

**MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF SOCIETY, CULTURE, MEDIA AND  
PHILOSOPHY,  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION**

**ICOM 890  
Digital Audio/Radio Production**

**STUDY GUIDE, SEMESTER 2, 2008**

**Unit Overview:**

The course provides a variety of professional sound recording and broadcasting production experiences, which will help participants understand audio/radio media. The seminars focus on international radio and audio broadcasting. The course does not aim to train on-air personnel but to provide a managerial outlook on how digital audio practices are used in broadcasting. Many of the skills, such as sound recording, audio/visual media writing and interviewing are transferable to other media areas.

The course will consist of ten weeks of lectures and workshops followed by three sessions devoted to student production. Practical production exercises will involve digital media exclusively.

**Unit Value: 4 Credit Points**

**Contact Details:**

Unit Convener:	Mr. Howard Gelman
Phone:	9571 9994
Email:	<a href="mailto:howard.gelman@scmp.mq.edu.au">howard.gelman@scmp.mq.edu.au</a>
Time:	Thursday 3–6pm
Room::	F9C 130

**Unit Outcomes:**

In this unit you will learn the following discipline based skills providing a basic understanding of professional sound recording and radio program production:

1. Operate a digital audio recorder and associated microphone effectively.
2. Input sounds at optimal levels using Pro Tools software.
3. Edit and mix sounds (voice, music and sound effects {SFX}).
4. Write and copy-edit radio news.
5. Carry out interviews for radio production.
6. Prepare a script for a public service announcement or commercial spot.
7. Collate all class exercises and burn a CD-R as an 'audio portfolio'.

**Generic Skills:**

University study does not only aim to provide you with knowledge and skills in a particular academic discipline, but also in research, work and expression skills that will help you in later employment. These are known as generic skills:

1. Cross-cultural skills in dealing with individuals from different linguistic backgrounds.
2. Independent library and online research skills
3. Report writing skills
4. Oral presentation skills

## Topic Schedule

### Week 1

**Introduction:** a) The unique nature of radio (*p.3*). b) An overview of the basic physics of sound c) Demonstration of the course's hardware and software. c) **Radio frequency exercise.**

*Reading:* [*pp.4-5*].

### Week 2

**Microphones:** a) Microphones as *transducers* for voice, music and sound effects. b) The microphones used in *this* course. c) Getting the best levels when music and voice are mixed. Practical example of digital distortion. d) Allocation of recording "kits".

*Reading:* "A history of radio in two Asian nations and in Australia" [*pp.6-7*].

### Week 3

**Recording:** a) Recording good sound on MiniDisc. b) Recording voice and music and adjusting levels while using Pro Tools as a mixer. c) Creation of student folders for use with Pro Tools. d) Using the flash disk for saving audio files.

*Reading:* "The Rules of Writing News for Radio [*p.10*]. *Pro Tools* [*pp.1-2*]

### Week 4

**News writing:** a) Writing radio news — the main Western rules. b) Converting wire service or print news to radio news (*p.11*). c) **Radio news writing assignment** set (*p.12*). d) Further principles of audio editing and mixing. Downloading multi-track audio material to Pro Tools for off-line editing.

*Reading:* "The Structure of the Radio News Story" [*pp.13-15*]. *Pro Tools* [*pp.3-7*]

### Week 5

**DAWS practice:** a) Small group student practice on the digital audio work stations (DAWS).

b) **News writing exercise** handed in.

*Reading:* "Some Principles of Advanced News Style" [*pp.17-19*]. *Pro Tools* [*pp.8-11*]

### Week 6

**On-air:** a) Announcing and communicating with the listener. b) Broadcast journalism interviewing. **Practical exercise in class: interview** (discussed and assessed).

*Reading:* "Preparing for an Air Shift," [*p. 8*].

### Week 7

**Interviewing:** a) News writing exercise returned b) Interviewing techniques for radio journalism. c) Practical interviewing exercise set. d) Practice in editing an interview on Pro Tools.

*Reading:* “Interviewing Techniques” [pp.20-24]. *Pro Tools* [pp.12-18]

### RECESS OF TWO WEEKS

### Week 8

**Music and SFX:** a) The uses of music (including music “beds”), SFX and dialogue (spoken and sung) in radio c) Practice in editing an interview on Pro Tools d) **Practical interviewing exercise** handed in.

*Reading:* “Radio News – Actuality, Voice Reports and Formats” [p.25-29]. *Pro Tools* [pp.12-18]

### Week 9

**Copywriting:** a) Using dramatic reconstruction within the feature program and the radio commercial as examples (p.30). b) Script layout; types of commercials; samples played. c) **Commercial script writing assignment** set. d) Students plan final projects.

*Reading:* The Basics of Radio Copywriting [pp.31-32]. *Pro Tools* [review]

### Week 10

**Producing commercials:** a) Radio copywriting, using the commercial as the practice medium b) **Commercial script exercise** handed in. b) Practical class working on student productions.

