the CWRL *Guide*
for *Podcasting in Pedagogy*

The Computer and Writing Research Lab

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the CWRL *Guide* for *Podcasting in Pedagogy*

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Introduction

You have two hundred pages to read for this week, twenty-odd research summaries to grade, and little time – if any – to "pick up" a new technology. You're busy, I know. Teaching is already time-intensive work. A guide to "podcasting in pedagogy" attracts an immediate question: why podcast, anyway?

First of all, podcasting is a lot easier and more intuitive than you might assume. It requires neither expensive equipment nor great technological savvy. And this guide will give you the step-by-step, user-friendly guidance you'll need to get started. Second, podcasting encourages your students to learn in new ways – assigning audio-based materials, like incorporating visual and film-based rhetorics in your teaching, will help break any monotony inspired by constant reading and writing. Plus, a podcast allows you to assemble multiple sound files, including your own voice, in the same overarching "text" – meaning that multiple soundbites, songs, or speeches on a single controversy, along with your own observations and reactions, can be assigned for any given course meeting.

Podcasts also underscore that rhetoric is not merely written discourse. Studying rhetoric also demands attention to orality, speech, and vocal delivery, and podcasting is a great way to emphasize this fact. Just for example, Joe Biden's infamous comments regarding Barack Obama – "I mean, you got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy" rather shifts meaning if there's a comma after "African-American." Including Biden's soundbite within a podcast, *as it was delivered*, would encourage students to think about the senator's intentions, as well as how *transcribing* an oral text itself produces arguments. Finally, podcasting is a great addition to your teaching portfolio, a way to showcase your creative approach to pedagogy, and will pique the interest of hiring committees.

Podcasting is an obvious solution when you're teaching classes wholly devoted to music. Several instructors in recent years have devoted 309K to musical topics: for example, Lydia Wilmeth will be teaching *The Rhetoric of Southern Rock* in the 2008-2009 year; Justin Tremel devoted his course for '06-'07 to *Rock 'n' Roll Rhetoric*; and I relied heavily on podcasts for my own '07-'08 course, *The Rhetoric of Country Music.* In
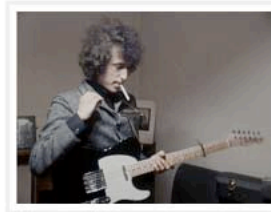
Course Description

In our day and age, you know your song is an American rock anthem if it's the ultimate test of Guitar Hero skills. And when you get to "Freebird" on the game, you know you're a guitar hero. As indicated by the popular video game, Lynyrd Skynyrd's song has become commonplace in American cultural productions, indicating the role that Southern rock music has come to play in American popular imagination.

In this course we will explore the role and perception of the South in relation to American identity through the lens of popular music. Suddenly in the 1970s and '80s, the contexts in which bluesy tropes of poverty, migration, and, in spite of everything, tempered optimism, appeared, shifted from a particularly Southern domain to a broader American domain. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement, rhetoric of a backwards and benighted American South gave way to an embrace of a certain Southern charm. Emblematic of that shift, the growth in popularity of Southern music forms led to the emergence of the genre we now know as Southern Rock. In this class, we will examine essays, songs, record reviews, memorabilia and other artifacts to define Southern ethos and its enunciation in the music of the South. Southern songs and musical forms will be put in conversation with other popular musics to answer the questions: What does the South mean to America? And how do tropes of Southern identity come to represent American identity on the whole?

Course Description: Lydia Wilmeth's *The Rhetoric of Southern Rock*
Department of Rhetoric and Writing at the University of Texas, Austin
http://web.austin.utexas.edu/cola/students/courses/coursedetail.cfm?courseID=20736

Course Website: Justin Tremel's *Rock 'n' Roll Rhetoric*
Computer Writing and Research Lab at the University of Texas, Austin
http://instructors.cwrl.utexas.edu/tremel/node/6

