

Podcasting

Semester: Spring 2026

Course Number: COMM 3313

Location: CAB 320F Tuesday 4-6:45 pm

Instructor: Donna Pazdera

Office: 320E CAB

Office Hours: M 3:20-4pm; T 2-3:45 pm and by appointment

Email: dpazdera@tamusa.edu (please do not use Blackboard email because I don't get notifications.)

Phone: 956-566-2823 (cell)

Course Description

This 16-week intensive course provides a comprehensive introduction to the art and craft of podcasting. Students will learn the fundamental principles of audio storytelling, from conceptualization and scriptwriting to recording, editing, and distribution. The first half of the course will focus on the nuances of interview-style podcasting, covering effective questioning, conversational flow, and multi-track recording. The second half will transition to narrative-style podcasting, exploring advanced storytelling structures, sound design, and immersive audio techniques. Through hands-on projects, critical listening, and collaborative exercises, students will develop the technical skills and creative sensibilities necessary to produce compelling audio narratives. The course will also cover the history of podcasting, current industry trends, and ethical considerations in audio production. By the end of the course, each student will have produced a short, original podcast episode.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the Podcasting Landscape: Identify and describe the history, evolution, and current trends within the podcasting industry, including various genres, formats, and influential podcasts.
2. Develop Compelling Audio Narratives: Apply principles of effective storytelling to audio, including developing engaging concepts, structuring narratives for both interview and narrative formats, writing for the ear, and crafting compelling interview questions.
3. Master Audio Recording Techniques: Demonstrate proficiency in using various types of microphones (dynamic, condenser, lavalier) and recording equipment, understanding optimal recording environments, and capturing high-quality audio both in studio and in the field for single and multiple speakers.
4. Utilize Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs): Navigate and effectively use a chosen Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) for importing, editing, mixing, and exporting audio files, including basic functions like cutting, trimming, fading, and noise reduction.
5. Implement Sound Design Principles: Integrate music, sound effects, and ambient audio to enhance storytelling, evoke mood, and improve the overall listener experience, while understanding principles of audio mixing and mastering.
6. Navigate Legal and Ethical Considerations: Identify and apply ethical guidelines and legal considerations pertinent to podcasting, including copyright, fair use, intellectual property, consent for interviews, and responsible content creation.
7. Distribute and Promote a Podcast: Understand the technical requirements for podcast distribution (e.g., RSS feeds, hosting platforms) and develop basic strategies for promoting a podcast to a target audience.
8. Critique and Analyze Podcasts: Critically listen to and evaluate existing podcasts, articulating strengths and weaknesses in terms of content, audio quality, storytelling, and overall production value.
9. Produce an Original Podcast Episode: Plan, record, edit, and produce a complete, short-form original podcast episode (narrative-style) that demonstrates mastery of the course's technical and creative principles.

Course Schedule (16 Weeks)

Weeks 1 and 2 Introduction to Podcasting & Audio Fundamentals

- What is a podcast? History, evolution, and current trends.
- Exploring different podcast genres and formats (narrative, interview, conversational, documentary).
- Introduction to basic audio concepts: frequency, amplitude, decibels.
- Understanding microphones: types, polar patterns, and applications.

- Assignment: Podcast listening journal (start), identify potential podcast topics.

Weeks 3 and 4 : Interview Podcasting: Content & Structure

- Deep dive into various interview formats (one-on-one, panel, Q&A).
- Developing interview concepts, research, and pre-interviewing strategies.
- Crafting effective interview questions: open-ended, follow-up, challenging.
- Active listening, guiding the conversation, and managing flow.
- Ethical considerations in interviewing (consent, privacy, sensitive topics).
- Assignment: Interview podcast concept pitch, detailed interview question set.

Weeks 5 and 6 : Recording Interviews & Field Production

- Microphone placement techniques specifically for interviews (single and multiple speakers).
- Remote interviewing tools and best practices (e.g., online recording platforms).
- Portable recording equipment and best practices for field interviews.
- Assignment: Conduct and record a short (3-5 minute) interview segment.

Weeks 7 and 8 (spring break): Editing Interview Podcasts & Mid-Term Project

- Editing interview audio: removing filler words, pauses, cross-talk, and managing tangents.
- Structuring interview episodes: effective intros, outros, segmenting, transitions.
- Basic mixing for interviews (balancing speaker levels, adding music beds).
- Mid-Term Audio Project (20%): Submit a 2-3 minute edited interview segment, demonstrating recording and basic editing skills.

