

# Communications Skills for Public Service

**Spring 2024**

## Instructor Information

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* Office Hours: https://calendly.com/wagner-writing-center/30min

## Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: 6:45-8:25pm
* Class Location: Bobst LL141
* If we ever have to meet on Zoom it will be posted on Brightspace

## Course Description

I would love to call this course “Manipulation, in a good way.” The goal of the course is to help students get the most out of every form of communication: to change minds with the written word, win allies in person, to sway audiences in presentations, and to get what they want out of the various forms of communication most common in the careers of recent NYU Wagner graduates. Students will work both individually and collaboratively on a series of communications deliverables including:

1. Memos;
2. Oral Presentations;
3. Negotiations;
4. Talking Points;
5. One-pagers;
6. Audio; and
7. A final unified campaign putting much of these forms together to enact a change you are passionate about.

Each work product will be treated as a case study with specific audiences and a well-defined purpose.

## Course and Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Write well-reasoned, fallacy-free, clear and effective documents;
2. Speak Clearly and effectively in public settings
3. Speak clearly and effectively in pre-recorded videos and podcasts
4. Layout and prepare well-written and aesthetically pleasing presentation slides
5. Edit for clarity, conciseness, grammar and appropriateness of content for a specific audience
6. Effectively offer and receive thoughtful, specific, and actionable feedback to and from class colleagues

## Teaching Methods

In addition to short lectures, class discussions and case-based exercises, the course utilizes a writing workshop approach during many sessions. The main difference between a normal class and a workshop is that the foundation of workshop discussion and study is student work.

Students will review their peers’ work and offer thoughtful constructive criticism in a safe environment. The emphasis is not in just identifying flaws, but also identifying strengths that will help colleagues improve their assignments. The workshop setting also aims to help improve student’s ability to give and receive in-person feedback and run effective meetings.

## Chat GPT, Bing, Bard, GrammarlyGo and other LLMs and Ai resources.

We are going to use Ai throughout the term and our usage will hit an apex during the debate where we will consider a proposition that will be informed by LLM usage throughout the term. Ethical uses of ChatGPT, Bard, and other generative AI tools will be common topics of discussion, but please review Wagner’s Academic Integrity Policy, which is also mentioned separately on this syllabus. But we are going to try to break some of these systems to figure out how they work, what their limits are and where the blind spots are in their current iterations.

Remember always we are in the pre-history of some kind of singularity general Artificial Intelligence future.

## Peer Exchange

This semester we are using a peer review tool that costs $10 for the semester and is purchased through the Harvard Business Review Coursepack site. I’ve used lots of other tools for this sort of thing including the discussion board, google docs/folders and this one is the cleanest. I have cut another resource this semester that normally costs $15 to compensate.

## Readings

New Readings: https://[www.nytimes.com/2023/04/02/opinion/democrats-liberalism.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/02/opinion/democrats-liberalism.html)

Readings will be posted on Brightspace. I change supplemental reading based on issues I see in your writing and communication skills. When a reading is assigned, please bring a printed or digital version of it to class in case it is referred to directly in class (It always is.)

## Front and Center:

Everyone in this class will sign up for one course activity that requires you to be the focus of a class session. This activity is worth 5% of your total grade and each represents a very different communications skill. Some F&Cs will have your colleagues consider your writing, some will involve in-person presentations.

A NOTE ON ATTENDANCE AND ITS EFFECT ON GRADES:

Normally my rule is two absences can be excused with prior notification to the professor for no penalty. Barring true emergencies, each unexcused absence will subtract 1/3 of a letter grade from your final grade (i.e. an A+ would become an A.)

