many programs, GarageBand and Audacity included. Finally, the [Multimedia Project Studio](#), located in Room 006 in Bostock Library, is a wonderful space where you can access high-end editing software and ask trained consultants questions about GarageBand, Audacity, or other applications.

You are welcome to use material from other sources – news, other podcasts, movies, etc., as long as you cite them. Technically, you should be able to use any of these materials as long as it is for

academic purposes (rather than financial gain), but if you are interested in finding music that is available for public use, try searching on Google for “royalty free music.”

Grading:

Please see the attached rubric for grading. I will be considering the content of your podcast – the strength of the argument that you are making and the evidence that you include, but also your delivery and the production of your podcast – transitions between segments, quality of audio, engaging presentation, etc. That said, I do not expect you to become experts at podcast creation within the weeks that we are working on this assignment, and I will certainly allow for some roughness in your episodes.

To conclude:

Have fun! I hope that you develop a deeper understanding of the topic of your choosing, but also that you get creative with your podcast. I look forward to hearing them, and I’m sure your peers are looking forward to hearing them, too!