Weeks 9 and 10 Narrative Podcasting: Advanced Storytelling for Audio

- Transitioning from interview to narrative: The unique demands of narrative audio.
- Advanced narrative structures: arcs, character development through sound, conflict, resolution.
- Scriptwriting for narrative audio: crafting compelling voiceover, dialogue, and sound cues.
- Assignment: Narrative podcast concept & detailed outline for final project.

Weeks 11-12: Advanced Sound Design & Mixing for Narrative

- The strategic role of music in narrative: licensing, mood, transitions, emotional impact.
- Integrating sound effects to build atmosphere, advance plot, and evoke emotion.

- Assignment: Develop a sound design plan and create a short (1-2 minute) narrative audio segment with layered sound.

Weeks 13 and 14: Legal, Ethical, Distribution & Promotion

- Copyright and fair use in audio: music, clips, samples (revisited for narrative context).
- Ethical considerations: accuracy, bias, privacy, sensitive topics, responsible representation.
- Understanding RSS feeds and podcast hosting platforms.
- Uploading, publishing, and submitting to directories (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts).
- Marketing and promotion strategies: social media, cross-promotion, website, analytics.
- Assignment: Create podcast artwork, set up a hosting account (free tier).

Weeks 15 and 16: Final Project Presentations & Future of Podcasting

- Student presentations of final narrative podcast episodes.
- Critique and feedback session.
- Discussion: Emerging trends, new technologies, and the future of audio.
- Career paths in podcasting and audio production.
- Assignment: Submit final podcast episode and peer critique.

Assessment

- Participation & Engagement (15%): Active participation in class discussions, critical listening exercises, and constructive feedback during peer critiques.
- Weekly Assignments (30%): Short audio exercises, script drafts, interview questions, sound design experiments, and other practical tasks designed to build skills incrementally.
- Mid-Term Audio Project (20%): A short (2-3 minute) edited interview segment, demonstrating initial mastery of recording and basic editing techniques for conversational audio.
- Final Podcast Project (30%): A complete, original narrative-style podcast episode (5-7 minutes in length) showcasing all learned skills from concept to final mix and distribution readiness.
- Podcast Critique/Analysis (5%): A written or audio analysis of a professional podcast, applying critical listening skills learned in class.

Required Materials

- SD card and four AA batteries: for the Zoom recorders.
- Headphones: Over-ear, closed-back headphones are highly recommended for accurate audio monitoring. (The classroom work stations have headphones.)
- Computer Access: A personal computer (laptop or desktop) with sufficient processing power and storage for audio editing software.
- Microphone: While the instructor will provide some equipment for in-class use, students are encouraged to acquire a personal USB microphone (e.g., Blue Yeti, Rode NT-USB Mini) for out-of-class recording. ***this is suggested but not mandatory
- Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) Software:
The university provides Adobe Audition.

Course Policies

- Attendance: Regular attendance is crucial for hands-on learning and participation. Students are responsible for all material covered and announcements made in class, regardless of attendance.
- Late Work: Assignments are due on the date specified. Late submissions will be penalized [e.g., 10% per day] unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor due to extenuating circumstances.
- Academic Integrity: All work submitted must be original and adhere to the university's academic integrity policies. Plagiarism, including unauthorized use of copyrighted audio, will result in severe penalties. Absolutely no AI!
- Disability Services: Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the university's Disability Services office and the instructor as early as possible.
- Classroom Conduct: Respectful and constructive engagement is expected from all students. This includes active listening, providing thoughtful feedback, and maintaining a positive learning environment.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodations with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

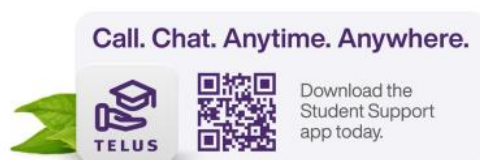
While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

Counseling/Mental Health Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.* The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit:

<https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found [here](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC)

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The Writing Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#). The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a [CARE report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students

Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources. Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in

classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments,

activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

NOTE: Guidance for how to cite AI-generators, like ChatGPT, can be found here

<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Important Spring 2026 Dates

Dates	Event
January 13	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. – No Classes
January 20	First day of class
February 4	Census date
February 23-March 6	Midterm grading period
March 9-March 14	Spring Break
April 3	Study Day – No classes
April 17	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
May 1	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
May 4	Last day of classes
May 5	Study Day – No classes
May 6-May 12	Final exams
May 19	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online