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

## Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

## NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

## Due Dates and Where to Upload

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Assignment** | **Points (out of 110)** |
|  | **Introductory and Front and Center Assignments** | **15** |
| **Throughout Term** | Front and Center – Sign up for one by 2-7-2024 | 5 |
| **01/23/2024** | Introduction Email (Assignment Tab) and Introduction Discussion Post (Discussion Board) | 5 |
| **02/07/2024** | Module 2 Reflection (Assignment Tab) | 5 |
|  | **Kennedy Krieger Memo Assignment** | **25** |
| **02/10/2024** | KKI Memo Draft Stage 1 (Peer Exchange) | 5 |
| **02/14/2024** | KKI Memo (Peer Exchange) Stage 2 Feedback | 10 |
| **02/17/2024** | KKI Memo (Pear Exchange Stage 3 Feedback Evaluation | 5 |
| **02/21/2024** | KKI Memo Revision (Assignments) | 5 |
|  | **Talking Points and Slides** | **15** |
| **02/21/2024** | Communicating Complicated Problems Talking Points Memo (Assignments) | 5 |
| **02/28/2024** | MED-Lee Talking Points (Assignments) | 5 |
| **03/06/2024** | Informal Presentation Slides (Add to Google Slide Link) | 5 |
|  | **Debate** | **15** |
| **03/10/2024** | Ai-Aided Op-Ed (Assignments and Printed for class) | 5 |
| **03/27/2024** | Ai Debate Prep Doc (Google Doc) Group Submission | 10 |
|  | **Unified Campaign** | **40** |
| **04/14/2024** | Draft Unified Campaign Intellectual Document (Memo or Op-ed) Stage 1 (Peer Exchange) (complete and on time – full credit) | 5 |
| **04/24/2024** | Draft Unified Campaign Stage 2 Feedback (Peer Exchange) graded on quality of feedback | 10 |
| **04/27/2024** | Draft Unified Campaign Stage 3 Feedback Evaluation (Peer Exchange) | 5 |
| **05/12/2024** | Unified Campaign (Audio, Revised Document, and coverletter) | 20 |

## Semester Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** |  | **Notes/front and center** |
| **1/24/2024** | Module 1: Introductions |  |
| **01/31/2024** | Module 2: Social Styles |  |
| **02/07/2024** | Module 3: Kennedy Krieger Discussion and Peer Exchange |  |
| **02/14/2024** | Module 4: Kennedy Krieger Front and Center Workshop | 3 F&C Spots |
| **02/21/2024** | Module 5: Difficult Problems | 3 F&C Spots |
| **02/28/2024** | Module 6: Med Lee Negotiation | 3 F&C Spots |
| **03/06/2024** | Module 7: Presentations | 3 F&C Spots |
| **03/13/2024** | Module 8: Ai Debate Op-Eds | 1 F&C Spot |
| **03/27/2024** | Module 9: Debate | 8 F&C Spots |
| **04/03/2024** | Module 10: Breaking Down Podcasts |  |
| **04/10/2024** | Module 11: Audio Bootcamp |  |
| **04/17/2024** | Module 12: F&C Workshops | 3-4 F&C Spots |
| **04/24/2024** | Virtual Workshops: no class this week as you work on your Podcast and feedback | All Drafts will be considered this week on Peer Exchange |
| **05/01/2024** | First three minutes of your edited podcasts | You need to upload your first three minutes of an edited podcast before class. |

## Resources to buy/subscribe to:

1. **[Required $10]** Peer Exchange from HBR, Required.
2. **[Required $20/mo]** Zencastr: this is for recording your interviews and podcasts. You should be able to get away with one month plus the free 14 day trial. I’ll let you know during the semester when you should start the subscription. Be sure to cancel at the end of class!
3. Grammarly. There’s no reason to have grammatical or sentence level problems in your writing these days. You can use the free version, but premium is around $12/mo and is absolutely fantastic. I will give a demonstration during class to show you how I use it (I only use the online portal.)
4. OpenAi’s ChatGPT-4 Premium. You may use the free version, though the bleeding edge premium version ($20/mo) is much better. Fewer Privacy concerns than using the next two.
5. Bing: also uses openAi’s Gpt, but has more robust integration with the internet and is sometimes more accurate due to this and it is currently free. Creative mode uses the full GPT-4 premium version, Precise mode uses a version of 3.5 with built in reliability checks that still miss plenty. Significant privacy issues.
6. Bard: free, but requires gmail account and an opt in. You can use your NYU account to access it as well. Significant privacy Issues.

# Detailed Course Overview

## Module 1 : Some thoughts about writing and communicating and the Kennedy Krieger Case

Great readings, discussion in class, why we are doing this? What will you be able to do well at

the end? Write emails. Give and receive feedback. Prepare talking points for synchronous communications (negotiations, debates, meetings)

### Reading:

Ben Yagoda, When you catch an adjective, Kill it: Intro

Notes: This is my favorite discussion of grammar and the arguments that happen all the time between people like me who believe that communication is an act of conveyance as well as identity building and many people of authority, including managers, professors, (you?) who use grammar as a crutch and stand-in to describe good writing and good thinking. Even worse, some people believe in a kind of prescribed idea of the perfect sentence: deviation from which means you are inarticulate. The truth, that we will discuss in class, is that you get away with what you can get away with as a writer and communicator. That is very much about flexing to your audience and much less about grammar.