"Podcasting in the Rhetoric Classroom," featured in the Spring 2007 issue of *Currents in Electronic Literacy*, Tremel recounts the pedagogical dilemma he faced in planning *Rock 'n' Roll Rhetoric*: "Listening to and rhetorically analyzing various popular songs and performers was essential to the course, yet too much actual class time could not be devoted simply to 'listening' to music as this time needed to be devoted to discussing readings, writing instruction, and the like."[1] He surmounted the obstacle by using podcasts; students completed the listening before coming to class, and ample time remained to focus on writing, discussion, and the core issue: rhetoric. For my own course, I assigned 22 podcasts, including songs devoted to technique (e.g., narrative; figurative language), tropes (nostalgia; authenticity) and controversies (divorce; domestic violence; racism; war; women's work). While *The Rhetoric of Country Music* likewise included readings, film, music video, and image/design-based analysis, the podcasts proved an excellent way to maintain a focus on the songs – and to keep the students' attention on the rhetoric of the music itself.


Course Website: Kevin Bourque's *The Rhetoric of Country Music*
Computer Writing and Research Lab at the University of Texas, Austin
http://instructors.cwrl.utexas.edu/bourque/309K_Spring08

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1. Justin Tremel and Jamie Jesson. "Podcasting in the Rhetoric Classroom." *Currents in Electronic Literacy* Spring 2007. 22 August 2008. <http://currents.cwrl.utexas.edu/spring07/tremel_and_jesson>

But you needn't devote an entire course to musical rhetorics to talk about songs in the classroom, or to find podcasting useful. In a course meeting for Rhetoric 306, Hala Herbly asked her students to consider MIA's "Paper Planes," which samples "Straight to Hell" by the Clash, in relation to the original, sampled tune. Through a musical approach, students considered how allusions might be not only textual, but also musical; and how figuring out the arguments of the songs required both textual and contextual analysis. Nor is it difficult to find ways to incorporate popular music in Rhetoric 306 or 309S. Think creatively, and use the first-year forum text as your lead. For example, many instructors teaching Lawrence Lessig's *Free Culture* addressed mash-ups as a site where the struggle over DRM and online copyright (or, as Cory Doctorow might put it, CopyFight!) reaches a frothy head. An instructor could craft a podcast providing original and mashup versions of songs – for example, selections from the Beatles' *White Album*, Jay-Z's *Black Album*, and Danger Mouse's *The Grey Album*, which mashes the two others together – and devote class time to careful discussion of the collected "texts," instead of spending the bulk of time simply listening to them. Courses considering Luis Alberto Urrea's *The Devil's Highway* might include a podcast of popular songs devoted to the immigration debate. Just for example, I teach three country songs on the subject of immigration (Reba McEntire's "Just Across the Rio Grande," Steve Earle's "What's a Simple Man to Do?" and "So Long, Texas; Hello Mexico!" by Johnny Tex and the Texicans) in podcast form, and my students think about how these songs use styles of argumentation and persuasive techniques, in addition to musical gestures and song structures, to persuade the audience that the song's stance on immigration is right and just.
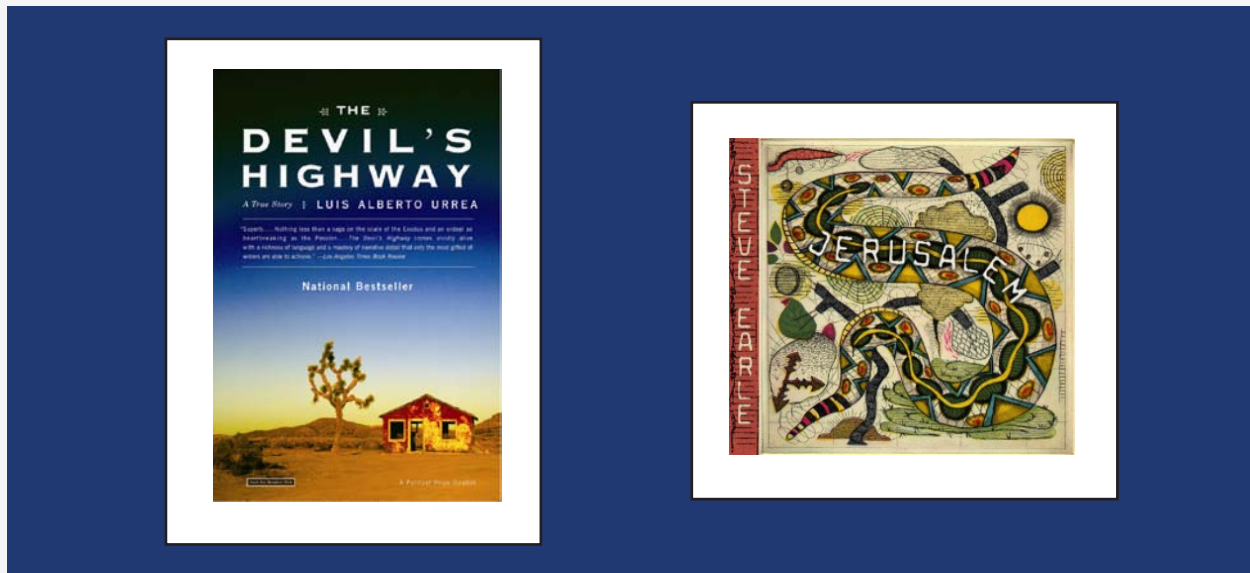
Luis Alberto Urrea and Steve Earle: *The Devil's Highway* meets *Jerusalem*

