



Major Course Assignment

English 101, Project 1:
Academic Journey Podcast

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Assignment Rationale

INSPIRATION

In the summer of 2020, I worked with the Alliance for Refugee Youth Support and Education (ARYSE), a Pittsburgh-based NGO, to facilitate English language and creative expression lessons. During my work there, I connected ARYSE with Youth UnMuted, an international NGO dedicated to amplifying the voices of refugee youth. Together, we led linguistically diverse newcomer teens through a series of creative prompts, culminating in a letter to their future selves that they read and recorded for inclusion in YU's "Now You Hear Us" podcast. I developed this assignment stemming from my commitment to amplifying refugee and immigrant voices in higher educational institutions, and my interest in drawing upon multimodal forms for rhetorical learning.

SCAFFOLDING & SUPPORT

Starting with the "Now You Hear Us" podcast as the core text of this assignment, I sought to better scaffold the three core components of the assignment: personal narrative writing, genre analysis, and podcast recording. I am grateful to one of my mentors, Dr. Matt Vetter, for helping me think through the support students would need around multimodal composing, accessing open license media, and the technical skills of podcasting, and for suggesting the *Writing Spaces* and #WhyIWrite Podcast sources that became core to this assignment.

ADAPTATION

This project was conceived of as the first major assignment of an English 101 course, but it would also be effective as a late-semester adaptation of a research paper in an English 202 course. I have also expanded this assignment in a three-assignment sequence in an English 101 course, where there are 4-5 weeks devoted to each component: Personal Narrative, Rhetorical Analysis, and Final Podcast Project. This assignment brings up rich rhetorical questions appropriate not only at the introductory level, but also in more advanced writing courses, perhaps especially (although not exclusively) in a public writing and/or multimodal rhetoric course or module at any level.



ENGL 101
Fall 2021

Project 1: Academic Journey Podcast



Figure 1: "Roscoe Considers Recording a Podcast" by zoomar is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Professor Heise
IUP

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

So far as a class, we have begun to discuss our language, learning, and writing journeys. This assignment asks you to share a “Who I Am” story about your academic journey and goals in the form of a short podcast. Over the next few weeks, we will brainstorm topics, draft podcast scripts, and record the podcasts. By the end of this sequence, you will analyze podcasts as multimodal “texts,” learn about the genre of podcasts, and write and record a short podcast episode of your own.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1: For class, you will listen to the Now You Hear Us podcast, and consider how the narratives in this podcast could be considered “Who I Am” stories, from the Ramsdell piece last week. We will begin our own “Who I Am” stories in the context of academic hopes and dreams. After a series of in-class writing exercises, you will pick a story to share in your podcast episode, and draft a project proposal for next week.

Class 2: Based on the Deedy podcast excerpt & Buzzsprout Podcast Guide due this week, we will discuss podcasts as a form or genre: What are their strengths and limitations? What

are their purposes, their audiences? We will workshop each other’s proposals with these questions in mind, in order to help each other draft a podcast “script” for next week.

Class 3: In conversation with the Gagich reading for this week, we will workshop each other’s podcast scripts and go over tools for recording podcasts, like phone and web apps, software for editing podcasts, like audacity, and open access media sources, like Creative Commons. Using feedback from the workshop, revise your script and record your podcast for next week.

TIMELINE

9/7/21

Listen: NYHU podcast

In-class: Writing exercises

9/14/21

Due: Podcast proposal

Listen: Buzzsprout & Deedy podcast excerpts

In-class: Podcast genre analysis & proposal workshop

9/21/21

Due: Podcast Script

Read: Gagich

In-class: Practice podcasting tools & workshop scripts

9/28/21

Due: Podcast recording & reflection letter

In-class: Share podcasts & debrief together

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Based on our in-class writing exercise on our academic journeys, hopes, and dreams, choose one of your “Who I Am” stories to transform into a short podcast episode. Draft a **proposal** that states the narrative you want to share, and any ideas you have for turning it into a podcast. No length limit.

DUE: 9/14

After our proposal workshop and class discussion, draft a **2-3 page script** for a 5-10 minute podcast excerpt. Note any cues for visuals or music that you will add in later. You may also share any challenges or questions that have arisen thus far.

DUE: 9/21

Drawing upon the peer workshops and instructor feedback, use the tools we went over in class (or others that you are familiar with) to record and edit your podcast. With your **5-10 minute podcast recording**, submit a **1-page reflection letter** that states your imagined audience, your purpose in communicating with this audience, and why you chose to do an audio-only or video podcast. You may also explain any challenges or success you had along the way, and what your overall thought process was.

DUE: 9/28

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

In line with our labor-based grading contract, credit for this assignment will be based on the following completion requirements:

- Podcast proposal is completed on time
- Podcast script is at least two pages and completed on time.
- Podcast recording is completed on time, and is at least five minutes, with an accompanying reflection letter addressing final choices regarding audience, purpose, and form

Qualitative feedback from myself and peers will be focused on:

- Audience: (How) does the podcast address the audience targeted in the reflection letter?
- Purpose: (How) does the podcast achieve the desired purpose, as stated in the reflection letter?
- Form: (How) does the form of the podcast (audio, video, etc.) align with the composer's purpose and intended audience, as stated in the reflection letter?
- Impact: As an audience, what thoughts, feelings, or other responses does this podcast evoke for us? (How) do these align with the composer's intended purpose and choices around form & audience?
- Process: (How) has the composer responded to peer and instructor feedback from the script draft to the finished recording? (How) do their decisions help further their purpose for communicating with an imagined audience?

RESOURCES

The following resources may be helpful for you to return to while you work on this project:

- [Storytelling, Narration, and the “Who I Am” Story, Catherine Ramsdell](#) (read for 8/31 class)
- [Now You Hear Us podcast, episode 2](#) (listened for class 9/7)
- [#Why I Write Podcast, episode 11 – Carmen Agra Deedy](#) (listened through 18:00 for 9/14 class)
- [Buzzsprout “How to Make a Podcast” Guide](#) (read through Step 1 and watched first video for 9/14 class)
- [An Introduction to and Strategies for Multimodal Composing, Melanie Gagich](#) (read for 9/21 class)



LEARNING GOALS:

1. Reflect on your learning journey and academic goals
2. Write a “Who I Am” story script with a particular audience and purpose in mind
3. Analyze podcasts as multimodal “texts,” and learn about the podcast genre
4. Use digital and analog tools to create a short podcast episode