Joan Didion, The White Album: Bureaucrats

Notes: I love Joan Didion. She’s a bit of a shit-kicker and man did she hate HOV lanes in 1976. In a few weeks you will have the option to consider HOV/HOT messaging, but for now I wanted you to see as Joan goes in and interviews smart data-driven policy specialists like you. These decision-makers are terrible at communication, unlike you I hope! They are also pretty awful at telling the truth.

Saul Alinsky, Rules for Radicals: Communication

Notes: You’ve probably read parts of Alinsky’s Rules for Radicals because a bunch of your professors through the years idolize Alinsky. Not me. But I love what a clear communicator he is and what he has to say about community organizing is applicable in literally any situation. Communicating with people requires having some kind of shared experience. Find that experience and flex to it and there is your common ground.

George Orwell, Politics and the English Language

Notes: I know, this is an old British essay, but wow is it great! I wish I could get everyone to read this and not just his six rules of great writing which are consistent with everything else you will learn in this course, but also about the way tired old cliches and side speak can bring down governments, moral authority, and our willingness to hold powerful people accountable. This is very appropriate right now.

### Assignment: Introductions

There are two short assignments doing simmilar things for two diﬀerent audiences.

1. **Email Introduction**

**Read these four pieces. Write me a pretend email (uploaded to classes as an assignment)**

Subject line: Communications Skills Email Introduction.

Introduce yourself to me and pretend you are on the waitlist hoping to get a seat in the class. (Ha! A waitlist for my class! I know.) You have read the first four assigned readings, tell me if something in one of them got you to thinking about your own life or career or past communications and how it made you want to stay in the class.

**Why I assign this:** I assign it to be turned in before class because these small assignments improve class discussion. Also: I want to see how you write the most common form of professional written communication: an email. I want to have something to remember you by. I want to hear your thoughts on one of these pieces of writing that I love, even if you don’t love them! I also use small assignments like this to give you feedback way before you turn in longer pieces.

1. **Discussion Board Post to Introduce yourself to your classmates**

Read the prompt and follow the instructions to create your post there. Read it closely--this assignment is straightforward but the instructions are buried in a wall of text written to emulate real life.

**Why we do this:**

This is a bit of a public profile that is analogous to a common writing assignment for large companies and organizations. It is also a great counterpoint for the email introduction which is intended just for me. This will be accessible to your classmates and hopefully you'll check back after the first day to see what they wrote and learn something new about them.

## Module 2: Figuring out where your comfort and discomfort lies in Communicating in teams and collaborating

### Pre-Class Self-assessment on Brightspace

Notes: You have done many of these before. I like this one because it oﬀers a good conversation starter for the in class work. If you let these results reshape your identity you are doing it wrong and I apologize.

Read the appendix for your “type”:

Notes: I know, this reads a bit like a horoscope, but the writers behind these are excellent at prepping for social interactions and thinking about those interactions as professional social challenges. We will too!

Listen to past semesters’ Unified Campaign Podcasts on Brightspace Read the KKI Case. We’ll unpack that at the end of the session.

### Assignment: Module 2 Reflection

Write 200-300 words max answering one of the following prompts:

**Choose 1:**

1. Social Styles Reflection: Tell me how this or a past self-assessment has added to your self- awareness as a communicator and how might you act on that self-awareness to improve your communication in the future.
2. The last several months have seen a migration to online collaboration, learning, and work. Tell me how this new reality in professional and academic communications changes the way you communicate with people. What is lost as we move to a more virtual nearness? What is gained? What communications and professional issues are you most worried about due to the these changes. How do you plan to overcome those issues?

**Why we do this:** With these reflections, we are closing the loop. I want you to use the writing of this as a self-guide to improve at least one aspect of your communication skills.

## Module 3: Lead Poisoning; Giving feedback, being heard, using feedback, Memos and the SCQR action introduction method.

Giving feedback in groups, how to be heard in groups and how to listen, email conventions, the best email you’ll ever write and using Peer Exchange for this course.