Finally, using podcasts in a classroom setting isn't *just* about using music. You might use a podcast to share your reactions to a student's paper; it's less time-intensive than writing down all of your feedback and ideas, and a way to preserve a degree of direct contact without the hassle of scheduling a face-to-face appointment with each student. Should you read the paper aloud as you provide comments, it could also be a way to clearly denote how potential readers "trip" over awkwardly-constructed sentences, or how a reader might find a well-crafted turn of phrase particularly effective. One of the more common ways to use podcasts in pedagogy is to record and broadcast a course lecture. Although as rhetoricians we lecture less often than other instructors might, one could develop a podcast-based lecture which students are assigned before a class meeting (perhaps a lecture on "figures of speech," using sound clips available at the American Rhetoric website; or a feature of several pundits discussing the same controversy. Both are potential podcasts I discuss in sections six and seven). Finally, asking students to create their own casts is an inventive approach to student projects. For example, in his section of Rhetoric 309K, *Youth Rebellion and the Rhetoric*

of American Identity, Jamie Jesson allowed students the option of recording a podcast to accompany their final papers. As Jesson writes in *Currents*, "students wrote essays evaluating popular music's potential to create social or political change. The authors then recorded themselves reading their essays aloud and used audio-editing programs like GarageBand to splice musical clips into appropriate moments in these oral arguments." Working in this medium had several beneficial effects: students thought carefully about the way in which they incorporated citations; carefully selected the most compelling extracts as examples; and, in some cases, dramatically improved their own writing style by reading their papers aloud.

The bulk of this guide, however, is devoted not to the "why," but to the "how." This guide will give you the step-by-step guidance you'll need to develop podcasts for your own courses. Section Two covers "the basics" – the core equipment you'll need to get started. Three and Four provide in-depth guidance in building podcasts in GarageBand and Audacity. In the Fifth section, I cover hosting the casts – that is, making them available to your students for downloading and listening. Finally, I cover ways in which podcasts can effectively be used in conjunction with other online resources, such as American Rhetoric and YouTube. The final section provides a few external tutorials, guides and texts you might refer to, should you like further information. Once you've got the basic technological knowledge down, you're really only limited by your own pedagogical creativity. Good luck, and happy podcasting.

The *Basics*

fig. 01: **LogiTech Desktop Mic.**

You could spend heaps of money setting up a podcasting studio, but there's absolutely no reason to. All you need to podcast is the following: 1) some way to record your own voice, be it an external microphone, a built-in one, or a voice recorder; 2) audio editing software; and 3) a place to host the finished product.

Most computers now feature internal microphones, although their quality can range considerably. I recommend that you test your own, and if the quality's something you can live with, save yourself the additional time or trouble of an external microphone. Additionally, the CWRL makes available several voice recorders, which use a Windows Media file format. If you're doing enough podcasting to warrant the expense, there's a plethora of mics on the market; prices for microphones on Amazon.com range from twelve dollars to three thousand. For good quality at an affordable price, I recommend the LogiTech Desktop Microphone (*fig.* 1), which retails new for roughly $20 to $30. The desktop mic features plug-and-play capacity, and connects to the USB port of your machine.

