

History 200G: Audiohistory (Coming to Illinois)

Time & Location : 2-3:20 TR Room 205 Gregory Hall

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Office Hours: W 1-3, or by appointment, 444 Gregory Hall

Course Moodle Site: <https://courses.las.illinois.edu/>¹

Audiohistory@Illinois Website: <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/jwr/www/audiohistory/index.html>

Course Description

How can historians tell their stories through the spoken word, and sound? How can they speak to the new questions and the new audiences created by internet audio, and podcasting?

Until quite recently, too few historians (inside or outside academia) had access to the sort of studio equipment and distribution channels that make such questions worth pondering. But now all that is changing. Digital audio, desktop editing suites and the rise of the Internet have made the creation of audio explorations of the past easier than ever before. But how can historians learn to work in such media? What sort of opportunities, what sort of challenges, do they pose? Most basically: how can sound be added to history? Like all History 200s, this course will open with questions of method: what is good history, and how is it made? After the first few weeks, however, we will shift to consider the role of sound in both the making and retelling of history.

We will consider such questions as how to write for audio; how and whether to incorporate sound, archival or otherwise; the strengths and weaknesses of audio (as compared to text) for talking about history; and the hybrid kinds of history (textual, audio, visual) that might emerge in coming years. We will also consider the role of sound itself in human history. How have historians tried to imagine what the world sounded like in the past, and the role that hearing has played in shaping human history and memory?

The final part of the course will prepare students to create a final project, a short audio presentation on a topic built on a common theme: 'Coming to Illinois.' How have people arrived to this state—and more specifically to this University—in the past 200 years, and what can we learn about the past by studying this process? To prepare ourselves for thinking about these issues, we will read recent historical works about the history of transport and migration, the history of Illinois, and the history of our University. Students will be able to draw on archival materials – including archival sound – from our Library, the University Archives, WILL, and (of course) the Internet. You will also receive instruction on basic digital recording and editing; interview techniques and working with live subjects; and internet distribution and archiving of audio content.

Your final project will be an audio-presentation on our shared theme, 20-30 minutes in length. Students will be invited to archive their work through IDEALS, as well as to present it at the Ethnography of the University Initiative's student conference in November.

¹ This link will take you to a login page. Once logged in, if you are enrolled in this course, you should automatically have the option of going to the Moodle page. Please contact the instructors (see block above) should you have any questions.

Co-Sponsors of the Course

- The Ethnography of the University Initiative ([EUI](#))
- The Provost's Initiative on Teaching Advancement ([PITA](#))
- The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences ([LAS](#))
- [ATLAS](#) & ATLAS [Digital Media](#)
- Center for Teaching Excellence ([CTE](#))

Course Materials

1. Books

The following books have been ordered for this class, and should be available for purchase in the bookstores.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, The Craft of Research, Third Edition, 3rd ed. (University Of Chicago Press, 2008).

William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (W. W. Norton & Company, 1992).

Michael Geoghegan and Dan Klass, Podcast Solutions: The Complete Guide to Audio and Video Podcasting, 2nd ed. (New York: Friends of Designer to Designer, 2007).

Wolfgang Schivelbusch, The Railway Journey : The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century (Berkeley Calif.: University of California Press, 1986).

All of these books will also be on reserve for our course in the Undergraduate Library. If you are worried about cost and would like used editions, most of these books are available used online as well. Earlier editions of them are fine.

2. Software

The following free software applications will be used in this course. If you have access to a computer, please visit the following websites, download, and install these applications:

Audacity (A free sound editing tool): <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Zotero (An internet-based bibliographical tool that runs inside of the Internet browser Mozilla Firefox; if you don't have Firefox, then download and install that as well): <http://www.zotero.org/>

Firefox (See above: for use with Zotero, for normal browsing and downloading any browser will do): www.mozilla.com/firefox/

In both cases advanced, or 'beta,' versions may be available, and if you're feeling adventurous, try them. That said, the old versions will work fine for our purpose as well.