### Reading:

Weeks, Holly. “The Best Memo You’ll Ever Write.” Harvard Management Communication Letter. Article Reprint No.: C0504C

Notes: the way I see it, SCQR is your default formula for writing emails and great introductions to memos and briefs. Super applicable in all formal professional writing. It provides a framing logic model for every situation.

Silverman, L (2023, August 15). Zero Lead is an impossible Ask for American Parents. The Atlantic. [https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2023/08/lead-exposure-child-risks/](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2023/08/lead-exposure-child-risks/) 675093/

Notes: This recent article shows the diﬃculty of people to remedy lead from their home and how expensive a proposition this remeans especially in the city.

Tannen, D. The Power of talk: Who Gets Heard and Why. Harvard Business Review, Sept.-Oct. Reprint #95510

Notes: I assign this to show you some data support for things you probably already know, but maybe not how to deal with especially related to gender in the workplace and how people hear and support each other in meetings and group situations. Such as the workshop we’re doing today, the debate prep coming up, the negotiation prep coming up, really everything in this course.

Case: Kennedy Krieger

Notes: You cannot do the assignment or participate in class if you have not read the case. Read the case! It’s fascinating.

Required Viewing: Sample KKI memo workshop from a few years ago on zoom.

### Assignment: KKI Memo

**Draft 1—Post to your KKI Memo group Discussion board three days before class:** Using the SCQR Introduction method write a “What we should have done” memo advising the Kennedy Krieger Institute about what they should have done regarding their lead study.

Memo Setup: Johns Hopkins is building a knowledge bank for continuing education of its research professionals. They ask you to take a look at what happened with the lead abatement study and what they should have done.

Memo Structure:

1. Introduction (SCQR) what happened, what did Kennedy Krieger Institute or JHU do wrong and when/what should they have done diﬀerently
2. Background: (the context of the Kennedy Krieger study)
3. Critical turning point: What did they do wrong and when should they have changed what they were doing? What should they have done? What were some rational reasons they had at the time to not change?
4. Retrospective Recommendation: At the turning point above, what should KKI have done? What would have been the ramifications (financial, scientific, public health, ethical) if they had done your suggestion then without the knowledge of foresight?
5. Lessons for today: Ultimately what lesson should JHU and KKI employees take away from this experience to apply to current research at the university?

**Read the KKI memos from your group. Post a short note—Answering this question: After reading your group mates work, what do you need to do diﬀerently in your revision?**

**Revision Due before next class:** Upload to Brightspace in one document: 1) A 50-150 word cover letter explaining how you revised your memo and what feedback was most helpful for that revision process in your in-class workshop 2) your revised memo.

**Why I assign this:** I love this assignment because it is one of the most important public policy cases since 2000 or so with implications for researchers and universities. But most people do not know anything about it and the catastrophe of lead poisoning in Michigan and other places overshadows it in terms of lead impact so much that even epidemiologists do not teach it that much.

## Module 4—Evaluating and Giving Feedback

**Readings:**

**Front and Center Workshop submissions**

## Module 5—Communicating Diﬃcult Problems

This week we are going to work on identifying and communicating problems that might require policy work. You know from IPP that policy can mean quite a large vaiety of things. Here we are going to think about it in the same broad terms. But before any policy solutions are considered we need to find the problem that needs addressing. Students of mine often tell me they are for universal basic income or Medicare for All or paying people more at the non-profit where they work or some other policy solution. I always ask the same question, what problem are we trying

to fix. If the problem is “we don’t have universal basic income,” then you have not done enough of your thought work.

### Readings:

Pahlka, J (2023). Recoding America. Macmillan

Notes: I give you the first two chapters of the book. You should buy and read the whole thing, but for this session you really need to get an understanding of how important implementation is to making good policy and why so many major policy failures are due to the way we handle digital data.

### Assignment:

Figure out a problem that could possibly be fixed with some kind of policy change. Write an SCQR introduction where the Complication is your problem and Resolution is the sentence, “As a start I have identified some potential challenges and stakeholders to solve this issue.” Then include three lists:

1. 10 challenges for solving it
2. 5 people/organizations who would benefit from solving the problem.
3. 5 people/organizations who benefit from not solving it.

