Editing & Mixing 101

"Cutting" Audio
- Review your field notes for each interview before beginning to edit.
- Import audio files into your editing software.
  - It is very important to save your editing session with an appropriate name **immediately** and save frequently throughout your session. A lot of good editing work has been lost because people forgot to save. *It's not fun to have to do it over.*
- Review all your audio and identify the best, most interesting, most relevant segments. These segments are called "cuts."
  - You can do this by creating a tape log on paper or by labeling different segments of the track in your editing software.
- Move your cuts into the order you want. Move them around to create the best story while still being true to your subject.
  - A good way to make your cuts is to leave the original interview file on one track then copy and paste selected segments into the track below it. That way you don't risk deleting anything you might need. If you label the segments before you copy and paste them, it will help keep you organized while editing.
- Once you have the cuts you want, write out word-for-word (transcribe) what is said in each one. This way when you start to write your script, you'll have all the pieces of your story laid out on the page.

Mixing Audio
- When you have your cuts, your narration, and all your ambient sound recorded and ready to go, you can begin to make your mix. This means putting everything in order and layering all the sounds to tell your story.
- Be intentional about transitions and the order of the audio elements. Ask yourself:
  - How is the pace of the piece—does it lag? is it too fast?
  - Is the audio mixed effectively using fades in and out?
  - Did I use music or ambient sound dynamically, choosing whether to start and stop abruptly or with a fade?
  - Did I maintain/create a story arc?
  - Did I remain true to the original material? Did I edit ethically?
- Smooth all transitions by creating a short fade so that your audio doesn't "clip" or make a pop-sound at the end.
- Once you have the audio edited as you want it, adjust the volume of all your clips so that it is even throughout. You want the volume to peak between 12 and 9. For the most part, all your audio should peak in the yellow on your level meter in the editing software. Adjust any sections where the audio peaks in the red.