Please also make sure the computer you'll be working with has an audio playback software package installed (e.g. iTunes, Windows Media, etc. – anything that will play audio files on demand). These are generally also available for free.

3. Hardware (Recommended)

The following pieces of hardware are useful for your work in this class. My hope is that by pooling together what we already have and / or can cheaply acquire, we will be able to do our work without additional expense. Please contact the instructors as soon as possible should you foresee any problems.

Computer: The most essential thing: desktop or laptop with operational sound card, of a relatively recent vintage.

Headphones or Speakers to connect to said laptop, to listen to course materials and digital audio.

Digital Recording Device or Microphone: Anything that will record a digital file (preferably in .wav or other high-quality format), or (alternatively) will provide an audio feed to your computer when plugged in. For a list of suggested devices, see end of this syllabus. For the early assignments, the internal mic on your computer may work fine, but for week 3 and later, please try to have acquired or gained access to a better microphone.

.mp3 Player: An I Pod or equivalent device will no doubt handy, although it is not absolutely necessary (because you can always listen through your computer).

Course Requirements

- Faithful attendance, reading, and constant participation in class discussions.
- A commitment to doing the work it takes to pioneer a new field.
- A willingness to help other students, not least by sharing know-how and equipment.
- Promptness in submission of assignments and in listening to work distributed by others.

Course Assignments

Assembling Audiohistory requires us to master several skills at once while we conduct research. As a result, I've broken the project down into a bunch of steps, rather than simply dumping a big general assignment on you. Although the list that follows may seem daunting, most of the work is shorter pieces that should not take a great deal of time. Instructions for these assignments will be given through the Moodle (where you do not already have them).

- Participation **15%**
- Two Short Audio Assignments: **5%** (Assignment One, Required; Assignment Two, 5%)
- Discussion Group Session **5%**
- Final Project **75%**, consisting of:
 - Two Short (1-2 page) Written Assignments: 10% (Assignment Three, 5%, Assignment Four, 5%)
 - Audio Project Proposal 10%
 - Small Group Segment Plan 10%
 - Source Discussion 5%
 - Group Storyboard 10%
 - Bibliographical Assignment 5%
 - Draft 10%
 - Final Copy 15%
 - Archiving these Steps in Moodle (Required)²
- Extra Credit Assignment: Presentation of Poster on Your Work at EUI Student Conference, November 30th (more details to follow).
- Extra Credit Assignment: Participation in creation of Audiohistory@Illinois Website (more details to follow).

Audio assignments will be submitted through Podcast Producer: see description of this process at the end of this syllabus, under FAQ.

² Please note: this is a step-by-step process that I will explain later. You will be archiving this material in a database; at the end of the course, should you so desire, it will be possible to turn the material over to the EUI for permanent archiving as a record of your research process. That latter step, however, is entirely voluntary.

Guidelines for Written Work

Although much of the work for this course will be in audio format (about which see the relevant guidelines provided in this syllabus), some will be written. Unless otherwise instructed, please prepare these written assignments according to the following guidelines. **A 1/3 grade penalty will be assigned to work that fails to match the specified formatting standards (thus B's will become B-'s, etc.)**

Format:

- **All written work should be typed (word-processed), double-spaced, 12 pt. font. Please put your name at the top, and number all pages.**
- **References to sources of interpretation, fact, and evidence should always be duly noted, with footnotes.**
- Footnotes should be formatted as follows:
 1. References to course texts should consist of the author or editor's name, a brief title, and page number. (Example: Cronon, Nature's Metropolis, 50).
 2. References to any other materials should be formatted according to The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed. or later. (A recommended handbook on Chicago Style is Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6th ed., widely available in bookstores). A guide to Chicago Style is also available through our Library's webpage. (Go to the main page, type "Chicago Style" into the search engine there, and look at the link under 'Online Research Resources.')

