Pre-Production Planning Document (PODCAST)

GENERAL INFO

1. **Your Name:** Nix Pendergast

PROJECT: Podcast

CREATIVE BRIEF

1. What must it be (i.e. format, like audio-only podcast, video, etc.)

   An audio-only podcast or PSA.

2. Who is it for? (**Note:** this should **not** simply be "for the professor" or "my classmates". What real-world audience would find this piece appealing? Think about age, location, education level, life position, interests, etc. For example, a piece on retro video games might appeal to those who grew up in the 1980s in the US. A piece in a local library might appeal to seniors living nearby, etc.)

   Potentially: true crime enthusiasts, LGBTQ+ folks, LGBTQ+ allies, or Dungeons & Dragons nerds.

3. How long must it be?

   2-10 minutes (contact the professor if you want to go longer)

4. What is your objective with the piece?

   To either inform the audience about a true crime that happened within Washington State or provide information on how the concepts of semiotics and signification intersect with personal identity, and how this can be seen in action with the self-expression of the LGBTQ+ community. Or finally, teaching D&D Lore.

5. When is it due?

   Sunday, November 2nd.

6. What is the overall idea?

   I have three ideas:
   - A true crime podcast about cases that specifically happened in Washington State. Think like: *Only Murders in Washington*, but it won't be called that because I don't want Steve Martin and Martin Short to sue me.
   - A PSA type thing that talks about the concepts of semiotics and signification and how they relate to the expression of one's personal identity. It will discuss the works of LGBTQ+ artists like Hal Fischer and Joan E. Byron, gay and lesbian photographers, respectively, who documented the self-expression of their own communities in the 80s. It will call for viewers to be on the lookout for others' own self-expression now.
   - More like an audio essay about something with D&D Lore.

7. What is the storyline summary?

- Either the story of a solved serial killer case or an unsolved serial killer case. Solved provides more options than unsolved. Also, preferably a case that is not over-covered.
- Semiotics and signification will both be defined, and how they can relate to the visual self-expression of one's identity. How this can be seen in action will be supplied through analyzing Hal Fischer and Joan E. Byron's photography of other gay and lesbian folk.
- A crash course of information on D&D Lore, such as typical monsters of the monster, the history of the city of Baldur's Gate, or how the portrayal of Tieflings has changed over time due to the perception of fans.

8. Elevator pitch:

- As a true crime enthusiast myself, I always find true crime podcasts interesting. Living in Washington, I have found that there are plenty of murderers, even serial killers, who have operated in this state. This podcast will be one installment of a true crime series that discusses cases that occurred in Washington State. Rather than focusing on killers who already have plenty of podcasts about them, like Ted Bundy and Gary Ridgeway, this podcast will focus on lesser-known cases from Washington.
- For a few years now, I have been interested in the concepts of Semiotics Signification, the theory behind how we assign meaning to signs, convey them to others, and how these concepts relate to self-expression, especially within the LGBTQ+ community.
- As a Dungeons & Dragons nerd myself, one of the things I find the most interesting is the lore of the world. This will be a video essay giving the rundown of a piece of Dungeons & Dragons lore.

