

Week 3: July 4th Celebrations

Everything is due July 10th by 11:59.

Some of you have gotten a lot of things up and running and fixed by using the Digital Knowledge Center. The University of Mary Washington's Digital Knowledge Center provides peer tutoring to all University students on digital projects and assignments. Students can schedule 50 minute, one-one-one tutorials with a trained peer tutor on any DS106 related projects. Click [Here to set up an appointment](#).

Introduction to Audio

This week in ds106 we're going to be diving into our first storytelling genre: audio. Working with sound can be a bit daunting and unfamiliar, so we'll be easing you into it this week. Nearly all previous ds106 students start here dreading this media, and in a few weeks they totally change their mind.

We'll ask you to do some listening exercises as well as do some audio story editing.

PART I: About Audio Storytelling

Look, Listen and Watch below. Pay attention and keep track of the "nugget" that grabs your attention- and **write a blog post summarizing what you learned about how these experts describe their craft**. Come back to these later when you review some audio shows I recommend listening to.

For many of you radio may seem like old technology, but there

is a lot of current powerful creativity done in a single media. Audio is most effective when sounds generate stories in the minds of listeners. You might be familiar with the panic caused in the late 1930s when [Orson Wells produced the radio show of H.G. Wells War of the Worlds](#)– it was so effective, people thought it was real. If you think we are much more savvy in the modern age, read about what happened when [producers of an Italian movie tried to play out a promotional video](#) as something like looked like a real news broadcast.

I'd like you to listen to some experts on audio storytelling describe a bit of how this is effective, probably no one has their game on for this than Ira Glass, host of [This American Life](#), a weekly radio storytelling show on National Public Radio.

Listen to least two parts of Ira Glass' Series on storytelling (all together they're about 20 minutes)

<http://youtu.be/loxJ3FtCJJA>

Find [Part Two](#); [Part Three](#); [Part Four](#).

For another point of view, listen to a short interview with [Radiolab](#)'s Jad Abumrad on "How Radio Creates Empathy":

or listen to his longer talk where he shares how he and his colleagues go about the process of creating radio shows.

[Jad Abumrad: Why "Gut Churn" Is an Essential Part of the Creative Process](#) from [99U](#) on [Vimeo](#).

PART II: Introduction to Audio Techniques

Some things to notice when listening to audio are the pacing (think of the equivalent of paragraphs in sound), the use of music, sound effects, ambient/environmental sounds, the introduction of radio “bumpers” to remind us of the show, introduction and exits. **Of key importance is trying to hear the layering of sounds, of how audio can create a sense of place by being more than just a recording, but a deliberate stacking of audio.**

For a great reference reference, you might listen to an episode of Howsound, the radio show that takes you behind the scenes to understand how these shows are produced- [Dissecting Joanne Rosser, Papermaker](#).

As another example, we took out elements of an hour long episode of RadioLab, [a 2007 show called Detective Stories](#), and uploaded a shorter version to Soundcloud, where the comments indicate how some of these are used in the show. See if you can pick these out in this example and then in other audio you listen to this unit.

Another technique that is counter-intuitive, is when sound is left out. Listen to this annotated clip, an intro to an episode of the [TED Radio Hour](#), for what happens near the 3 minute mark when the background music suddenly stops

Here are some references for audio techniques:

- [Radio Glossary](#)
- [What is Foley Sound?](#)
- [Video of foley artists at work on Prairie Home Companion](#)
- [The Wilhem Scream](#)

- [Howsound](#)
- [Transom](#)

View the story “[ds106 Tips for Audio Storytelling](#)” on Storify

And, if that is not enough, among the open participants of ds106 is [Scottlo](#), a guru of audio and radio technique. Scott was one of several ds106ers who gathered in the summer of 2013 in Kamloops, British Columbia for [SoundCamp](#), a one day hands on experience in learning audio recording and editing technique– check out the [SoundCamp site for audio resources and tutorials](#).

Also useful from Scottlo are archives from his daily series from the Summer ds106 Zone class of 2013, below are some selected episodes where he reviews audio and shares Audacity tips:

-  [Lo Down Episode 1](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 8](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 9](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 10](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 11](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 12](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 13](#)
 -  [Lo Down Episode 14](#)
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Part III: Listening to Stories



One of the best ways to understand how audio can be used to create stories is to *listen* to some great examples. We've assembled a list of audio stories for you.

Try to listen closely to at least one this unit and write up your reaction and thoughts about it.

Overall, how effective do you think audio was for telling the story(ies)? What types of audio techniques did the producers use – sound effects, layering of sounds, music, etc. – to convey their story? While we are interested in reading what you thought of the story being told – but we're just as interested in your reflection about *HOW* the story was told. Try and step back from the story itself, and reflect upon the technique that the storytelling/producers used. What choices did they make that impacted your understanding of and feelings about the story? What are the techniques from the references above that you may not have noticed before?

Pay very close attention to not only the stories told but how they are constructed in audio format. Take the time to focus on listening, not just in the background of being on your computer. Put the phone down, turn off the TV, tell the family to leave you alone. Just listen.