Deadlines:

- **All written assignments are to be turned in at the beginning of class, on the date specified in the syllabus, unless otherwise noted.**
- **No late work will be accepted without the instructor' approval.**

Grading Standards for Essays:

Some of your grade in this course will be based on written assignments. Except where otherwise noted, the following broad standards will be used to assign grades. (These standards are general guidelines only). Papers which are incorrectly formatted (see above) may be returned or penalized at the instructor's discretion. I try to evaluate each paper as a piece of work: my goal is not to render judgment on your work as a whole each time, but rather to look just at the pages in front of me. Thus I try to grade fairly, with hopes for improvement.

D or F Grade = Below Standard : A 'D' or an 'F' paper contains numerous factual, grammatical, or spelling errors; fails to contain a coherent thesis; does not provide relevant evidence, provides only skimpy evidence; or is very poorly written.

C Grade = Average: A 'C' paper contains several factual, grammatical, or spelling errors; has a thesis, but not a precise or provable one; uses some evidence, but not sufficient, or very well-analyzed evidence; or is hard to read (for example, it is confusing, wordy, or poorly organized).

B Grade = Good: A 'B' paper contains few factual, grammatical, or spelling errors; has a provable if not exceptional thesis; uses appropriate evidence and analysis to support it; and reads well beginning to end (that is, it has a clear introduction, middle, and conclusion).

A Grade = Excellent: An 'A' paper has no grammatical or spelling errors; has an insightful and engaging thesis; uses robust amounts of evidence and analysis to support it; and is a pleasure to read (that is, it tells a clear analytical story, and does so with style).

Grading Standards for Audio Work:

Since this is an experimental course in a genre that is only now developing, I hope to work with you to create fair grading standards for the audio tracks you produce. I look forward to that discussion. Let me articulate, however, a few basic principles as a start:

- *This is a history class first, and an audio class second.* That is, my first concern is that we are creating 'good history'—and we'll discuss what that is—and in this sense such issues as sound quality, technical proficiency with studio equipment, and general 'whiz-bang' factor are a secondary issue and will receive less weight in your evaluation. My goal is for us to develop interesting concept-projects – based on good research and analytical storytelling – with the ambition that later on, if we had more time and practice, we could create a really smooth sounding project. Thus, history and creativity are first, sound quality and technical chops second.
- *That said, I expect you to experiment with the audio tools we do use, to try to create presentations that suggest the possibilities of the medium.* Creativity will be rewarded, even if you don't quite pull off the effect you're shooting for. And if you do pull off the effect, that's worth even more!

Our general goal is to produce work that could be archived—perhaps with a little post-class clean up—in the University's permanent digital archive, [IDEALS](#), under the auspices of the EUI. We are also going to try to develop curricular materials and a website that will help inspire future efforts in the Department along these lines. So you are very much there at the foundation!

Department of History Statement on Plagiarism

Preamble:

In order to preserve the integrity of our courses and insure that honest efforts by students are not cheapened by the cheating of others, the Department of History sets out its definition of plagiarism and its policies and procedures concerning this abuse. The definition, policies, and procedures are in accord with University of Illinois standards as stated in the Student Code, Article 1, Part 4, which can be found at http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/article_1/a1_1-401.html. All faculty and students should read this key document.

Definition of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. Submitting papers not written by the student is only the most blatant form of plagiarism. Plagiarism also includes, but is not limited to: copying another student's work in exams, papers, or other exercises; inappropriate collaboration with another student; and verbatim copying, close paraphrasing, pasting in, or recombining published materials, including materials from the internet, without appropriate citation. For examples of plagiarism, see Article 1, Part 4 (above).

