Assignment
Podcast on Transhumanism

Introduction:
“A podcast is a series of audio or video digital media files which are distributed over the Internet by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players and personal computers” [Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast]

Goals:
• You will produce an 8-10 minute audio podcast on “transhumanism.”
• The approach must be research-based, i.e., you should develop a script, mention resources, citations, etc.
• You must take the position of a journalist and cover the topic thoroughly and in-depth for at least one aspect. You should bring in other perspectives too and apply critical thinking. If you state your own opinion, make it clear that it’s your own. If you state other opinions, provide the sources.
• Other sound sources can be used. You are highly encouraged to interview other people, e.g., experts, clients, etc. Make sure that you obtain their consent and that you only use material that you have permission to use (see podcasting legal guide under resources)!
• The intended podcast audience is a well-educated listener with no specific knowledge about the topic. So that means you have to introduce the topic first!
• The assignment addresses all UNST goals.

Make a plan and make your podcast:
1. Listen to a couple of professional podcasts to get a good idea of typical podcast content and format. E.g., NPR (http://www.npr.org), ScienceFri (http://sciencefriday.com), or Scientific American (http://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast)
2. Pick a topic, begin researching it, and outline a script. Topics you may want to consider (this list is by no means exhaustive):
   • Life extension
   • Plastic surgery
   • Liposuction
   • Body extension, exoskeletons
   • Gene therapy
   • Cryonics (low-temperature conservation of bodies)
   • Sex re-assignment surgery (surgical)
   • RFID tagging of humans
   • Pacemaker and other non-biological organs
   • (Re-)Growing organs, limbs, etc.
   • Bioengineering for medical purposes
3. Check in with us if you are unsure about a topic and/or the podcast content.
4. Focus on one topic only. However, always consider the broader implications of your chosen topic as well.
5. You are strongly encouraged to interview other people, e.g., experts, critics, victims, witnesses, etc., in the field. It is rather difficult to get an A for this assignment without doing at least one interview.
6. Record more material than you will need and do not expect to get everything right from the beginning! Produce your podcast in multiple steps.
7. Edit your sources into a final podcast.
Practical details:
• No movies are allowed for this assignment. We’ll all do a movie in the Spring term.
• This is an individual project. No teamwork allowed.
• Due date: Wed, Feb 25, 2015, 10:00pm
• How to submit: The podcast must be submitted on D2L.
• Typical podcast length: 8-10 minutes (15 minutes maximum!)
• Format: audio (mp3, m4a)
• Audio editing software on UNST PCs: Audacity or Soundbooth
• Mac: You can use GarageBand. Online tutorials can be found online easily.
• UNST podcast recorders: They can be reserved and checked out from the ePortfolio website. Many smartphones also offer podcast recording apps. E.g., iTalk for iPhone. Note that the sound quality may be considerably inferior to the UNST recorders. If you plan to use alternative recording devices, do a test first.
• List of criteria for a good podcast:
  o Introduction: How was the topic introduced? Was the goal of the podcast stated?
  o Content: Was the structure clear? How easy was it to follow? Did the statements make sense? Were any interesting comments made? How well did you understand the topic? How well prepared were you? Did you consider other perspectives?
  o Conclusion: How well did you summarize the content? How did you wrap up the podcast? Was there a take home message?
  o Mechanics: How good is the quality of the sound? Can all passages be heard and understood? Was the editing done well? Was the pace of speech appropriate?
  o Completeness: How well and how in-depth was the topic covered?
  o Critical thought: How was critical thinking applied throughout the podcast?
  o Originality and creativity

Resources:
• UNST ePortofio site (with software and hardware tutorials):
  http://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/unst-ep-resources
• Podcasting legal guide: http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Podcasting_Legal_Guide