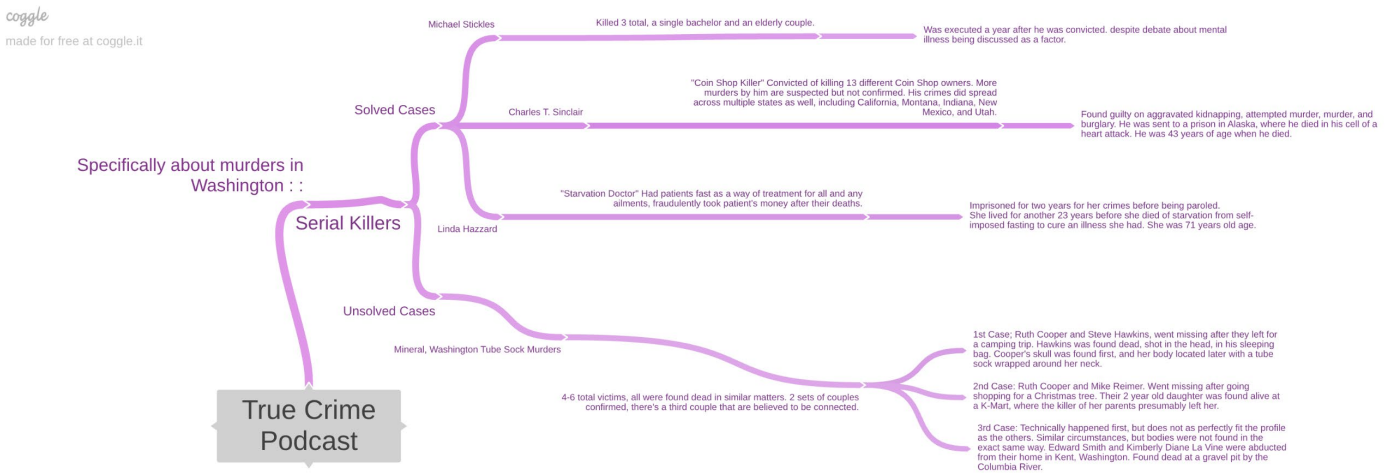
9. Tagline:

- Welcome to the True Crime in the Evergreen State, where only the trees will hear you scream. I'm your host, Nix Pendergast.
- Welcome to the Semiotics, Signification, and Self-Identity Podcast, where we discuss how we assign meaning to signs and how that affects self-expression. I am your host, Nix Pendergast.
- Dungeons & Dragons Book Report! I am your host, Nix Pendergast.

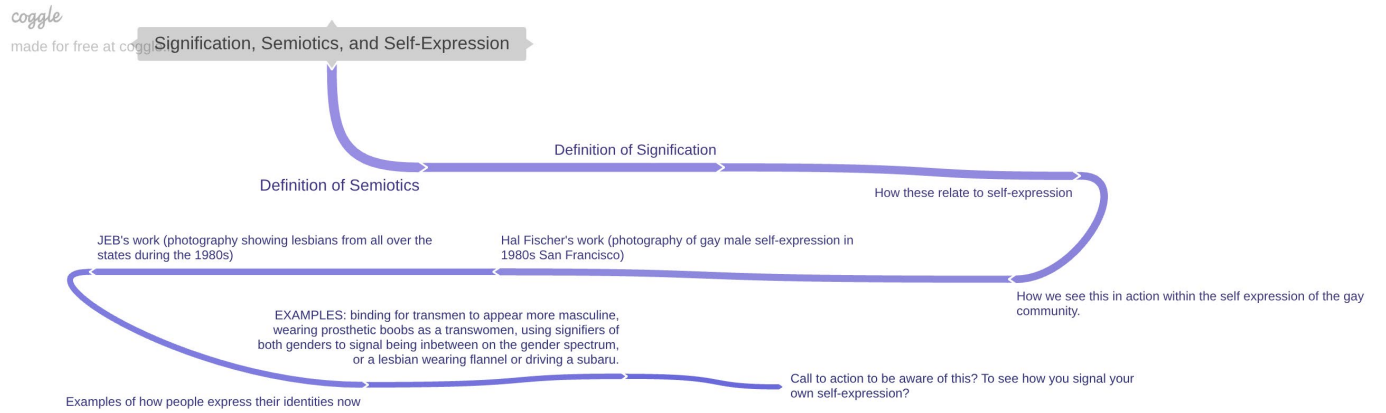
10. Look and feel description:

- I want it to seem like just one episode out of an already established true crime podcast. I want it to be professional and respectful to the victims mentioned in the case.
- A casual explanation of these topics, meant to be like an educational conversation.
- A casual discussion of D&D lore, an educational conversation of totally fictional stuff.