Recommended Penalty for Plagiarism:

Faculty should refer to Article 1, Part 4, 1-403, for the range of penalties considered appropriate in cases of plagiarism. The penalty to be exacted is at the discretion of the instructor. However, it is recommended that in serious cases without mitigating circumstances, the student receive a failing grade for the course. In the light of an increased level of plagiarism due to the ease of copying from the internet, it is hoped that the severity of the penalty will act as a deterrent. Whatever course of action an instructor chooses, that instructor must follow the procedures prescribed in 1-404. The

Department of History also requires that whenever a penalty is enforced, instructors are to document the case with a formal letter to be inserted in the student's file. This will alert future instructors that the student has a track record of plagiarism. If you have questions, contact the Department Chair directly.

Q: How do I publish to Podcast Producer? What is Podcast Producer?

Podcast Producer is a site through ATLAS that will take our .wav files, convert them into one, easily downloadable format, and publish them on a blog accessible to students in our course. A link to the Producer site is available on our Moodle page (under 'General Resources') as is a link to the Blog. *Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments in audio format should be submitted through this site.*

Please note: one nice feature of Podcast Producer is that you can subscribe to the Blog through I-Tunes, where you will automatically receive the material as it is uploaded.

How do you do this? ATLAS Technology Specialist Jim Witte explains:

1. Go to the Podcast Producer link (<https://podcast.cites.illinois.edu/>, also on Moodle). Once there, click on Podcast Capture
2. Log in using your AD username and password, when prompted.
3. To add an audio file that you've prepared in advance (your assignment), choose "file". The other options (audio, video, dual) are meant for creating an audio or video presentation "on the fly".
4. Choose a workflow. In most cases, you will have only one workflow available, the one workflow for your course.
5. Type in an episode name – use your last name and the name of the assignment ("Rodriguez_assignment1").
6. Under 'description' write in your name, the date, the assignment name, and any other comment you may have.

NOTE: VPN CLIENT SOFTWARE

Currently, Podcast Producer is protected by a special kind of firewall, necessitating the use of what is known as a Virtual Private Network (or VPN Client) software program, if you are trying to access this system from home (off campus).

I have been told that they are trying to take this firewall down ASAP. However, it may be that you will need to get the VPN Client software. I will update you on this on Thursday.

If you do need VPN software, here is what you should do:

- Go to the CITES Webstore. <http://webstore.illinois.edu/>
- Click on Faculty / Student button (top right)
- Type 'VPN' in the Product Search menu.
- Install the free software package UIUC VPN Client.
- Run that program. Restart your computer if necessary.
- Use your university ID and password to identify yourself.

Once you are logged in through VPN, you should be able to use Podcast Producer as described above without incident.

Schedule of Readings, Listenings and Assignments

Unit One: Introductions

NB: Full bibliographical information on course handouts and texts accessible via Moodle will be provided in the “Coming to Illinois” Group Library.

Tues., 8/24 First Meeting

Thurs., 8/26 Quick and Dirty Audio: The Basics

- **COURSE SESSION TO BE HELD IN FLB ROOM G27. PLEASE DON'T BE LATE!**
- This class will be led by a representative from ATLAS Digital Media, who will walk us through the basics of recording, cleaning up, and uploading an audio file recorded live on Audacity (e.g. you speaking into a microphone and then taking gaps and coughs out).
- Readings: Go to Course [Moodle](#) Site and download three handouts from ATLAS: ‘Audio Recording Best Practices’; ‘Audio Files’; and ‘Basic Editing’. Read them over. Don’t worry if you don’t understand it all, just try to get the gist of it.
- Additional Assignment for Today: acquire and install required software packages (see above). Use invitation sent out by instructor to join two Zotero group libraries (‘Audiohistory’ and ‘Coming to Illinois’). Be prepared to report back on any problems.

Tues., 8/31 What is History?: A Discussion

- Topics: What is history? What is the role of historians within it?
- Readings: Carl Becker, “Everyman His Own Historian,” *The American Historical Review* 37, no. 2 (January 1932): 221-236. Please print this paper out from either our Moodle site or JSTOR (an online database available through the Library’s web page), read it carefully (twice!), and bring it to class.
- **Assignment One** due to Podcast Producer (see above for details) no later than late Monday afternoon.

