

POLS 110, Fall 2016

US Federal Government and Politics

Podcast Assignment

Learning Objectives and Background

Podcasts are an increasingly common and shared way that people talk about, listen to, and think about American politics. In order to connect this phenomenon to your study of US Federal Government and Politics this semester, your final assignment is to create a 12-20 minute podcast on a current issue in national, state, or local politics.

Objectives for the podcast assignment:

- Connect course material and ideas to a contemporary political issue
- Explore multiple modes of analytically and creatively engaging American government and politics
- In the spirit of Beloit College's commitment to the liberal arts *in practice*, participate in the (audio) public sphere of American politics
- Learn audio recording and editing skills that may be useful beyond the classroom and College

General Guidelines for Your Podcast

You will analyze a topic of national, state, or local political relevance and connect that topic to what we've learned in this class. You will bring the ideas, skills, and modes of thinking and analysis developed in class to the political world around us.

One of the great aspects of podcasting today is the variety of forms that podcasting may take. Thus, I am open as to the general format and style of the podcast you produce. As you will observe in the podcasts we listen to for class and in the podcasts that I linked to on Moodle, there are many ways to discuss politics in the podcast form: interview, storytelling, investigative reporting, discussion, debate, analysis, research, informational, and more. Please feel free to focus on any one of these styles, or mix and match them as you see fit. Consider how the style(s) you work in fit with the topic and your approach to the topic.

There will be several intermediary assignments throughout the semester designed for you to familiarize yourself with techniques of audio recording and for me to provide feedback at different stages of your project.

Requirements for Podcast

- Length: single person, 12 minutes; pair, 15 minutes; group of three, 20 minutes
- Content:
 - Talk to and include clips from at least three separate people from the Beloit community (students, faculty, staff) who are not people in this class weighing in on the topic

- Include at least three sound effects and/or music clips (see <https://sites.google.com/a/beloit.edu/classroom-media/home/digital-storytelling/finding-media> for links)
- Include one or two 15-30 second clips of a piece of spoken audio media (speech, interview, Congressional testimony, debate, etc.)
- Include references to at least two readings from the class
- Introduce yourself/yourselves within the first minute of the podcast
- Requirements for Pairs/Groups
 - Each person in the group should have approximately equal amount of speaking time
 - Each person in the group will individually submit a 150-200 word overview of their specific contributions to the project

Key Dates and in-progress assignments

- Oct. 7: Audio Essay (essay II) due
- Oct. 19: Let me know if you plan to work individually, in a pair, in a group of 3, or will choose the research paper assignment (see syllabus)
- Oct. 26: Submit topic overview of approx. 150 words to Moodle by end of day
- Nov. 11: Submit outline for your podcast to Moodle by end of day
- Nov. 28-Dec. 2: In-class 'pitch' meetings – 2-3 minute presentations to the class on why you chose the topic and why it's important
- **Dec. 12, 10pm: podcasts due to Moodle**
 - Submit BOTH an audio file and a 100-150 word description

Grading

Near the end of the semester, we will collectively develop a rubric for me to use in grading your assignments. This will provide us the opportunity to consider what is most important in thinking about and evaluating your podcasts and for there to be clear and transparent expectations as you create your podcasts.

Posting your Podcasts

After grades have been submitted for the semester, I will create a website where I will post all the episodes, with the descriptions you submitted along with the audio. At this time, I will also upload the podcasts to an iTunes channel I create for the class. This way, you can show off your podcasts!