**COURSE INFORMATION**

Location: TLC 1109  
Day/Time: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:40 p.m.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor: Dr. Shannon Finck  
Office: TLC 114-D  
Contact: sfinck@westga.edu  
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 11AM-12PM; Monday, 2PM-5PM; & by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this class, students will explore a variety of popular, free podcasts in different genres, from true crime to voice play, and become familiar with the software and web-based tools available to produce their own podcast episodes. Each week, the class will meet for a 1-hour listening and discussion session, where we consider the form and content of an episode or two from a podcast series (i.e. Serial, This American Life, The Black Tapes, or My Favorite Murder), and a 1-hour "tools & tips" tutorial on podcasting technologies. The final product of the course will be a multi-episode podcast "season," collaboratively written, recorded, and produced by students working in pairs to create each episode. Assignments in the course will be scaffolded to help students through each stage of the process. The content and overall form of the podcast will be student directed.

XIDS 2002 is a course designed to help students get excited about learning at West Georgia. In addition, it is our hope that this course helps you succeed academically as well as personally and socially during this semester and beyond. The fundamental focus of the class is to provide an understanding of the basic structure of critical thinking and of academic disciplines in order to increase learning in the university classroom. Students are required to attend class and to interact with their instructors and classmates. While students must take responsibility for their own learning, the course supports that responsibility by making the class a learning community within the University.
**LEARNING OUTCOMES**
As a result of participating in this course, students should be able to:

1. adapt written and oral communication to specific rhetorical purposes and audiences.
2. recognize and begin to implement the skills necessary to become life-long, active learners through the exploration of an academic topic that focuses on a contemporary and/or enduring question or problem.
3. identify, evaluate, and use information, language, and technology appropriate to a specific purpose.

**REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS**
This is the textbook we’ll be using to study podcasts and how they are made:


We’ll be considering this longform, or serial, podcast at length:

*Serial: Season One* (Serial Productions, 2014) - [https://serialpodcast.org/season-one](https://serialpodcast.org/season-one)
We’ll also be tuning in to select episodes/clips of other podcasts to examine the range of the form, such as:

- Criminal - [https://thisiscriminal.com](https://thisiscriminal.com)
- This American Life - [https://www.thisamericanlife.org](https://www.thisamericanlife.org)
- My Favorite Murder - [https://www.myfavoritemurder.com](https://www.myfavoritemurder.com)
- The Fall Line - [https://www.thefalllinepodcast.com](https://www.thefalllinepodcast.com)
- The Black Tapes - [http://theblacktapespodcast.com](http://theblacktapespodcast.com)
- Everything is Alive - [https://www.everythingisalive.com](https://www.everythingisalive.com)
- Welcome to Night Vale - [http://www.welcometonightvale.com](http://www.welcometonightvale.com)
- Radiolab - [https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab](https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab)

Finally, you’ll want to download at least one of the following audio recording and editing tools:

- Anchor - [https://anchor.fm](https://anchor.fm)
- Audacity - [https://audacity.en.softonic.com/mac/download](https://audacity.en.softonic.com/mac/download)

**Expectations**

Assignments: In this class, there are three assignments, and they make up 75% of your grade:

1. a proposal or “pitch” for an original podcast episode – 1-2 pages, 20%
2. an episode script – 2-5 pages, 25%
3. a recorded podcast episode – 20 minutes of quality audio, 30%
Here’s the plan. As a class, we’ll come up with a theme or focus for a podcast. Then, in pairs, you will plan, write, record, and produce a single 20-minute episode of this podcast, to be unveiled in its final form at our end-of-semester listening party. Some of this collaborative work will be conducted in class, but you’ll also need to make some time throughout the semester to get together with your partner to work on this project. Specific assignment sheets and grading rubrics will be distributed closer to the due dates of each of these assignments.

The other 25% percent of your grade comes from your engagement in the class. That includes listening attentively to the podcast episodes we’ll be discussing each week, reading the assigned chapters in the text, taking notes both on what you read and what you hear, attending class on a weekly basis, completing the required labs*, and contributing to class conversations and activities. This is a significant portion of your overall grade, and it’s easy to get an A, but that will depend entirely on what you’re willing to contribute to the class community.

*The First-Year Seminar Lab opportunities will be posted in Course Den within a course called “XIDS 2002 Lab.”

Policies

Etiquette: Students may be dismissed from any class meeting at which they exhibit behavior that threatens or disrupts the learning environment of others or is deemed disrespectful to other students, the professor, or the learning process. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Arriving excessively late for class—if you find you are more that 15 minutes late for class, do not come. You will not be given credit for attendance.
- Persistent use of portable electronic devices for purposes unrelated to course content—if you need to send a text here or there, that’s fine, and on occasion, I might even ask you to use phones, laptops, or tablets to look something up or complete an assignment, but if you are paying more attention to social media, work for other courses, email, etc. than what is going on in this class, you will not be given credit for attendance.
- Inappropriate behavior—racist, sexist, classist, xenophobic, homophobic, or transphobic comments or slurs, threats of violence, sexual harassment, or other forms of abuse have no place in an academic setting. These behaviors will not be tolerated.
- Lack of preparedness—if you arrive in class without the day’s assigned text(s) or means by which to take notes or complete in-class assignments, or if you are found sleeping in class, you will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

You may feel free to eat or drink, to use the restroom without asking, to respond in conversation without raising your hand as long as you are speaking in turn, to share materials with others, to bring infants and children occasionally if need be, to raise questions, to share your own knowledge, and to contribute suggestions for course discussions or activities.

