

Course Syllabus
COMM-620-002: Seminar on Audio Storytelling
Fall 2017

Instructor Information

	Michael O'Connell
	Email: mo9970a@american.edu
	Phone:
	Office location:
	Office hours: By appointment. Or we can arrange to meet before or after class, or during the lunch break on Saturday.
	Response time: Within 24 hours

Instructor Bio: [optional]

Course Information

Description

The class will focus on the current popular form of audio storytelling known as podcasting. Students will learn about the history of podcasting, starting with its roots in radio and the early days of digital audio production, to the vast world of network podcasting.

Course Format and Structure

This will be a hands-on course. Classes will meet for six Saturdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Each class will include a discussion about the day's topic, guest lectures and time for students to master the technical and storytelling aspects of podcast production. Students will be listening to and dissecting podcasts in class.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Tell an engaging audio story.
- Develop a podcast episode from the grain of an idea to posting the final product online.
- Understand the basics of distribution, marketing and monetizing a podcast.
- Understand the legal and ethical standards around producing a podcast.

Instructional Technologies

In this course, students will use the following systems and tools:

- **Blackboard Learning Management System:** Participants will use their AU credentials to log in at <https://blackboard.american.edu>. AU's Blackboard Support team recommends using Chrome or Firefox to optimize your experience and avoid incompatibility issues that can occur when accessing Blackboard with other browsers. DO NOT USE INTERNET EXPLORER.
- **Software:** Audacity 2.1.1 and LAME MP3 Encoder (<http://old.audacityteam.org/download/mac>)
- **Software:** Latest version of GarageBand.
- **SoundCloud:** Each student will need to set up their own SoundCloud account (<https://soundcloud.com/>), which will allow them to post their final projects online. They will need to do this before the final class. When they turn in their final project, they will submit a link to the audio and the html code for an embeddable player.
- **Audio Recorder:** American University will provide a Zoom H1 Ultra Portable Audio Recorder for students to use for the duration of the class. These will be provided on the first day. Students may opt to use their own audio recorders. If they choose to do so, the instructor recommends either a Zoom H4n, Tascam DR-40 or the equivalent.
- **Headphones:** Students will need to bring headphones to every class. The headphones should cover the ears and preferably have a closed back. Do not use earbuds or noise canceling headphones.
- **Microphones and Accessories (Optional):** The Zoom H1 Portable Audio Recorder has built-in microphones, which should be sufficient for the assignments in this class. If the student opts to use their own digital audio recorder, they may want to purchase their own microphones, audio cables and windscreens. If the student decides to do this, he or she may contact the instructor to discuss their audio setup.

Textbooks and Materials

- **Turn Up the Volume -- A down and dirty guide to podcasting** (Michael O'Connell) **ISBN-13:** 978-1138218031
- **Out on a Wire: The Storytelling Secrets of the New Masters of Radio** (Jessica Abel) **ISBN-13:** 978-0385348430 (Note: This is a graphic novel. The paperback version may be easier to read than the Kindle version).

Guidelines and Expectations

Course Policies

The instructor expects students to adhere to professional standards when it comes to the quality of work they produce and the procedure for turning in assignments. For that reason, all graded assignments are due by the deadline

dates and times posted in the syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to change deadline dates and times, but he will notify students of such changes one class session prior to the original deadline due date. He will also post all such changes on Blackboard.

Students are expected to check Blackboard weekly for any changes in reading and listening assignments. The instructor will post changes to class readings or podcast listening assignments for upcoming classes by midnight on Sunday.

Expectations for Course Participation

The overarching expectation of this class is one of professionalism. Students will be learning professional level skills; therefore, they need to ensure that their assignments strive to meet those standards. When it comes to in-class presentations, such as the final project pitch, students should act as if they are pitching an idea to an editor, trying to convince him or her to produce their podcast.

This is also a learning environment. The classroom is a safe place to share ideas and ask questions. All students will be expected to critique the work of others and have their own work critiqued constructively. This will figure into a student's class participation grade.