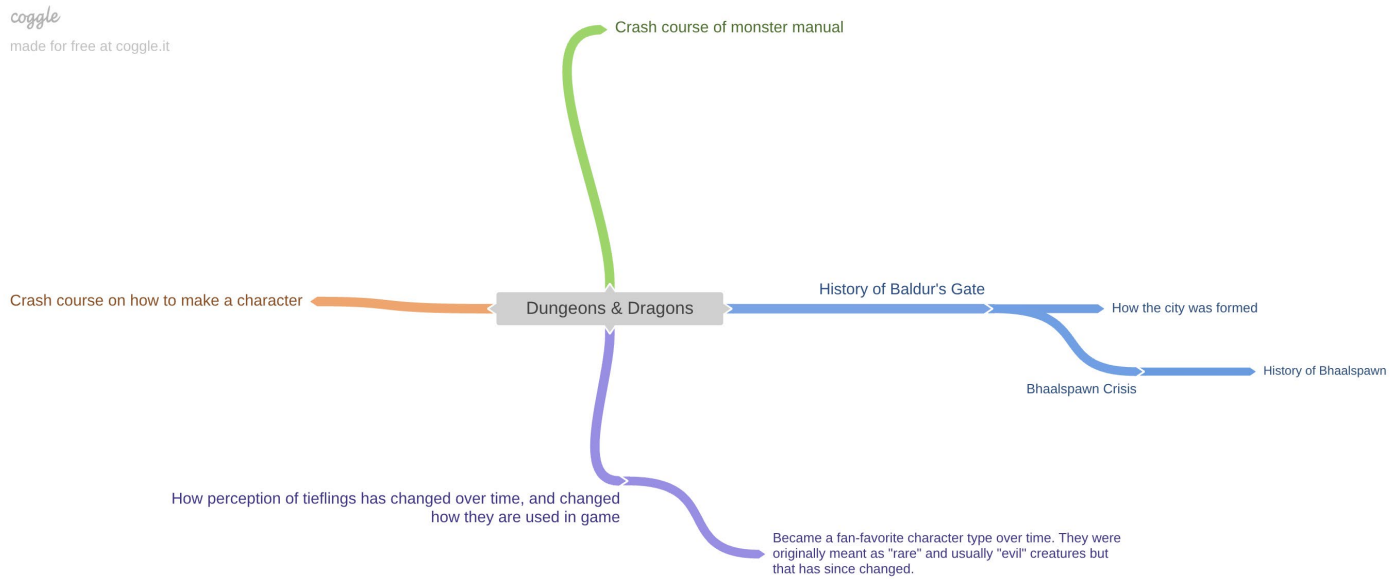
MIND MAPS



Mind Map for True Crime Podcast Ideas



Mind Map for Signification, Semiotics, and Self-Expression PSA



Mind Map for Dungeons & Dragons Podcast

QUESTIONS / NOTES

I've decided to go with the semiotics and signification topic because I think it will be the easiest to discuss within the given time frame.

HOOK:

1. What will grab the attention of the audience within the first few seconds?
2. Hook ideas:
    - Talk about signals we see every day
    - Talk about looking at someone and just getting a gut instinct about them.
    - Ask if the viewer has ever thought about how we assign meaning to signs.
    - Ask how they recognize a person's identity when they see them.

MESSAGE/STORY:

1. What message are you trying to deliver to the audience?
2. Clearly describe the following parts of your story:
    a. **Beginning:** Define semiotics and signification, explain how they relate to one another.
    b. **Middle:** Discuss how these things then relate to self-expression and how you recognize it in action. Mention Hal Fischer's works and how he used semiotics to demonstrate the self-expression of gay men in the 80s.
    c. **End:** Call on the listeners to evaluate their own self-expression, how do they signal who they are? How do others around them signal their identities?

NARRATION/HOST:

1. Who will lead us through the piece?
2. Narration ideas:
   I will narrate this myself.

MUSIC:

1. What is overall "mood" and "feel" of the piece?
2. Music track ideas:

The mood of this piece should be educational without being boring. The music track should not be too distracting but still have some playfulness.

AMBIENT AUDIO:

1. What is the "location" of the piece? If we close our eyes, where should we imagine that we are?
2. Ambient audio ideas:

I will use both room ambience and ethereal ambience. Room ambience is to be paired with music, while ethereal ambience will be played when there's no music in the background.