**Upload to Assignments “Short Talking Points Memo”**

**In Class:** In goups you will provide a short 3-4 minute Presentation to colleagues on your problem identification.

**Why we do this:** Figuring out a problem is the most important and hardest part of solution formation and implementation. Solving a problem is the Northstar that you can keep going back to decide whether or not you are still working toward the right goal. We will emphasize this over and over. Your Purpose in this class is figuring out the most elegant way to solve this problem. I know this feels a bit like what you do in IPP. The topic should diﬀer from that class and this is building toward a final unified campaign that will include interviewing stakeholders and producing a podcast and a memo or op-ed.

## Module 6—collaborate on Negotiation prep MEDLEE

### Readings:

Read the case

Watch negotiation videos and lecture

Run MedLee Case in Class Associated Readings/videos/etc

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llctqNJr2IU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llctqNJr2IU) Closs—let them say no to what you want

### Assignment: Negotiation Talking Points

In Class: Run the negotiation.

Debrief: Return to your teams and score yourselves. Did you win? Present interesting moment from each debate. Scoring: -1, 0, or +1 for each 1-on-1 negotiation for each part of the negotiation: 1) profit, 2) Staﬃng, 3) decision-making, and 4) conflict resolution. If everyone in your team achieved their goals in every aspect of the negotiation you would have +4 points for each member. It is possible on many points for both sides to feel as though they won or both feel as though they lost. Pick one speaker for your group. Speaker reports back.

What could you have done better? Discuss in groups. New Speaker reports back.

What is one piece of advice you would give to students in Spring 2020 doing this debate?

Why do we do this: I want to reinforce the preparation required for verbal communication challenges, but collaboration in large groups gets harder. I also want you to feel more comfortable in negotiation situations and just to think of them as communication challenges. You are persuading, but mostly you are here again trying to occupy perspective to figure out what you will need to give to get what you want. Purpose, Audience, Intent?

## Module 7—Informal Presentations: Unified Campaign

**Longterm goal of the Unified Campaign**

By the end of the semester you will turn in a final draft of an intellectual foundation document (either a memo or an op-ed) written to or for your chosen organization. You will create, edit and produce a podcast that could be hosted on the webpage or digital space of your chosen organization.

**Chunking out the Campaign**

We will make this into bitesize pieces. Starting with an informal presentation during module 8 that will require you to research a policy area you already care about and an organization that actively works in that area. Consider using the organization from your press release writing assignment. From there you will have a series of draft deliverables that will inform the final products. Get started on the pieces early.

**Informal Presentation:** Pick a non-profit, political campaign, social/policy/advocacy organization or private company that is addressing an issue area you are passionate about. This is the organization you will create your unified campaign for. In class be prepared to discuss:

* 1. The policy area you are interested in
	2. An organization that is doing work on/in that policy area
	3. A data source that could be analyzed to help answer some kind of question in the policy area (you will not do this analysis this semester except for possibly minor descriptive analyses)
	4. The names of two experts in the policy area that you could possibly interview
	5. The names of two stakeholders that you could possibly interview.

## Module 8 Current Events: AI writers

### Assignment:

Write at least 4 Op-eds using one of the generative Ai programs—ChatGPT, Bing or Bard. They should be about a topic related to your unified campaign. Pick the best one, spend exactly one hour editing and adding to it. Then spend no more than 15 minutes proofing using Grammarly Premium. Post to your edited version to the discussion group

### Readings and videos:

Practical Ai for Instructors and Students Part 1: Introduction to Ai

Video: (~10min)This is produced by Wharton and while it is a little old (8 months) It is an excellent overview of the things we will be talking about this semester. We will watch three more of their videos next week.

Practical Ai for Instructors and Students Part 2: Large Language Models

Part two of the Wharton video series. This is a great overview of the foundational Ai models that are powering most of the ai integrated applications.

Practical Ai for Instructors and Students Part 3: Prompting Ai

This is part three of the Wharton video series. This is a very useful step by step guide to making prompts. It is already a little out of date, but the overall idea that interacting with the Ai is the key.

Priming for prompts: https://promptengineering.org/unlocking-ai-with-priming-enhancing- context-and-conversation-in-llms-like-chatgpt/

Who knew a whol organization had already popped up to corner the prompt engineering market?

Discussion: What does it mean that AI wrote these things. Will you find a place in your career for AI writing tools?

Group Breakout: Debate team captains assign background research to research team and begin prep for next week’s debate.

## Module 9 AI Debate

## Module 10 Using Zencastr and breaking down podcasts

This week we will reverse-engineer podcasts in groups.