Since we will only have six weeks of class and we have a lot to accomplish in such a short time, the instructor expects all students to attend every class. Tardiness will be reflected in the class participation grade. Excused absences will be granted only with the prior approval of the instructor.

Unless an assignment is specifically given as a collaborative work, students are expected to do their own work. This includes adhering to professional and ethical standards regarding plagiarism, intellectual property rights, copyright, etc.

Academic Integrity Code

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the university's [Academic Integrity Code](#). By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should violations occur. This includes cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism.

SafeAssign: In this course, one or more assignments may be submitted to the instructor using the SafeAssign plagiarism detection tool, which is integrated into Blackboard. SafeAssign uploads the submitted work to the AU SafeAssign database for comparison against other student papers, as well as academic articles and internet resources, to generate an "Originality Report" that identifies areas of potential overlap. In addition to discouraging academic dishonesty, this tool can create opportunities for students to learn how to properly cite and paraphrase sources. Neither Blackboard nor AU claim any copyright ownership of work submitted through SafeAssign.

Student Code of Conduct

The central commitment of American University is the development of thoughtful, responsible human beings in the context of a challenging yet supportive academic community. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) is designed to benefit the American University community and to assist in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Student Code of Conduct, and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code.

Grading and Assessment

Assignments

In Class Assignment #1: 2-minute audio - In Class interview (Due: Nov. 3, 5 p.m.)

Audio Audit #1: Student will listen to a podcast of at least 15 minutes in length and fill out an audit report on it. (Due: Nov. 11, 9 a.m.)

In Class Assignment #2: 2-3 minute audio interview with natural sound (Due: Nov. 11, 5 p.m.)

Final Project Pitch: The pitch should include the subject, list of guests, planned sound elements to tell the story, a rough outline of future stories, and possible website elements. The student should prepare a presentation for the class, including visual and audio elements as examples. A 500-750 word pitch document should be turned in at the start of class. The student will be graded on the quality of their in class presentation and the detail contained within their pitch documents. (Due: Nov. 18, 9 a.m.)

Audio Audit #2: Student will listen to a podcast of at least 15 minutes in length and fill out an audit report on it. (Due: Dec., 9 a.m.)

Final Assignment: Produce an 8-10 minute podcast episode that contains at least three “voices,” one of which can be a narrator/reporter. It should also contain music and natural sound. The subject of the podcast is of the reporter’s choosing. It is the first episode of at least a five-episode podcast series. Each student will present their final project on the last day of class. The presentation should include the final audio; a web page containing related materials (photos, text, links, etc.), the link to the online audio file; html text for embeddable player (this can be posted on the student’s website; an overview of the first five episodes of the podcast series; a promotion plan; and a monetization plan. The materials should also contain links demonstrating that the student has obtained the proper rights for the music being used in the podcast. (Due: Dec. 16, 11 a.m.)

GRADING EVALUATION:

A and A- grades represent work whose superior quality indicates a full mastery of the subject. An A represents work of extraordinary distinction. In this course, outstanding work will include (but not be limited to) the following features: excellent writing and organization, ability to follow directions, news judgment, thoughtful and creative approach to assignments, careful execution (including format, grammar, and presentation), and effective conveyance of messages.

B+, B, and B- grades represent work of very good quality but do not merit special distinction. In this course, very good overall work will include (but not be limited to) the following features: very good writing and organization, ability to follow directions, thoughtful and creative approach to assignments, and careful execution. The overall message is conveyed effectively but includes some organization, format or grammatical errors that could be corrected easily.

C+, C, and C- grades represent an adequate command of the course material. In this course, adequate overall work will include (but not be limited to) the following features: average demonstration of an understanding of format, grammar, and language mechanics. The overall message is conveyed adequately but the work includes several organization, format or grammatical errors that require correction.

D+, D, and D- grades indicate work that shows a deficiency in knowledge of the material. In this course, deficient work will include (but not be limited to) the following features: superficial work, sloppy presentation, reflects poor understanding of the message goal, and reflects a lack of effort or ability to achieve the objectives of the assignment.

