

**COMRT 376: Meadville Youth Media
Podcasting Presentation**

SP16

As our research team embarks on developing our Meadville Youth Media podcast mini-series, it's important for us to understand podcasting as a media form that can communicate ideas through a variety of means. Podcasts are audible, but they can do different things with sound to various effects. Your job in this assignment is to work with a partner to analyze the formal elements of a particular podcast series and present this analysis to the class in an 8-minute presentation.

Analysis

You should choose three episodes of your podcast for an initial listen. Set aside undivided time to listen to the episodes, taking detailed notes on their content and the following questions:

- What does the series seem to be “about”?
- What are each of the episodes about? Who are their main subjects and what are their main themes?
- What is/are the connecting thread(s) between the episodes? That is, what makes this a series, rather than a group of stand-alone podcasts?
- Are there characters in the story? Who are they? How do you get to know the characters?
- Note any “stand out” moments that surprise you or move you in some way. Why did you have this particular reaction to these moments?

Next, with your partner, choose one episode for formal, detailed analysis. On your own, listen to that episode again, taking detailed notes on the following:

- What are the introductory sounds of the podcast?
- Is there a narrator? What are his/her roles throughout the episode? For example, does the narrator open the episode with a story? A question? A summary? Does the narrator introduce characters? How? When does the narrator summarize information? And how is information summarized? What is the narrator's tone/role? (i.e., does the narrator serve as an expert? A friendly interlocutor? Is the narrator situated alongside the audience, or is the narrator all-knowing?)
- How are interviews used in the episode? Is it organized around 1 interview, or are different interviews woven together? Do we hear the interviewer speak, as well? Does the narrative “trust” the interviewee or suspect him/her? How do you know?
- Is other information woven into the episode? In what way?
- What other sounds are used in the episode? When do you hear ambient/background noise? When and how are sound effects used? When and how is music used?
- How does the podcast unfold? Is it a linear narrative that moves through time? Is it organized around themes? Is there a traditional story arc?
- What felt particularly effective to you in this podcast, and why? What felt particularly ineffective to you, and why?

After you have listened to the series once on your own, and listened to one episode twice on your own, you should participate in a final listening session with your partner. Discuss what you're hearing, using the above questions as a guide, and develop one document that compiles your notes on the above questions.

Finally, take a look at the podcast's website. What elements does it include? And do they relate to or supplement the podcasts? Note surprising or effective elements on your shared document.

Save your compiled document in your Research Dossier in Google Drive.

Presentation

Your presentation should be informal but meticulously prepared. Your presentation should include the following:

- A general introduction to your podcast series.
- A discussion of 3-5 formal elements that you found particularly striking. Describe these elements and discuss their effects – what they communicate to the listener. Why are they effective or not effective and in what way? Why do you think the producer make these particular formal choices? How might we use these elements in our own podcasts?
- One clip (1-2 minutes at maximum) from the episode you analyzed. You should include this clip for specific discussion. Explain why you choose the clip and what you'd like us to listen for. What are the impacts of the formal elements in the clip?

A couple of notes:

- The more you listen, the more prepared you'll be for creating your own work.
- These presentations are designed for you to share ideas and begin thinking about your own podcasts. You can engage in conversation with your classmates during the presentations.
- Tell us what you really appreciate about your podcast and why. Tell us what surprised you and why.
- Consider the podcast as a unique media form – what must it do differently from, for example, television?