For software, I recommend GarageBand for the Mac, which comes as part of the iLife suite of software; and Audacity for all other platforms, including PC and Linux. There are other options, too; but I include step-by-step instructions for GarageBand and Audacity in sections three and four of this guide. Guidance on hosting the casts can be found in section five.

Audacity
http://audacity.sourceforge.net
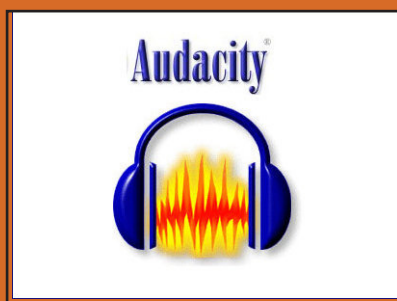
Garageband
http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/

It's a good idea to find as quiet a place as possible to record; I do all my recording in my bedroom, with the windows and the door shut, my phone silenced, and all fans off. Background noise has a tendency to become magnified on a microphone, and you want to save yourself as much trouble "cleaning up" the recording as possible. You might consider investing in an inexpensive, portable voice recording booth, or making one yourself (see http://blog.makezine.com/archive/2008/07/portable_voice_over_booth.html). Have a glass of water handy. Additionally, I always make sure I completely plan the cast in advance, and script my comments – I find I don't extemporize very well, once the recording has started. Everything else is intuitive: maintain a lively tone, enunciate clearly, and try not to be too weirded out by the sound of your own recorded voice.