F grades indicate the work submitted needs extensive revision to meet requirements or work that has the type or amount of format, grammar or content errors that make the message incomprehensible.

Grading Scale

Exemplary		Good		Acceptable		Unacceptable	
A	94%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C+	77%-79%	D	63%-69%

Exemplary		Good		Acceptable		Unacceptable	
A-	90%-93%	B	84%-86%	C	74%-76%	F	Under a 62%
		B-	80%-83%	C-	70%-73%		

Final Grade Calculation

Assessment	Percentage
In Class Assignment #1	10
Audio Audit #1	5
In Class Assignment #2	10
Final Project Pitch	20
Audio Audit #2	5
Class Participation	15
Final Project	35

Late Work Policy

The instructor expects students to adhere to professional standards when it comes to the quality of work they produce and the procedure for turning in assignments. For that reason, all assignments are due by the posted deadlines. The instructor reserves the right to change deadline dates and times, but he will notify students of such changes one class session prior to the original deadline due date. He will also post updates on Blackboard.

Students requiring a temporary leave of absence for medical or mental health reasons must provide documentation to the Office of the Dean of Students (dos@american.edu), which will verify with the academic unit that the documentation is appropriate and supports the leave. Students with an ASAC-approved accommodation for disability reasons, should, to the greatest extent possible, make arrangements in advance of the due date or deadline.

*****PLEASE DISCUSS WITH ME RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS/OBSERVANCES NOT FORMALLY RECOGNIZED BY AU AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO MISSING CLASS.*****

Incomplete Policy

At the discretion of the faculty member and before the end of the semester, the grade of I (Incomplete) may be given to a student who, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete the course during the semester. The grade of Incomplete may be given only if the student is receiving a passing grade for the coursework completed. Students on academic probation may not receive an Incomplete. The instructor must provide in writing to the student the conditions, which are described below, for satisfying the Incomplete and must enter those same conditions when posting the grades for the course. The student is responsible for verifying that the conditions were entered correctly.

Conditions for satisfying the Incomplete must include what work needs to be completed, by when the work must be completed, and what the course grade will be if the student fails to complete that work. At the latest, any outstanding coursework must be completed before the end of the following semester, absent an agreement to the contrary. Instructors will submit the grade of I and the aforementioned conditions to the Office of the University Registrar when

submitting all other final grades for the course. If the student does not meet the conditions, the Office of the University Registrar will assign the default grade automatically.

The Associate Dean of the Academic Unit, with the concurrence of the instructor, may grant an extension beyond the agreed deadline, but only in extraordinary circumstances. Incomplete courses may not be retroactively dropped. An Incomplete may not stand as a permanent grade and must be resolved before a degree can be awarded.

For more information on AU Regulations and Policies, see the [AU Catalog](#).

Rubrics

All assessments will have detailed instructions in the Blackboard course space and will be scored using the rubrics that follow. You should review all of the instructions in Blackboard and the rubrics before submitting each assessment. If you have questions about an assessment or rubric, contact the instructor to schedule a time to speak one-on-one.

In Class Assignment #1 Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)
Content	5 Points Excellent - The student asked questions that produced an engaging and entertaining interview. The audience has learned something about the subject.	4 Points Above Average - The student did an exceptional job interviewing the subject, but more could've been done to produce a stronger interview.	3 Points OK- The student met the minimum requirements of the assignment. The grade could've been improved if the student had made the effort to ask questions that elicited more about the subject.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student failed to meet all of the requirements of the assignment, either by not asking enough questions or asking questions that did produce a strong interview.
Audio Production	5 Points Excellent - Audio quality is clear. Editing is tight, with no extraneous content.	4 Points Above Average - While the audio may be clear, the editing could've been tighter	3 Points OK - The student has met the minimum requirement of the assignment.	2-0 Points Lacking - The sound quality is poor and the elements do not flow well together.