- [This American Life](#) "There's a theme to each episode, and a variety of stories on that theme. It's mostly true stories of everyday people, though not always." (Pick one to listen to)
 - [Episode 504: How I got Into College](#)
 - [Episode 503: I was Just Trying to Help](#)

- [Episode 494: Hit the Road](#)
- [Episode 484: Dopplegangers](#)
- [Episode 477: Getting Away With It](#)

OR

- [Radio Lab](#) “Radiolab is a show about curiosity. Where sound illuminates ideas, and the boundaries blur between science, philosophy, and human experience.” (Pick one to listen to)
 - [Drone it To Me](#)
 - [‘Why This Compulsion To Run Long Distances?’ A Runner’s Beautiful Confession](#)
 - [Is There A Giant Life Form Lurking In Our Solar System? Possibly, Say Scientists](#)
 - [Talking To Machines](#)
 - [Ghost Stories](#)

OR

- [The Truth](#) “Movies for your ears” (Listen to three of these, they are shorter)
 - [Falling](#)
 - [Fine Dining](#)
 - [It’s Going to Change Your Life](#)
 - [Third Party](#)
 - [The Modern Prometheus](#)
 - [The Death of Poe](#)

Part IV: Your First Audio Stories

Start your work on these assignments by reviewing [this list of audio resources](#) and/or the [Audio Section of the ds106 Handbook](#)

[section on Tools](#). You will find information here about software you can use to produce your own audio, as well as links to sites where you can download free clips, music, and sound effects.

We will not force you to use any software, but most highly recommend using **Audacity**, the opensource (free) audio editing software. Besides having many useful tools, a key features is its ability for multitrack editing, so you can layer your sounds. Some more tool references:

- Download Audacity, a free open source audio editing software <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>
- Download and install the plugin needed to save your Audacity sounds as mp3 files <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/faq?s=install&item=lame-mp3>
- Create an account on SoundCloud, a site used for audio Daily Creates <http://soundcloud.com> (if you have a smart phone, you may want to also get the SoundCloud app for recording audio). See also [Layering Sounds in Audacity](#)
- Create an account on Freesounds, a site for creative commons licensed sound effects <http://www.freesound.org/>

This week, we do want you to get your feet wet with creating **two audio assignments adding up to five stars**; these are the first ones you will do that come from the [ds106 Assignment Bank](#). Here are some popular ones.

- Create a [DS106 Radio Bumper](#). Once you've familiarized yourself with ds106 radio, try your hand at making your first radio "[bumper](#)" – a 10-30 second short audio that announces a radio station that is played between songs to remind listeners what they are tuned in to. (2 stars) This should be saved as an MP3 file, and then upload it to SoundCloud. Make sure in soundcloud that you enable to option to allow downloads (so we can add it to ds106 radio!) Your audio must be embedded in your

blog post summary of this assignment. You can embed soundcloud audio just like you have done for Youtube and flickr, put the plain text URL on its own line, and when you publish, WordPress will create a player to allow visitors to listen.

- Create a [sound effect story](#). This is a challenge to tell a short story (no longer than 60 seconds) using nothing but sound effects! Again, upload it to SoundCloud and make sure you embed your audio in your assignment post.2 (4.5 stars)

Share each of these contributions in separate posts on your blog, and tag them according to the instructions on their assignment page.

Part V: Weekly Summary

Your [weekly summary](#) is due by Sunday, July 10th by 11:59.. As always, link to or embed all of your work from the week. Use this as an opportunity to reflect upon your initial foray into audio. What did you struggle with? What ideas/exercises were most challenging or interesting?

Now we are moving into the main part of the course where the bulk of your work is writing up assignments, you are going to be expected to follow the [criteria](#) – just posting “here is my assignment” is not going to be enough to earn credit. There needs to be writing with your media, a story about the story.

This week’s checklist includes:

- **Summarize** the key points you learned about audio storytelling from the **Ira Glass and Jad Abumrad** videos.
- **Summary** of the **radio story** you listened to, making

special notes of the techniques used. Be sure to link to the show you listened to.

- **Summarize/link the Audio assignments**
- Summarize/link At least **4 Daily Creates**
- Summary of your **feedback from your Comments** and what you gained by looking at other people's blogs. You must make at least 5 comments on other people's blog, they must be different people. It must be construct feedback not this is great.
- At least a paragraph on **what you learned this week, what questions/complaints you have.**
- **Weekly Summary** Every week, you will be required to submit a summary post by the weekly deadline (generally due on Sundays at midnight). These posts should include links to or embedded media from all the work you have done for the week: storytelling assignments, daily creates, reflections etc. In addition, you should use this post to reflect upon your activity of the week:
 - How well do you feel you completed the requirements of the week's assignments?
 - What gave you trouble? What did you enjoy most? What did you learn?
 - What would you do differently? What questions to you have?
 - What are some of the larger issues surrounding your work? Cultural/Societal implications?

These weekly summaries are what we will use to find all of your weekly work as we determine your grade for that week. In addition, they are an opportunity for you tell us how you feel you are doing and what's giving you trouble, overall, in the course. If you forget to include something in a weekly post, I may not realize you've completed it. If you fail to submit a weekly summary, you will get no grade for that week! ***By the way proper English and good writing are required!***

These posts are REALLY important. I use them to grade you

every week, so you need to link to other posts you've written, embed media you've created, and narrate the process of learning that you went through this week. What did you learn? What was harder than you thought it would be? What was easier? What drove you crazy? Why? What did you really enjoy? Why? **Final Note: you MUST submit the link to this weekly post in Canvas by midnight on Sunday. NO EXCEPTIONS. NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED.**