Finally, keep in mind that copyright law does extend to material (such as songs) on podcasts. You might want to password-protect your cast(s), or change your sharing permissions when hosting them; for more, see Section 5, on "Hosting." If you have any concerns or questions, refer them to one of the CWRL's Assistant Directors.

GarageBand

GarageBand, originally developed for Mac OS X, is included in the iLife suite of applications. While the application offers great capabilities for amateur sound mixing and music production, it's likewise a fantastic program to use in podcasting – I've used it, almost exclusively, during my year of teaching 309K, and have found its interface intuitive and its learning curve (particularly for basic use) brief.

Here, I'll walk you through assembling a podcast in GarageBand, using my course's second podcast (Narrative) as an example. Before getting to work, I selected eight country songs which use storytelling techniques to great effect; chose the order in which I wanted to cover them; and wrote a script, both introducing and wrapping-up the podcast, and giving a little contextual information (and "stuff to listen for") for every song. Once my materials were prepared, the songs were in my iTunes library, and I found a quiet place for recording, I opened up GarageBand on my MacBook (*fig.* 01). After clicking on "New Podcast Episode," I gave the project an appropriate name: "02_Narrative" (*fig.* 02). GarageBand's interface opened, and I was ready to begin work (*fig.* 03).
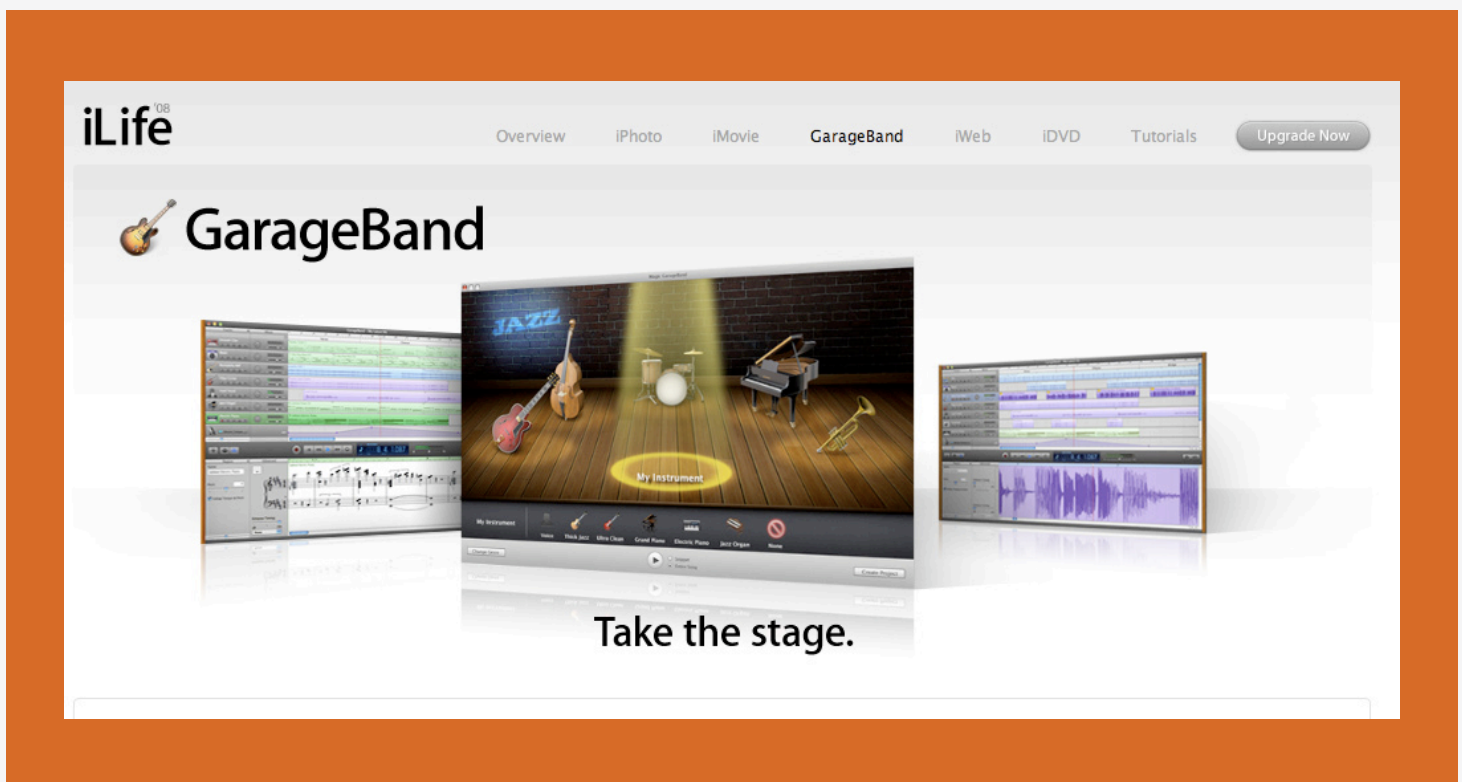
Apple's GarageBand '08