Audio Audit #1 Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)

Audio Audit #1 Rubric				
Content	5 Points Excellent - The student has provided superior detail in his or her evaluation of the podcast being audited. Not only has he or she identified all of the required elements, they actually “thought” about the content of the podcast and have made that clear in the content of the audit. The writing is clear and to the point.	4 Points Above Average - The student has included all of the required elements, but more detail could’ve been included. The writing may not have been as thorough.	3 Points OK- The student has met the minimum requirements of the assignment, but the audit lacks detail and insight into the podcast. A different choice in podcast may have elicited greater insight.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student has failed to meet all of the requirements of the assignment.

In Class Assignment #2 Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)
Content	5 Points Excellent - The student asked questions that produced an engaging and entertaining interview. The audience has learned something about the subject.	4 Points Above Average - The student did an exceptional job interviewing the subject, but more could’ve been done to produce a stronger interview.	3 Points OK- The student has met the minimum requirements of the assignment. The grade could’ve been improved if the student had made the effort to ask questions that elicited more about the subject.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student has failed to meet all of the requirements of the assignment, either by not asking enough questions or asking questions that did not produce a strong interview.
Audio Production	5 Points Excellent - Audio quality is clear. Editing is tight, with no extraneous content.	4 Points Above Average - While the audio may be clear, the editing could’ve been tighter	3 Points OK - The student has met the minimum requirement of the assignment.	2-0 Points Lacking - The sound quality is poor and the elements do not flow well together.
Audio Elements	5 Points Excellent - The student has effectively used the multiple audio elements to tell the story. The listener gets a real sense of place.	4 Points Above Average - The student has included all the necessary elements, but a little more care could’ve been used to incorporate the audio elements to better give the listener a sense of place.	3 Points OK - The student has met the minimum requirement of the assignment.	2-0 Points Lacking - The audio elements are either missing or poorly integrated into the audio.

Audio Audit #2 Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)
Content	5 Points Excellent - The student has provided superior detail in his or her evaluation of the podcast being audited. Not only has he or she identified all of the required elements, they actually “thought” about the content of the podcast and have made that clear in the content of the audit. The writing is clear and to the point.	4 Points Above Average - The student has included all of the required elements, but more detail could’ve been included. The writing may not have been as thorough.	3 Points OK- The student has met the minimum requirements of the assignment, but the audit lacks detail and insight into the podcast. A different choice in podcast may have elicited greater insight.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student has failed to meet all of the requirements of the assignment.

Final Project Pitch Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)
Content	5 Points Excellent - The written pitch includes detailed information about all the required elements. The student has grasped the scope of the project and has set up a plan that will allow him or her to succeed. The writing is clear and to the point.	4 Points Above Average - The student’s written pitch shows a general understanding of the scope of the project, but more detail might be required in order for him or her to succeed.	3 Points OK - The student has included the minimum requirements for the project without encompassing the final project’s scope. They may need more planning for the final project to succeed.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student has failed to include all the elements in their plan. Much work will be needed before the final project is due.
In Class Presentation	5 Points Excellent - The student has effectively pitched his or her project and presented the supporting materials to the audience. He or she also listened to feedback and asked followup questions.	4 Points Above Average - The student has successfully pitched his or her project to the class, though more detail may have been included. He or she has also listened to feedback, but more interaction may have been needed.	3 Points OK - The student has met the minimum requirements of the presentation. More detail and greater interaction was needed.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student’s pitch was lacking in detail and was poorly presented. More work will need to be done before the project is due.

Class Participation Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)
Participation	5 Points Excellent - The student enthusiastically took part in class discussions, contributing in some way in every class. He or she helped to critique other students' work and accepted the feedback of others.	4 Points Above Average - The student participated in most class discussions and critiques.	3 Points OK - The student participated in some class discussions and critiques, but could've chimed in more often.	2-0 Points Lacking - The student participated only occasionally or not at all.