The goal of the day will be for you to identify a few different tricks podcast producers use to tell stories and to identify the podcast formats you are most drawn to (and would like to create this semester.

### Readings:

Great article on different podcast formats

Why we read this. You can disagree with the 7 basic formats (the eighth is a cop out) but it is a very good starting plan to categorize what all is out there. When you are deciding to create something like this, some people are paralyzed by infinite choices. This is a good way to get past that paralysis. Hopefully you'll be inspired and reminded of what podcast storytelling you are most attracted to.

**Podcasts to listen to:** these will all be posted by your colleagues. You do not have to listen beyond the first 5-10 minutes of each if your group mates post longer pieces. For instance, I love Dan Carlin's Hardcore History, but each episode is 3-5 hours long. I savor those over many nights as I trail off to bed but I don't expect you to listen to the whole thing for this class.

This week all the action happens in Podcast Discussion Thread. Reply to my thread giving you instructions and you will be able to see only your discussion group's work.

You will post a link to a podcast that you like and post a very specific kind of audio editing response to it. Instructions are over on the discussion board. You will need to post by Monday at midnight again and be sure to listen to the podcasts (at least the first 5-10 minutes if they are long) and read your group-mates responses. This week we will do our very first look at audio story-telling in class. If you have never listened to podcasts and don't have a favorite you can try one of these episodes:

**Interview Format**

* A Journey From Mexico: Modern Immigrant
	+ This style is a conversational back and forth between the host and guest. The host in this episode is quite good at giving the guest space to tell their story. Notice how the host will at times summarize what was just said in her own words to ensure the key takeaways from the guest are clear.
* The Daily: One Man Flees The Draft: The Daily “T”
	+ This episode of the Daily is a great example of how to do voiceover translations in real time when interviewing guests that speak a different language. Notice the different tactics they use to combine the integrity of the person’s voice while adding translations. One way is to first let the person’s voice play out before lowering the volume and having the translation on top while the guest’s voice is still audible.

Another is to bounce back and forth between the interviewers guest and the translation one at at time. Or do both together!

* A Crisis In Peru Signals Trouble: The Daily “T”
	+ This episode shows what interviewing an expert can be like, in this case, a New York Times reporter recounting the findings of her story. This story veers almost into the narrative interview format through the use of found sound interspersed through the experts telling of the story. The main difference? The host does not do any narration to fill in gaps between the interviewer’s story. The integrity of the story relies entirely on the guest.
* NYC’s Bodegas are on the Brink of Collapse - the City Can Help them Survive
	+ This episode from Haley Schusterman is a great example of the interview format where the host is themselves an expert on the topic being explored. Notice her comfort with asking challenging questions to her guests and her willingness to reintroduce guests to answer specific questions that fit the episode’s story arc instead of just having set blocks where each guest speaks their piece. This can be seen near the end where she reintroduces one of her guests to ask what can be done about the problem she has been exploring up to that point.

**Narrative Interview Format**

* Video Gaming the System: Planet Money
	+ This fascinating story is propelled greatly by the narration by the two hosts who tell much of the story, set the scenes before their guest speak, and at times summarize the perspective of guests. Notice how, in fitting with the Planet Money mission of educating the public on economics, the narrators will use and explain economic concepts (in an accessible lecture like format) to ground the stakes of the story: the lack of inflation in Runescape’s currency made it a great place for Venezualans to acquire a currency that doesn’t rapidly devalue like the Bolivar.
* Redder than Red (Story of Xi Jinping): The Economist “T”
	+ This great series is another example of narration driven primarily by the host while using pull quotes from their interviewees to play out key scenes and convey important ideas. Considering the inability to directly interview a figure like Xi Jinping, the host’s narration is critical in telling this difficult story. Notice how her use of summary helps drive the narrative along.
* He’s Neutral (The Oakland Buddha): Criminal
	+ In this story the host’s narration again plays a key role in moving the story forward. However, notice how the story will jump back and forth between narration from the host and little segments of conversation between the host and the guest interacting in a manner one would expect from an interview podcast. This combination of both narration and interviewing makes this podcast episode one of Justin’s personal favorite.
* The Out Crowd (Remain in Mexico Policy): This American Life “T”
	+ This 2020 pulitzer prize winning episode of TAL is a masterwork of the narrative interview format. This general, multi act, show format that TAL uses can give you some insight into how different audio stories of a similar theme can be grouped together into one episode.
* Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland: NYU Student Podcast
	+ This podcast by Justin Lee is a good example of a student quality narrative/interview format that uses narration and musical cues to condense what would typically be pretty dry conversations about policy planning and implementation into a forward moving narrative arc featuring key characters and recurring political conflicts. Notice at the end of the episode how he uses moments of reflection from both himself and his main character to bring the story full circle to the hook he used in the intro: the murder of Joshua Pollick.