fig. 01: **Startup Panel.**

fig. 02: **New Podcast Title.**
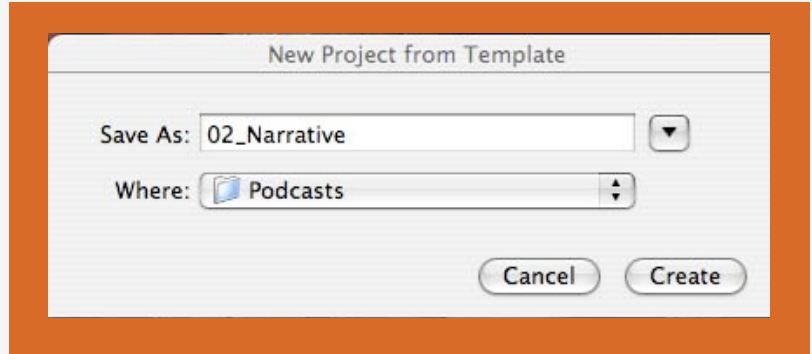
fig. 03: **GarageBand Interface.**
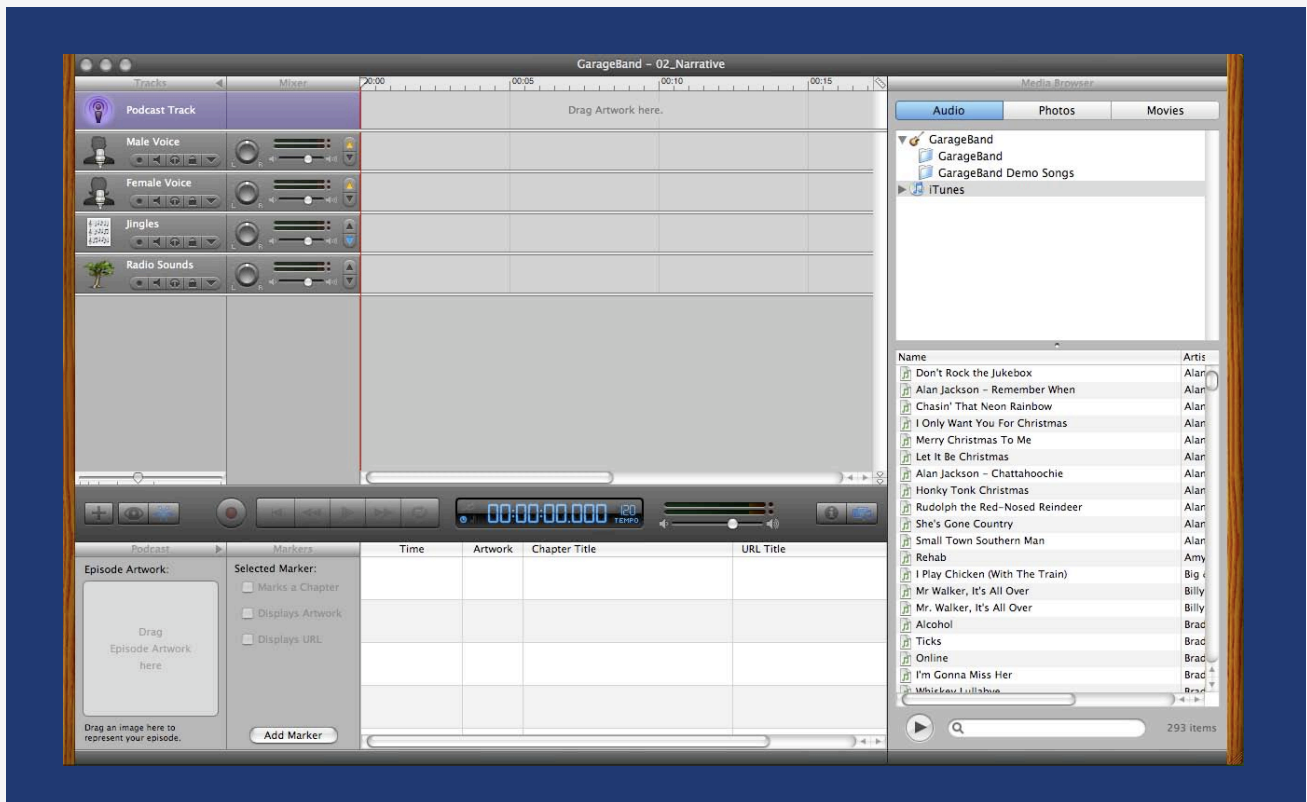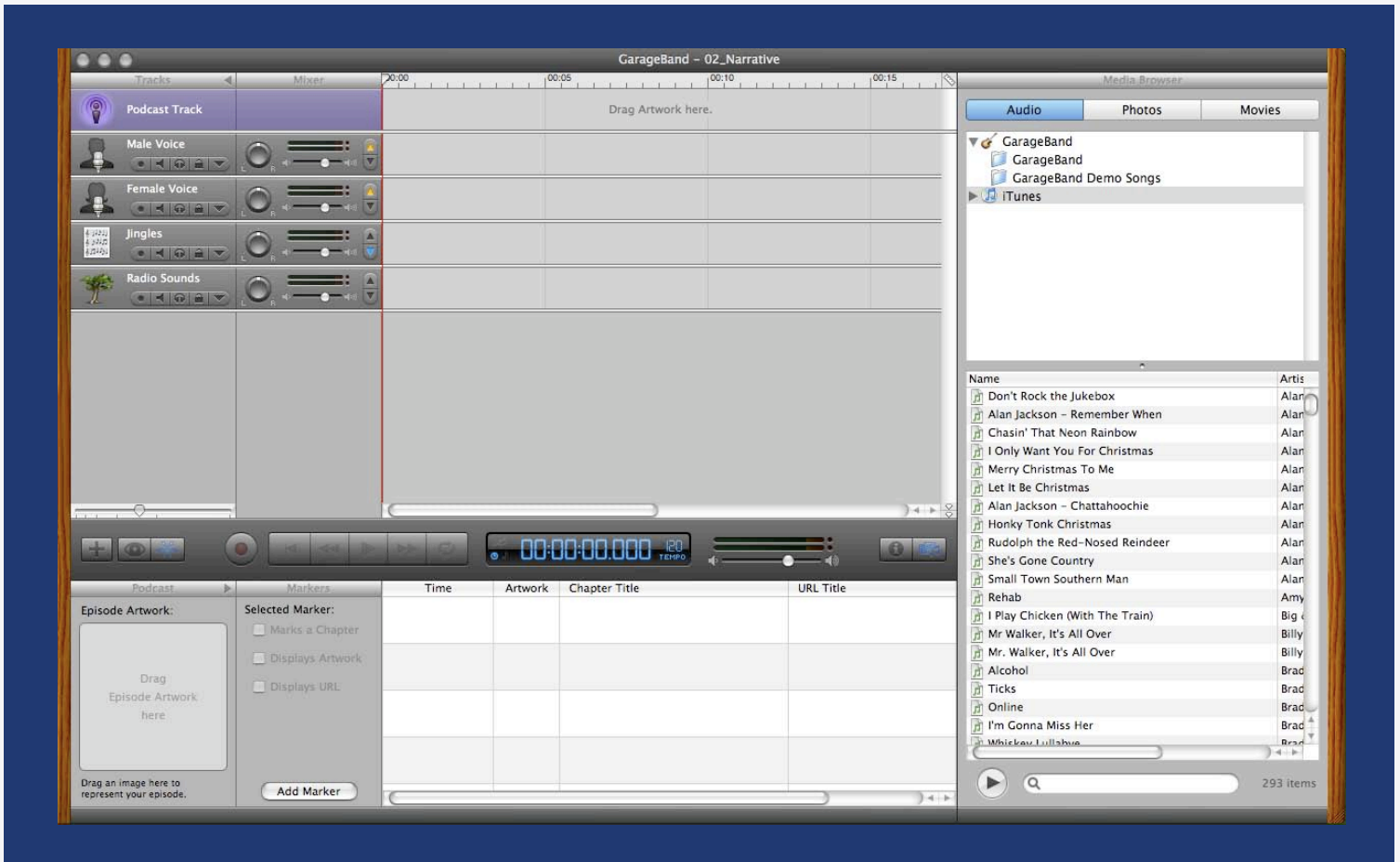
Let's take a closer look at the interface. Right now, we have four tracks: Male Voice; Female Voice; Jingles; and Radio Sounds. Each of the tracks is optimized to play or record the eponymous sound; since I'm male, I'll be using the Male Voice track to record my own comments. "Jingles" and "Radio Sounds" (*fig.* 4) include copyright-free sound samples, which you might use to add an intro or effects (e.g., applause; laughter; etc.) to your cast.

