

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY & PRACTICE  
Master of Science in Social Policy**

**MSSP 798-003 Social Policy Through Podcasting**

**Spring 2022**

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Twitter hashtag: #mssp798

Class-related tweets: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23mssp798&src=typd>

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Office hours: for Ioana Marinescu, use Calendly (link to be posted soon), or email her if you cannot find a time that works on Calendly.

We will use Piazza to ask questions and communicate as a class outside our meeting time.

Course time: Wednesdays 3pm-5:50pm, Caster C5.

**Course Description**

In this class, students will experience hands-on learning about social policy through podcasting. Students will work collaboratively as a newsroom to produce three episodes of the new SP2 podcast, "Just Economics", with Ioana Marinescu and Kat Rosqueta. The podcast explores what we actually know about how policies and labor markets work, including the science behind job creation and unemployment insurance. Each episode introduces the work of an eminent scholar whose research provides evidence that empowers us to create a more just world. In some episodes, economist Ioana Marinescu will be joined by her colleague, Katherina ‘Kat’ Rosqueta, founding executive director of Penn’s Center for High Impact Philanthropy. Together, Ioana and Kat will discuss the implications of the guest scholar’s research, with Ioana focusing on the policy implications, and Kat focusing on the implications for philanthropy – i.e., private action for public good. Students will work together with Ioana and Kat to select the topic and guest for each episode, do background research, prepare questions for the guest, do post-production, and promote each episode on social media. Special guests from Spotify will provide professional information on the podcasting world and opportunities it offers for students.

**Educational Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand how to communicate social policy to a broader audience through a podcast
- Find a podcast topic that will likely appeal to a broader audience
- Read original research on social policy and prepare questions for a podcast based on it
- Understand the process of podcast editing
- Understand how to publicize a podcast on social media

**Background**

Steps for a podcast episode:

1. Find a topic, especially one that has resonance given current events and policy debates. List other promising topics for future episodes.
2. Find a couple of economists who have a recent paper (no more than 5 years old) on the topic
3. Read abstract and introduction of the papers and figure out which one to make a podcast about
4. Invite the speaker. If they are unavailable, invite the next speaker on the list.

5. Read the whole paper and prepare about 10 questions that break the paper down into key takeaways. Briefly summarize the key points of the other papers you identified in step 3: this can be used to prepare questions and to add comments after the recording.
6. Share the questions with the speaker and ask for feedback if any. Review the questions as needed after speaker feedback
7. Record the interview and listen to it
8. Prepare the introduction and conclusion that are recorded by the host(s).
9. Record introduction and conclusion.
10. Edit the interview, introduction and conclusion, removing digressions or discussions that e.g. got way too technical.
11. Add beginning and end music.
12. Listen to the whole episode and edit some more as needed.
13. Post the episode on Spotify / Apple, etc.
14. Promote the episode on Twitter and more broadly on social media.

## **Course Requirements and Expectations**

### **Improve your writing**

Writing is an essential professional skill for policy analysts and others working in areas related to social policy. Even the best writers always have room for improvement. In some cases, instructors may suggest that students seek out help with their writing; in other cases, students might decide on their own, that professional help is in order.

The Marks Family Writing Center

([http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/graduate\\_students/help\\_with\\_your\\_writing.php](http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/graduate_students/help_with_your_writing.php))

has a variety of services for those who would like help with their writing. The School also offers writing workshops.

### **Grading policy**

Assignments have to be handed in on time. Each day an assignment is late without a substantial excuse, a full letter grade is deducted from the paper. Starting from 30 minutes after the official deadline, your paper is considered to be a day late, and two days late 24 hours after the official deadline, etc.

### **Class participation**

You are expected to come to every class on time and fully prepared to discuss the material assigned for the week. That is, you should have completed all assignments and be ready to discuss them.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to adhere to the University's Code of Academic Integrity, available at <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>. Care should be taken to avoid academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, fabrication of information, and multiple submissions (see descriptions below).\*\* Students who engage in any of these actions will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct, which investigates and decides on sanctions in cases of academic dishonesty.