Communication: University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The purpose of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check their email. Though I will often communicate with you about course content and assignments using Course Den and welcome you to do the same, please email only from your UWG account to discuss final grades (because FERPA) or with time-sensitive questions or requests, as I am often likely to see this correspondence sooner. I may reply to your emails promptly, but please allow 24 hours for a response during the week (48 hours over the weekend)
before sending a follow-up email or message and plan accordingly. Remember that email is an opportunity to practice professional communication—always include a greeting and a closing with your name. Also, be sure to proofread for clarity, spelling, and grammar. Studies show that well-written, courteous emails are better received and more likely to lead to rapid and favorable replies than those that are hastily written or inappropriate in tone.

Honor Code: At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing. The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student’s conduct record at UWG. Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student’s account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook.

Credit Hour Policy: The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).
• CourseDen D2L Home Page
  https://westga.view.usg.edu/

• 24/7/365 D2L Help Center
  https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/

• University Bookstore
  http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/

• Common Language for Course Syllabi
  https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php

• UWG Cares
  http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/

• Center for Disability
  https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php

• Student Services
  http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php

• Center for Academic Success
  http://www.westga.edu/cas/

• Ingram Library Services
  http://www.westga.edu/library/

• Proctored Exams
  http://uwgonline.westga.edu/exams.php#student

• UWG Accessibility Statements for Technology
  https://docs.google.com/document/d/16Ri1XgaXiGx28ooOzRvYPraV3Aq3F5ZNJYbVDGVnEA/edit?ts=57b4c82d#heading=h.yrqeffvts1f

• University Writing Center
  https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/writing
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<tr>
<th>Class Period</th>
<th>Prepare</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 1/8</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>List to and discuss episode 1 of Criminal</td>
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<td>Tools &amp; Tips: The Focus Sentence &amp; Alex’s Formula—maybe Soren’s/Chana’s Sentence if time</td>
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<td>Tools &amp; Tips: The Unscripted Narrative/Radio Diaries, examples from Mortified and Everything is Alive</td>
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<td>Wednesday, 2/5</td>
<td>Read Chapter 3, “Keep or Kill: Story Structure,” in Out on the Wire.</td>
<td>Listen to and discuss Serial SE01:EP03, “Leakin Park.”</td>
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<td>Tools &amp; Tips: Collaborative Writing/Tracking, examples from My Favorite Murder and Radiolab</td>
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<td>Wednesday, 2/12</td>
<td>Binge episodes 4, 5, &amp; 6 of Serial, “Inconsistencies,” “Route Talk, and “The Case Against Adnan Syed.”</td>
<td>Post-game Serial at the halfway point.</td>
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<td>Select partners for podcast episodes and exchange contact information &amp; schedules.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, 2/19</td>
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<td>Ideas Meeting</td>
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<td>Discuss theme(s)/title for the class podcast.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, 2/26</td>
<td>Listen to episodes 7 &amp;8 of Serial.</td>
<td>Tools &amp; Tips: Scene and Signposting</td>
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<td>Wednesday, 3/11</td>
<td>Listen to episodes 9&amp;10 of Serial.</td>
<td>Pitch Workshop</td>
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<td>Pitches/Proposals Due Friday 3/13</td>
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<td>Wednesday, 3/18</td>
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<td>Spring Break – Class Does Not Meet</td>
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<td>Scripting Meeting/The “Braindump”</td>
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| Wednesday, 4/1 | Write your episode’s script as completely as you can; start planning, scheduling, and recording raw material, or “tape”—whatever can be organized or reorganized later. | **Script Workshop**
   |                                                              | **Scripts Due Friday 4/3**                       |
| Wednesday, 4/8  | Read Chapter 5, “Your Baby’s Ugly: The Edit,” in *Out on the Wire*.               | **Tools & Tips: Editing, examples from *The Fall Line*** |
| Wednesday, 4/15 | There is no reading or listening assignment for this week, but you should use this week to record and edit your podcast episode. If you plan to include interviews and you haven’t conducted them yet, early this week would be a good week to schedule them but remember to leave yourselves time to edit. | **Recording/Editing w/ your Partners**           |
| Wednesday, 4/22 | Submit the final version of your podcast episode to the Google Drive by 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday 4/29. This will be our final class meeting. | **Final Listening Party & Peer Review**
   |                                                              | **Episodes Due**                                |