SOUND EFFECTS:

1. What sound effects (SFX) would help tell this story? Why?
2. SFX ideas:
   I will use sound effects at appropriate times to help make the narration more engaging. Such as a yawn when I mentioning yawning or the sounds of a club while discussing the Castro District of San Francisco

SCRIPT

Name: Nix Pendergast
Title: Semiotics, Signification, and Self-Expression

VIDEO	**AUDIO**
(NO VISUALS FOR AUDIO PROJECT)	(Fade in ambient ethereal audio) **HOOK:** • When you see another unknown person, how do you identify them? Other than going over and asking them, that is. What signs do you look for to identify them? Height? Hairstyle? Their clothing? All of these are examples of signs that one gives to express their identity. But how do we recognize these signs? (ethereal ambience fades to room ambience) (playful but music still good for thinking begins to play in the background) **INTRODUCTION/TAGLINE:** • Welcome to the Semiotics, Signification, and Self-Expression Podcast, where we discuss how we assign meaning to signs and how that affects self-expression. I am your host, Nix Pendergast. I am a current graduate student pursuing a master's in interactive media. My undergraduate degree was in Digital Technology and Creative Culture, and I also had a minor in Gender and Sexuality Studies. I have been studying how we express ourselves.

	NARRATIVE
	
	(music from before fades out)
	
	• Define Semiotics (study of how we assign meaning to signs)
	• Define Signification (the relationship between a sign and its meaning)
	• The linguist Ferdinand de Saussure developed the model of what makes a sign.
	• A sign is made up of two parts: a signifier, which is a signal of some sort, and a signified, which is the meaning assigned to the signifier.
	  o EX) A yawn (yawn SFX) is a signal or signifier from the body, the signified or meaning being that you're tired.
	• Explain how these concepts relate to each other (semiotics is the study of signification)
	• Explain how these concepts relate to self-expression
	
	(music shift for talking about the 80s, turn to copyright safe 80s pop background music)
	
	• Explain how nonverbal self-expression was necessary for the safety of the LGBTQ+ community in the 80s. Examples from media and history are:
	  o Hal Fischer's work
	  o Hanky and Earring Codes
	  o Clones of the Castro (mention Village People)
	  o Lesbians defying expectations of women
	  o Joan E. Bryan (JEB)'s work

	(street SFX and club SFX before talking about Fischer)
	
	(driving SFX and chattering women SFX before talking about JEB's work)
	
	(80s music fades to just room ambience)
	
	• Nonverbal or visual communication was and is important for the LGBTQ+ community because it provides a method to find others in the community that only others in the community or in the know recognize, to keep themselves safe from homophobic and transphobic people.
	• Semiotics and Signification are methods of nonverbal communication.
	• LGBTQ+ folks can recognize the signs of other LGBTQ+ folks and seek them out or look for them in public spaces. Especially in situations where there may be homophobia or transphobia. This is to keep ourselves and each other safe.
	
	(lo-fi music fades in)
	
	• The need for nonverbal communication through semiotics and signification has not gone away; just how it looks has changed over time, due to society's general perception of gender and sexuality changing
	  o Online LGBTQ+ communities (typing SFX)
	  o The 90s brought on metrosexuals (sample of original *Queer Eye* Theme?)
	  o Adam Ant then versus Harry Styles now. (camera shuttering SFX)

	• The modern LGBTQ+ community still expresses itself visually, and the ways they commonly do so have expanded.
	  o Flag pins
	  o Flags
	  o Flannel
	  o Doc Martens
	  o Hawaiian Shirts
	  o Vibrant colors
	
	CLOSE & CALL TO ACTION:
	
	(lofi music fades out to ethereal ambience)
	
	• Reflect on your own style, how do you self-signify?
	• How do others around you self-signify?
	• If you like this podcast, please like and subscribe to hear more about semiotics, signification, and self-expression. If you're interested in learning more about Hal Fischer or JEB, then I suggest their photography books, *Gay Semiotics: the Gay 80s* and *Eye to Eye: Portraits of Lesbians.*
	• Thank you for listening, and I hope you'll tune in next time. Byyyyyyyyyyyyyye.

CREATE A PDF

When you are done creating this document, you should create a universal PDF document that can be easily posted to your blog or emailed (it's not safe to assume everyone has Microsoft Word, and the files can be very large).

To do this on a Mac, click File>Print and then click the option for PDF in the lower left, followed by "Save to PDF". Contact me if you need help on a PC.