Final Project Rubric				
	Exemplary (A)	Good (B)	Acceptable (C)	Unacceptable (D-F)
Storytelling	<p style="text-align: center;">5 Points</p> <p>Excellent - The student gathered all the interviews and elements necessary to tell an effective and engaging story. It has a beginning, middle and end. The audience wants to hear more episodes of this podcast.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 Points</p> <p>Above Average - While the story is good, greater care may have been needed in assembling and editing the interviews to achieve a successful podcast.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Points</p> <p>OK - The student has included the minimum requirements. The interviews could've been tighter or more information may be needed to effectively tell the story.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2-0 Points</p> <p>Lacking - The content is poorly assembled and fails to tell a cohesive story.</p>
Audio Production	<p style="text-align: center;">5 Points</p> <p>Excellent - Audio quality is clear. Editing is tight, with no extraneous content. The multiple elements blend together to help tell a cohesive story.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 Points</p> <p>Above Average - While the audio may be clear, the editing could've been tighter, and the blending of the multiple elements could've been better, it doesn't detract from the overall story.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Points</p> <p>OK - The audio production is adequate, but some elements may be detracting from the overall success of the story. Editing could've been tighter and the multiple elements are not well blended together better.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2-0 Points</p> <p>Lacking - Some audio elements may be missing. The sound quality is poor and the elements do not flow well together.</p>
Web Content	<p style="text-align: center;">5 Points</p> <p>Excellent - The student's web content is superior and worthy of the podcast he or she produced. It has all the required elements, including text and graphic elements; an audio player; a five episode overview; a monetization plan; and a promotion plan. The writing is clear and to the point.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 Points</p> <p>Above Average - The student's web content is good, but more detail could have been included. All the required elements are there. The writing is clear and to the point.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Points</p> <p>OK - The student's web content includes the minimum requirements for the project. More work could've been done on multiple elements to improve the overall content.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2-0 Points</p> <p>Lacking - The student has failed to include all the elements in their plan or the overall quality of the content is poor.</p>
In Class Presentation	<p style="text-align: center;">5 Points</p> <p>Excellent - The student has effectively presented his or her final project and supporting materials to the audience. He or she also listened to feedback and asked followup questions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 Points</p> <p>Above Average - The student has successfully presented his or her final project to the class, though more detail may be needed. He or she has also listened to feedback, but more interaction may have been needed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Points</p> <p>OK - The student has met the minimum requirements in presenting his or her final project. More detail and greater interaction was needed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2-0 Points</p> <p>Lacking - The student's final project was poorly presented and lacking in detail. There was little or no interaction with the audience.</p>

Course Schedule

Week/ Topic	Topic(s)	Readings & Resources	Activities & Assessments
Nov. 4/ What is a podcast?	Discuss the history of podcasting and review the different types of podcasts. Students will familiarize themselves with the equipment that we'll be using during the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: O'Connell, Introduction, Chapter 1 • Read: Abel, Introduction, Chapter 1 • Listen: The Nerdpocalypse - Nov. 2 episode (http://www.thenerdpcalypse.com) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Class Listening: The Kicker: Podcast: "Is the podcasting boom good for journalism?" (https://overcast.fm/+HnTltY3jM) • Introduction to equipment. • Guest: Jay Jacksonrao (http://www.thenerdpcalypse.com) • In class assignment: Interview another class member, download the audio and edit to 2 minute audio piece. (Due on Nov. 11).
Nov. 11/ How to get good audio.	Discuss the technical side of podcasting to help figure out what tools and audio elements students will need to complete your final final project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment: Audio from last week's in-class assignment is due at beginning of class. • Audit (#1) a podcast of your choice - It must be more than 15 minutes in length. Due at the beginning of class. • Read: O'Connell, Chapters 2, 3 & 4; • Read: Abel, Chapter 2 • Tutorial: Editing an Existing Audio File: http://manual.audacityteam.org/manual_editing_an_existing_file.html • Listen: Podcast Engineering School (PES 063/Sept. 14, 2017) https://podcastengineeringschool.com/category/show/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Class Listening: Investigation Continues (March 19, 2017) • Listen to the 2-minute interviews in class and offer critiques. • Guest: Chris Curan (https://podcastengineeringschool.com) • In class assignment: Interview a person on or around campus. Then, record natural sound to capture the location where that person is. Edit together into a 2-3 minute audio piece. (Due at the end of class).