Thurs., 9/2 What is Digital Audio? What’s Been Done with It? What Could Historians do With It?

- Topics: How have digital audio technologies evolved in the past decade? What have some more advanced practitioners done with it?
- Listenings: Please visit the audio sites (and listen to selections from them) listed on the Moodle, in an entry entitled ‘Listenings for 9/2’. Please start by opening and reading the instructions to this assignment given there.
- Readings: [Podcast Solutions](#), Introduction, Chapters 1-3 (a lot of this will be review, but it’s good to get all this down pat).

Tues., 9/7 Current Historical Uses of Digital Audio: Survey and Critique

- Listenings: Please visit the audio sites (and listen to selections from them) listed on the Moodle, in an entry entitled ‘Listenings for 9/9’. Please start by opening and reading the instructions to this assignment given there.
- Readings: Elise Malmstead, “Telling Stories with Sound,” (link on Moodle; see also “Audiohistory” bibliography).
- **Assignment Two** due to Podcast Producer (see above for details) no later than 5 p.m. Monday, 9/6. See assignment instructions on Moodle for details.

Thurs., 9/9 Sound in History and the History of Sound

- Topics: What has the past sounded like? How have culture and history been shaped by aural events, and the soundscape?
- Readings: Selections from The Auditory Reader (Moodle).
- Assignments for the next two weeks distributed. Make sure to go to the Moodle by 9/14 and sign up for a Discussion Group.

Tues., 9/14 What is the University: Learning to Analyze the Institution with EUI

- Presentation by Prof. Nancy Abelmann, Dept. of Anthropology and EUI
- Topics: What is the university? What does its life today entail? How can we learn to be careful observers about it? What present realities might we be interested in exploring historically?
- Readings: Select portions and student projects from the EUI Website (see Moodle for links); Handout on the EUI (Moodle); “The Ten Generations of American Higher Education” (Moodle).

Unit Two: ‘Coming to Illinois’: Mobility as a Prism on the University and its History

Thurs., 9/16 Taking the Turn to Research: From Topics, to Questions, to Problems

- Topics: How can we create good questions for historical research? What do they look like, and how do we know when we’ve found important ones?
- Readings: Booth, et. al., The Craft of Research, 3-67; Handout “The Craft of Historical Research” (Moodle).
- **Assignment Three** due in class. Please bring one copy for each of our participants.

Tues., 9/21 The Method of Catching Things in Motion: The Study of Movement, Migration and Transport as Windows onto the Past

- Topics: What things do we learn about people, institutions and places when we study the role mobility plays in their lives? What might we learn about the University?
- Readings: Cresswell, On the Move (excerpt); Hoerder, “Worlds in Motion, Cultures in Contact”; Mom, et. al., “Towards a Paradigm Shift?”; Kaufman, “Mobility: Trajectory of a Concept in the Social Sciences” (all on Moodle).
- **Assignment Four** due in class. Please bring one copy for each of our participants (that’s 19, total).

Thurs., 9/23 Approaching a Place through the History of Transport and Commercial Networks: Chicago

- Topics: How can the history of a place be approached through a history of its connections to somewhere else?
- Readings: Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis, 5-97.
- **Discussion Group One** will lead the discussion.

Tues., 9/28 The Metropolis and the Hinterland

- Topics: How can the history of a center influence a periphery?
- Readings: Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis, Chapters 3 and 5.
- **Discussion Group Two** will lead the discussion.
- **Karen Rodriguez’G of EUI will be visiting us to talk about work with human subjects and IRB approval.**

Thurs., 9/30 Imagining Personal Experience through the History of Movement: *The Railway Journey*

- Topics: How does how we travel shape our perceptions of the world, and who we are or can be?
- Readings: Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 1-124.
- **Discussion Group Three** will lead the discussion.