*Reading:* Types of Radio Commercials [pp.33]. *Pro Tools* [pp.18-22]

### Week 11

**Production:** a) Commercial script exercise returned. b) Final commercial production set. c) Practical class working on student productions.

### Week 12

**Production:** Practical class working on student productions.

*Reading:* *Pro Tools* [pp.22-24]

### Week 13

**Production:** Final student commercial productions; playing, discussion.

### **Assignments and Assessment:**

Students are expected to participate in discussions and activities around the readings allocated for tutorials and to attend and be punctual for **at least 75%** of the lectures and tutorials. Details about tutorials and how to get good grades are provided in the FAQ section of the course outline.

1. News writing:	20%	Due <u>Week 5</u>
2. Interviewing:	20%	Due <u>Week 8</u>
3. Commercial script:	15%	Due <u>Week 10</u>
4. Final production:	30%	Due <u>Week 13</u>
5. Class Participation:	10%	Overall mark given for 13 weeks.
6. Care of Equipment	5%	Overall mark given for 13 weeks

### Unit Texts:

All reading will be provided in a comprehensive course guide distributed by the instructor. There is no textbook currently available which covers this course adequately. Extra handouts will be distributed by the instructor as necessary.

### Grades, scaled marks and grade points

Assignments and presentations will be marked on the following scale:

HD	High Distinction	85-100	4
D	Distinction	75-84	4
CR	Credit	65-74	3
P	Pass	50-64	2
PC	Pass Conceded	45-49	1
F	Fail	0-44	0

To achieve a credit grade there must be evidence of critical analysis, knowledge and familiarity of key concepts from the course, material drawn from readings and lectures, and appropriate referencing. In addition to the requirements for a credit, to attain a distinction or better there must be reference to additional literature sources, creative presentation and individual field research, and the attendance must be not lower than 90%.

### PLUS

All students are required to participate in the Program for Learning, Understanding and Support (PLUS). One of the objectives of PLUS is to teach students to avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism. All students are expected to attend PLUS sessions about plagiarism and to use consulting time to discuss any questions they may have about writing of assignments with their lecturers. As students who have difficulty in English expression are expected to participate in the PLUS Language Support Program, they need to show drafts of their assignments to PLUS consultants. These drafts and PLUS consultant remarks should be attached to the final assignment. This procedure has two advantages: It will help students to avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism and also, if a question of plagiarism arises, earlier drafts are available for the protection of the student. EFL students in the **red and green** are required to participate in the Language Support Program so that they can derive maximum benefit from the degree.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of other peoples' work or ideas. It is a serious academic offence. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. More information can be found in the Division of SCMP Essay Writing Guide, or at [www.scmp.mq.edu.au/plagiarism.html](http://www.scmp.mq.edu.au/plagiarism.html) Additionally there will be PLUS guidance provided on avoiding plagiarism. Students who are experiencing difficulties in one way or the other should consult their lecturer about an extension rather than falling into the trap of plagiarism. Plagiarism can result in failure in the unit or even suspension from the University, depending on the extent of the offence. In order to protect students from the trap of falling into plagiarism, assignments may be subjected to electronic plagiarism detection tests.

### Student support services

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can found at <http://www.student.mq.edu.au>. A department feedback forum will be held Thursday, 11/10/2007 from 1–2pm at E5A 107.

### Human Ethics

Please note that research projects involving human participants must be conducted in conformity with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999). More information of the University's Human Ethics Guidelines is provided at [www.ro.mq.edu.au/eth\\_hum.htm](http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/eth_hum.htm).

### Frequently asked questions

#### *Where and what is the Centre for International Communication?*

Check the website [www.mucic.mq.edu.au](http://www.mucic.mq.edu.au)

#### *Where do I submit written work?*

Hardcopies of written work should be submitted by the due date to the lecturer. Assignments should have a completed cover sheet, the lecturer's name and other details completed. Assignments are date stamped. Unless prior approval is obtained or appropriate documentation is attached (e.g. doctor's certificate) **late assignments will be penalised at a rate of 5% per day.**

#### *Where do I collect my graded paper?*

Papers will be returned to students after marking by the lecture during class sessions. A portion of class time will be set aside for overall evaluation of the written assignments.

#### *What are references?*

Written academic assignments usually require a student to explore a topic, consider theoretical approaches, and provide examples to support arguments. To achieve these ends they usually need draw on a variety of written or others sources. Students should use the Harvard referencing style and not use footnotes or endnotes.

Instead use in-text referencing which state the author, date of publication and page number.

for information about the Harvard style see

<http://www.lib.gla.ac.uk/researchskills/citationstyle.shtml>

Writing Tools at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/html/tools.htm> is a site with useful information on writing assignments.

Media reports also require references, however the method of referencing differs from academic essays. Course content in this unit will carefully address a range of ways journalists use for referencing facts, information, opinions and sources in newspaper and magazine news and feature stories.