Week/ Topic	Topic(s)	Readings & Resources	Activities & Assessments
Nov. 18/ What will your podcast be?	Students will pitch their podcasts and their classmates will provide feedback. We'll discuss how to execute the idea as well as planning and the interview process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project pitches - Written pitches will need to be turned in at the beginning of class. Each student will give a 5-minute presentation of their pitch, with the class providing feedback. • Read: O'Connell, Chapter 5 • Read: Abel, Chapters 3 & 4 • Listen: All Things Considered (Listen to the Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017 episode. http://www.npr.org/programs/all-things-considered/) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Class Listening: Can He Do That? (Nov. 17, 2017) • Guest: Emily Kopp (http://www.npr.org/2015/04/20/394867832/the-all-things-considered-staff) • Guest: Allison Michaels (https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/can-he-do-that-trump-podcast/) • In class assignment: Students will have 5 minutes to pitch their final The pitch should include the subject, list of guests, planned sound elements to tell story, rough outline of future episodes, and possible website elements.
Dec. 2/ There's more to making a podcast than just good audio.	Now that the students have started to collect audio, we will discuss how to bring the various elements together to create a narrative. We will also discuss how your podcast will live online, reviewing the various podcasting platforms available and your website presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit (#2) a podcast of your choice - It must be more than 15 minutes in length. Due at the beginning of class. • Read: O'Connell, Chapter • Read: Abel, Chapters 5 • Listen: Out on the Wire, Episode 1 https://jessicaabel.com/podcast/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Listening: Crimetown: Episode 1 • Guest: Jessica Abel https://jessicaabel.com/join/ • Project Update: Each student will present a 2-minute status update of their final project. • In class assignment: Students will have time to work on their final projects, as well as receive feedback from the instructor and classmates. Students are encouraged to bring in audio to share. Also, they should be thinking about what non-audio elements they may want to include in their project, such as artwork and text elements.
Dec. 9/ What's all this legal mumbo jumbo?	We will discuss intellectual property and music rights, as well as other legal considerations. We will also discuss the various ways to market your podcast?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: O'Connell, Appendix 1 • Listen: Reveal - "A Sonic Memorial to the victims at Orlando's Pulse nightclub" (June 18, 2016) https://www.revealnews.org/blog/a-sonic-memorial-to-the-victims-at-orlandos-pulse-nightclub/ • Listen: In the Dark - Episode 1: The Crime (Sept. 7, 2016) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Class Listening: #GoodMuslimBadMuslim • Guest: Kevin Goldberg • If we finish early, students will have time to work on their final assignment.

Week/ Topic	Topic(s)	Readings & Resources	Activities & Assessments
Dec. 16/ Podcast Debut!	The final class will focus on presentations by the students of the podcast episodes they produced. The goal of the project and presentation is for students to demonstrate their understanding of podcast planning and production.		In Class Listening: We will listen to students' final project podcast. Each student will speak for a few minutes, describing what their podcast is about, how it will be monetized and what future episodes will contain. They will then play the episode and afterwards answer questions from the class.

Student Support

Technical Support

AU is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty that prevents a student from completing a time-sensitive assessment activity, instructors may extend deadlines and provide appropriate accommodations based on the situation.

Blackboard Support: Students should immediately report any problems to their course instructor and also contact the Blackboard Support Center at blackboard@american.edu or call (202) 885-3904 for 24/7 support. Students can also log on to [Blackboard Help](#) for support.

AU Help Desk (focuses on all other IT issues): Answers to your technology questions are just an e-mail, instant message, or phone call away. Contact the IT Help Desk at 202-885-2550, helpdesk@american.edu, or [AskAmericanUHelp](#) to reach one of our professional staff who can answer your questions and provide general troubleshooting assistance. Students can also log on to the [Need Help Now?](#) portal for support.