Tues., 10/5 Interfaces / Interplaces: The History of Terminals, or Where Here Meets There

- Topics: What are the places—where are the places—where worlds and people connect?
- Readings: Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 171-198; Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 263-341, 371-387.
- **Discussion Group Four** will lead the discussion.

Thurs., 10/7 The Making of the University in the 19th Century

- Topics: How did the University of Illinois come into being? What intellectual ambitions (and social realities) shaped its early development?
- Readings: Solberg, *The University of Illinois* (Moodle); Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, Introduction and Chapter 3 (Moodle); [Student Life and Culture Archive](#) (Various Resources, See Moodle for List of Links).
- Full description of Final Project in all its parts available.

Tues., 10/12 The Remaking of the University after the Second World War

- Topics: How was the University affected by America's emergence as one of the two great super-powers after World War II—and the outbreak of the Cold War? What role did the University play in America's new role in the world—and what role did the world play in the development of the University?
- Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, Chapters 7 and 8 (Moodle); Abelman, *The Intimate University*, Introduction, Selected Chapters (Moodle); [Student Life and Culture Archive](#) (Various Resources, See Moodle for List of Links).

Thurs., 10/14 Finding Primary Sources: A Visit to the [Student Life and Culture Archive](#)

- Readings: [Primary Source Village Training Module](#) (see link on Moodle).
- Field trip details TBA.

Unit Three: Creating Audiohistory (The Following Sessions to Be Worked Up as Needed)

Tues., 10/19 **Reconceptualizing Our Agenda (and Farming Out its Pieces)**

- Topics: This all-important session will be devoted to creating themes for our final projects, and dividing up into research groups to pursue them. Do not miss this session!!
- Readings: Detailed instructions on Final Projects
- **Audio Problem Proposal** due to Podcast Producer no later than 6 p.m., Monday the 18th.

Thurs., 10/21 Meeting with a Practitioner: Ryan Griffis Speaks

- Readings and Listeners: *Stories in Reserve, Vol. 1*, "America Ponds" and "Siting Expositions" (Moodle).
- We will be joined in class by one of the co-authors of this project, Prof. Ryan Griffis (School of Art and Design).

Tues., 10/26 No class. Small group readings with instructor, by appointment, to discuss your Small Group Segment Plan.

- Details TBA.
- **Small Group Segment Plan Due.**

Thurs., 10/28 Inventing Your Voice

- Readings: TBA.
- We will be joined by Prof. Carol Symes (History), who is, among other things, a professional actor. We will be discussing how you can create the sound you want from your voice.

Tues., 11/2 **Source Discussion** (By Group)

- See instructions for more details.
- **Bibliographical Assignment Due** with discussion.

Thurs., 11/4 **Source Discussion** (By Group)

- See instructions for more details.
- **Bibliographical Assignment Due** with discussion.

Tues., 11/9 **Storyboard Presentations** (By Group)

- See instructions for more details.

Thurs., 11/11 **Storyboard Presentations** (By Group)

- See instructions for more details.

Tues., 11/16 Audio Recording Revisited

- Workshop with LAS Digital Media, Time and Place TBD

Thurs., 11/18 Advanced Audio Editing & Clean Up

- Workshop with LAS Digital Media, Time and Place TBD
- Readings: Podcast Solutions, Chapters 5-6.

Tues., 11/23 THANKSGIVING VACATION

Thurs., 11/25 THANKSGIVING VACATION

Tues., 11/30 Open Meeting to Get Our Heads Back into The Game

- Come to class ready to get back into your groups, report on your progress, and begin stitching your drafts together for review.
- **DO NOT SKIP THIS MEETING!**
- Optional Extra Credit Assignment: Presentation at EUI Student Conference.

Thurs., 12/2 **Draft Presentations** (By Group)

- See instructions for more details.

Tues., 12/7 **Draft Presentations** (By Group)

- See instructions for more details.

Final Projects due by 4 p.m. on December 16th. This will involve a submission to Podcast Producer, as well as making sure all your work is archived as required. See Final Project instructions for more details.