1. Plagiarism: using the ideas, data, or language of another person or source without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying, in part or in its entirety, another person's paper, article, or web-based material and submitting it for an assignment; using someone else's ideas without attribution; not using quotation marks where appropriate; etc.
2. Fabrication: submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Example: making up data or statistics, citing nonexistent articles, contriving sources, etc.

3. Multiple submissions: submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement.

\*\*It is students' responsibility to consult the instructor if they are unsure about whether something constitutes a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity.

### **Required Texts**

Here are some useful reads about podcasting

### **Assignments**

For more details about the assignments, see the guidelines on Canvas under assignments.

Provisional list of assignments:

1. Make a case for a topic / guest for the podcast
2. Prepare questions for the guest interview
3. Beginning and end script
4. Social media posts / marketing strategy
5. Lessons from the experience about podcasting

### **Class Schedule (PROVISIONAL)**

The class consists of recording 3 podcast episodes with input from the students. The week by week activities are subject to change and will be adapted to the rhythm of podcast production.

Week 1 (January 19)

Why podcast for social policy;

Academia, journalists, policy makers and non-profits as shapers of social policy topics.

Twitter and podcasts;

Week 2

Assignment for this week: listen to at least one podcast episode of Just Economics.

Steps for a podcast episode (see above)

Brainstorm and decide on a list of topics for 3 episodes

Week 3

Discuss papers for each of the three episodes

Identify some key big picture questions to address in this literature

Decide which speaker to invite

Week 4/Lab 1 (facilitated by Kat): Students will present 1) their preliminary case for the relevance of the speaker's scholarly expertise for a broader audience and 2) their first draft of proposed questions for that speaker. With feedback from Kat and expert practitioners (e.g., Spotify, Studio To Be, Professional journalists), and their peers, students will refine their case and list of questions

## Week 5

Discuss chosen papers in detail, prepare final list of questions to the speakers based on the chosen papers, draft correspondence inviting the speakers to be interviewed for the podcast. Ideally, interviews will take place between weeks 5 and weeks 7 and will last no more than 30 minutes.

## Week 6

Spotify, Studio 2 Be and other guest speakers will teach on narrative, good interviews, and communications for social impact, etc. If an interview has been recorded, students will listen to that interview and propose edits, aligned with speaker's teaching.

## Week 7

Assuming at least one interview has been recorded, students will have listened to at least one recorded interview and propose edits to the interview, along with rationale and discuss edits, updates to their case of the relevance of scholar's work, and points to include in the introduction and conclusion.

Week 8/Lab 2: Students will present a proposed 'script' for the introduction and conclusion for one or more recorded interviews. Per best practice (Week 6), students intro and conclusion should emphasize the one big overarching idea or theme that best captures the interview's value to listeners.

The introduction provides talking points for Ioana and Kat to set up the edited interview. The conclusion emphasizes the implications of the scholar's work for policy makers (Ioana) and those who want to help (i.e., donors and volunteers). To ensure the conclusion of the episode is actionable for listeners, students will identify any and all content on the Center for High Impact Philanthropy's website that links to ways the nonprofit and philanthropic sector addresses the issues discussed.

## Week 9 - 11

Students will discuss effective promotion of podcasts and develop a social media plan for the series in general, and for each episode.

In Lab 3: Students will present ideas for a proposed social media strategy for each episode, including key messages, images, and relevant organizations and individuals to engage via social media. Organizations and individuals to engage include policymakers, nonprofit leaders and their organizations, and other stakeholders of the speaker's topic. With feedback from Kat, expert practitioners, and peers, students will refine.

Week 12 - 13/Final session + Lab 4: Students will synthesize learning and experience into a 'handbook' of what to do - and not to do - in exploring social policy through podcasting.