Academic Support Services

All students may take advantage of the [Academic Support and Access Center \(ASAC\)](#) for individual academic skills counseling, workshops, Tutoring and Writing Lab appointments, peer tutor referrals, and Supplemental Instruction. The ASAC is located in Mary Graydon Center 243.

Additional academic support resources available at AU include the Bender Library, the Department of Literature's Writing Center (located in the Library), the Math Lab in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics, and the Center for Language Exploration, Acquisition, & Research (CLEAR) in Asbury Hall. A more complete list of campus-wide resources is available in the ASAC.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

AU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. The ASAC assists students with disabilities and promotes full participation in academic programs and other campus activities.

Students are not required to notify the university or any of its offices or personnel of a disability either prior to or subsequent to admission; however, if a student plans to request accommodations, documentation of the disability must be provided. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended.

To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or asac@american.edu, or drop by MGC 243.

For more information, visit AU's [Services for Students with Disabilities web page](#).

Center for Diversity & Inclusion

[CDI](#) is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, multicultural, first-generation, and women's experiences on campus and to advancing AU's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center. (202-885-3651, MGC 201 & 202)

Counseling Center

The [Counseling Center](#) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources. (202-885-3500, MGC 214)

Dean of Students Office

The [Dean of Students Office](#) offers one-on-one meetings to discuss academic, adjustment, and personal issues that may be interfering with a student's ability to succeed academically. The office also verifies documentation for students who have medical or mental health issues that cause them to be absent from class. (202-885-3300, Butler Pavilion 408)

International Student & Scholar Services

[International Student & Scholar Services](#) has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, [support for second language learners](#), response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources. (202-885-3350, Butler Pavilion 410)

Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence

[OASIS](#) provides free and confidential advocacy services for anyone in the campus community who experiences sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking. Advocacy is survivor-driven and intended to empower survivors to make informed decisions about their health, emotional well-being, and the adjudication process. (202-885-7070, Wellness Center – McCabe Hall 123).

Writing Center

The [Writing Center](#) offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. (202-885-2991, Bender Library – 1st Floor Commons).

University Policies

Discrimination and Harassment (Title IX)

American University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The university is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. AU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information, or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the [AU Department of Public Safety](#) (202-885-2527) or the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (dos@american.edu or 202-885-3300). Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff – with the exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, staff in the Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence (OASIS), medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center – who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident. For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact [OASIS: The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence](#) (oasis@american.edu or 202-885-7070) or the Office of the Dean of Students.

For information about your rights, see the [Title IX Information](#) page on the AU website.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and

extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or the use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU email and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any emergency-related absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU email regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the [AU website](#), and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college specific information.

Religious Observances

Students will be provided the opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. Please send this notification through email to the professor. For additional information, see American University's [religious observances policy](#).

Sharing of Course Content

Students are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings, including live streaming, of classroom lectures or any class-related content, using any type of recording devices (e.g., smart phone, computer, digital recorder, etc.) unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained, and there are no objections from any of the students in the class. If permission is granted, personal use and sharing of recordings and any electronic copies of course materials (e.g., PowerPoints, formulas, lecture notes, and any classroom discussions—online or otherwise) is limited to the personal use of students registered in the course and for educational purposes only, even after the end of the course.

Exceptions will be made for students who present a signed Letter of Accommodation from the Academic Support and Access Center. Further details are available from the [ASAC website](#).

To supplement the classroom experience, lectures may be audio or video recorded by faculty and made available to students registered for this class. Faculty may record classroom lectures or discussions for pedagogical use, future student reference, or to meet the accommodation needs of students with a documented disability. These recordings are limited to personal use and may not be distributed (fileshare), sold, or posted on social media outlets without the written permission of faculty.

Unauthorized downloading, file sharing, distribution of any part of a recorded lecture or course materials, or using information for purposes other than the student's own learning may be deemed a violation of American University's Student Conduct Code and subject to disciplinary action (see Student Conduct Code VI. Prohibited Conduct).

Use of Student Work

The professor will use academic work that you complete for educational purposes in this course during this semester. Your registration and continued enrollment constitute your consent.