## Module 11 Sharing 4 minutes of interviews. Audio BootCamp

**This is your first Audio assignment—Interview one of your stakeholders . Limit the time to 15 minutes. Zencastr for recording these. And Audacity to edit them**

**In class we will work on it as an audio studio editing session. I will walk you through some of the most important tools of professional and amateur audio editing including noise reduction; cleaning up speech tics, the ethics of audio editing; multi-track dubbing, audio normalization and basics of podcast narrative building.**

**Before class.**

* interview one of your stakeholders for the unified campaign
* Download/install Audacity on your computer
* Watch the three how-to videos on Brightspace.

**After Class:**

* Edit your interview down to 5 minutes
* Add open source sound
* Export to MP3
* Upload to your group’s discussion board.

## Module 12 Front and Center Intellectual Document Workshops

### Assignment: Intellectual Document

You will need a document to guide you in your unified campaign. This piece must identify a problem, contextualize it, discuss at least three possible approaches to address the problem, advocate for and defend a “best” way to solve it or work toward solving it. The structure will vary depending on the form you choose. It may either be:

1. an op-ed intended for a specific publication (think of the op-ed event in Intro to Public Policy; or
2. A memo that would live somewhere on your organization’s webpage. So it would have a wide non-technical audience, but readers will be people who would intentionally click on a link to a memo.

Everyone in class will submit these through Peer Exchange (even the F&C workshoppers). I will post the F&C readings to Brightspace.

**Breakdown of the assignment.**

**Problem:** This is the thing you hope to solve or work toward solving. It could be as far-reaching and nebulous as ending a culture of white supremacy; or as focused as the bike lane on Navy street is dangerous and scary. Just remember it is harder to suggest cure-all solutions to big societal problems.

**Contextualize:** Help your reader understand the scope and scale of the issue. Who are the people aﬀected by the problem? What is the community we are talking about here?

Approaches to addressing it: What are some things that could be done about it? If you can talk about policies and initiatives other organizations are pushing.

**Best Way**: What do you think should happen and why is that the best option? There are many possible ways to argue why something is ‘best’ including ethical considerations, financial, political feasibility etc. Make sure your reader knows what the terms of your argument are. In this section you will need to include at least one example of quantitative analysis that helps your option.

**Here is a silly example:**

P: I do not have health insurance and cannot see a doctor.

C: Millions of Americans do not have health insurance or enough money to see a doctor and that costs the nation millions of dollars. Also, I have recently graduated, lost my parents’ insurance and have had only one job interview.

A: There are lots of ways I personally could get insurance or enough money to see a doctor: 1) family helps, 2) medicare for all passes and is signed into law, 3) I get a job with the federal government that does not shut down and access to sweet medical security.

B: Getting a job is best because I also have to pay my rent and that seems more feasible than swift passage of sweeping healthcare reform. And I do not want to worry my family by asking them to help. Also, they are not doing so great right now.

**Assignment Intellectual Document Comments: (Front and Center)** We will workshop the Front and Center Submissions in class all together. You must print each workshop submission, mark it up with a pen and then write a short email to the writer (cc me) explaining your notes and the 1-2 things you like the best in the person’s piece and the 1-2 things that need to be improved most. I use an iPad with notability for my mark ups and it is exactly the same thing. I do not love suggested edits in collaborative documents for this kind of thing. We’ll talk about my general thoughts on this in class.

**Assignment Intellectual Document Comments: (Peer Exchange)**

The rest of the classes’ work will be considered on Peer Exchange. As always please follow due dates for these drafts. It only works if we hit our marks.

**Assignment: Revised Intellectual Document**

Revise your draft based on notes from me and your classmates and include your revision in your final unified campaign.

## Module 13: Virtual Workshops

Peer feedback using the Peer Exchange system. Instructions are on Peer Exchange.

## Module 14: The End —First 3-5 minutes of podcast listening party, discussion and final thoughts. Drinks after?

## Check Brightspace for final due dates of Unified campaign.