

WEEK ONE: Podcasting:

For me, podcasting is so important to modern journalism that I'll introduce the whole course with podcasting. Tips, skills and tricks on how to produce a good podcast using minimal equipment. It's 2022, so I'm going to assume that every student has a smartphone. That can be enough to get going with a (basic) podcast.

Is it okay to assume that every student has a smartphone?

I'm also considering introducing a brief assignment that students can discuss and submit before week six.

WEEK TWO: Vox pops:

Modern journalism/media is snappy and attention needs to be grabbed (almost) immediately. People's (The audience's) attention span is close to zero. With information flooding at people everywhere, from Twitter to TikTok, to Instagram to Facebook, dating apps, WhatsApp etc, etc, etc, people's phones are constantly being bombarded with information, updates and messages.

A detailed 2021 (semi-scientific) survey revealed, if a reader/viewer/listener isn't taken in by a clip/article within the first nine seconds of opening the clip/article, that (potentially paying) customer is gone. However, if you can get the customer to engage for 30 seconds, you have a 90% chance of them engaging for three minutes or longer. A reader/viewer/listener to engage with an article for three minutes is a very long time in modern media and it greatly increases the chances of the reader/viewer/listener becoming a paid customer.

Hence, vox pops are so important in modern media.

A vox pop is a short video made up of clips taken from interviews with members of the public. These video interviews investigate public opinion towards widely known (often topical, current affairs) topics, brands or products. These videos are created in various formats. From on-the-street style, to in-home interviews and even mobile video diaries.

A vox pop video traditionally refers to an-on-the-street intercept/random interview.

It is essential to be confident, personable and to have a good sense of humour when interviewing people for a vox pop.

WEEK THREE: Techie, putting vox pops together and other technical things:

A modern journalist doesn't need to be a software engineer or a graphic designer but needs to be very competent with technology.

If we have access to the Adobe Suite and Photoshop and whatever technology you have to stitch together/edit video clips, week three would be used for that. Obviously, if it's a 90/120-minute session, we'll need to limit it to one or two (or at the most three) pieces of editing software for the night.

WEEK FOUR: Wit, punctuation, grammar, puns and finding your (journalistic) niche:

As a modern journalist, you need to have a "hook": something quick and snappy that'll catch a reader's/listener's/viewer's attention. Waterford Whisperers have that down to a fine art. Waterford Whisperers is a satirical website covering (mainly topical/current affairs) issues with magnificent wit and humour.

An in-depth knowledge of grammar and punctuation also gives (potential/budding) journalists credibility when being scrutinised by editors (who ultimately have authority for recruiting journalists.)

Some are suited to being news anchors. Some are suited to being written hacks (only). Some are suited to being social media experts. You need to find your (journalistic) niche. We'll discuss that also in week four.

WEEK FIVE: Radio and PR/sales class:

Commercial radio has gotten so sanitized and so politically correct that radio is now a dying industry because audiences are bored of commercial radio and there are so many other platforms to consume media/journalistic content. I expect that by 2035 that outside of the highest level of radio (BBC, RTE, Newstalk etc), that anything below that (people like 96FM and Red FM) will have ceased broadcasting.

Students going into media (unless they have a lot of high-level contacts) are most likely to go into PR or sales (often with media outlets). We'll discuss those sorts of opportunities in week five, also.

WEEK SIX: Podcasting

This session will involve podcasting but podcasting using more advanced technology, a studio, proper headphones, recording devices and microphones. Green screen, etc.

Will look at very professionally well made podcasts, such as Blindboy and what we can learn from them. Get opinions on podcasts such as Joe Rogan.

Will discuss the submitted assignments (which I'll ask to have submitted before that week six class).

WEEK SEVEN:

Give (informal) grades on the submitted assignment and feedback on same.

Make the rest of the class a written journalism class. Written journalism (e.g. The Irish Times) is becoming very antiquated, so a class on this does not need a full session.

By 2030, I don't think any major newspaper will have physical, paper copies on shelves of retail outlets, but important journalistic skills can still be learned from written journalism.

WEEK EIGHT: Advice on where/how to proceed now that the course is ending.

Will aim to keep it as individual centred as possible. I'll ask each student if they want to discuss things privately or publicly. Some students will be fine with discussing things publicly (as it'll inform themselves and others) while some students will want to discuss things privately.

I'll pass students' contact info to relevant sectors/niches that might suit them (for example: radio, print, PR, online, vox pops, etc, etc.) I'll also advise students though that they'll need luck and/or good connections to get a break in mainstream media.