fig. 04: **Radio Sounds.**
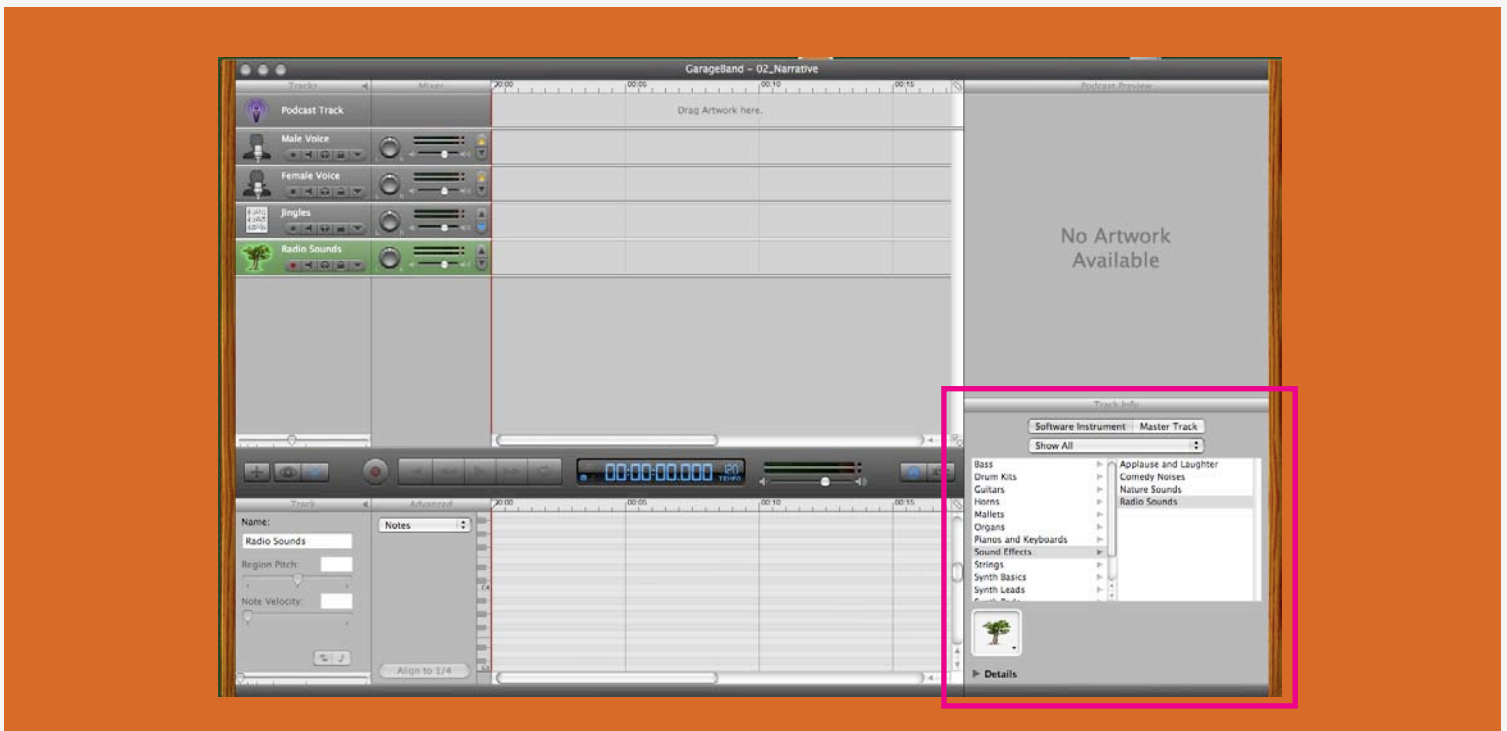
In the middle of the panel, the time progression is listed (currently at zero, as we haven't yet recorded anything). To the left of the time display, we have buttons for "record," "play," and navigation. "Record" and "play" are going to come in handy – though I generally navigate my podcasts by using the bar at the bottom of the track display. On the right hand side of the panel, .mp3 files from my own iTunes library are currently listed. As the media browser panel takes up a good deal of room, I may choose to collapse it by clicking the "media browser" key (*fig.* 05), leaving myself more space to work. It shares space with the "information" key (*fig.* 06), which allows you to view and edit track information – e.g., the kind of track (voice; real instrument; recorded instrument) you're working with.
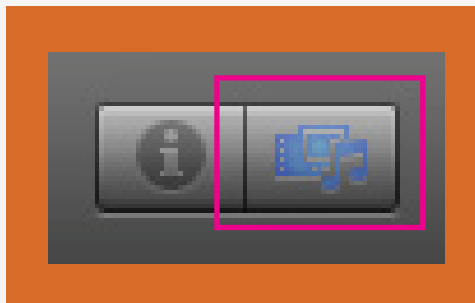
fig. 05: **Media Browser**
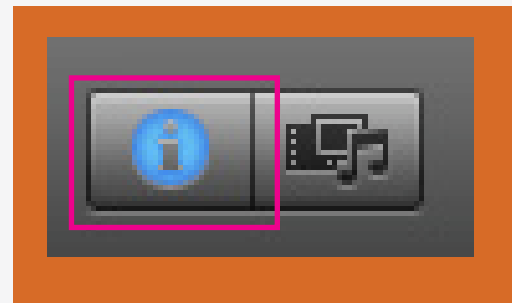
fig. 06: **Track Information**

First, I'm going to clean my slate – I'm not using any Jingles or Radio Sounds, and I don't need the "Female Voice" track, since I won't be recording with it. I select each of these, then "Edit" and "Delete" (the shortcut is command-delete). This leaves me with a noticeably cleaner workspace (*fig.* 07).

fig. 07: **After collapsing "media browser," "track info." and deleting unnecessary tracks.**
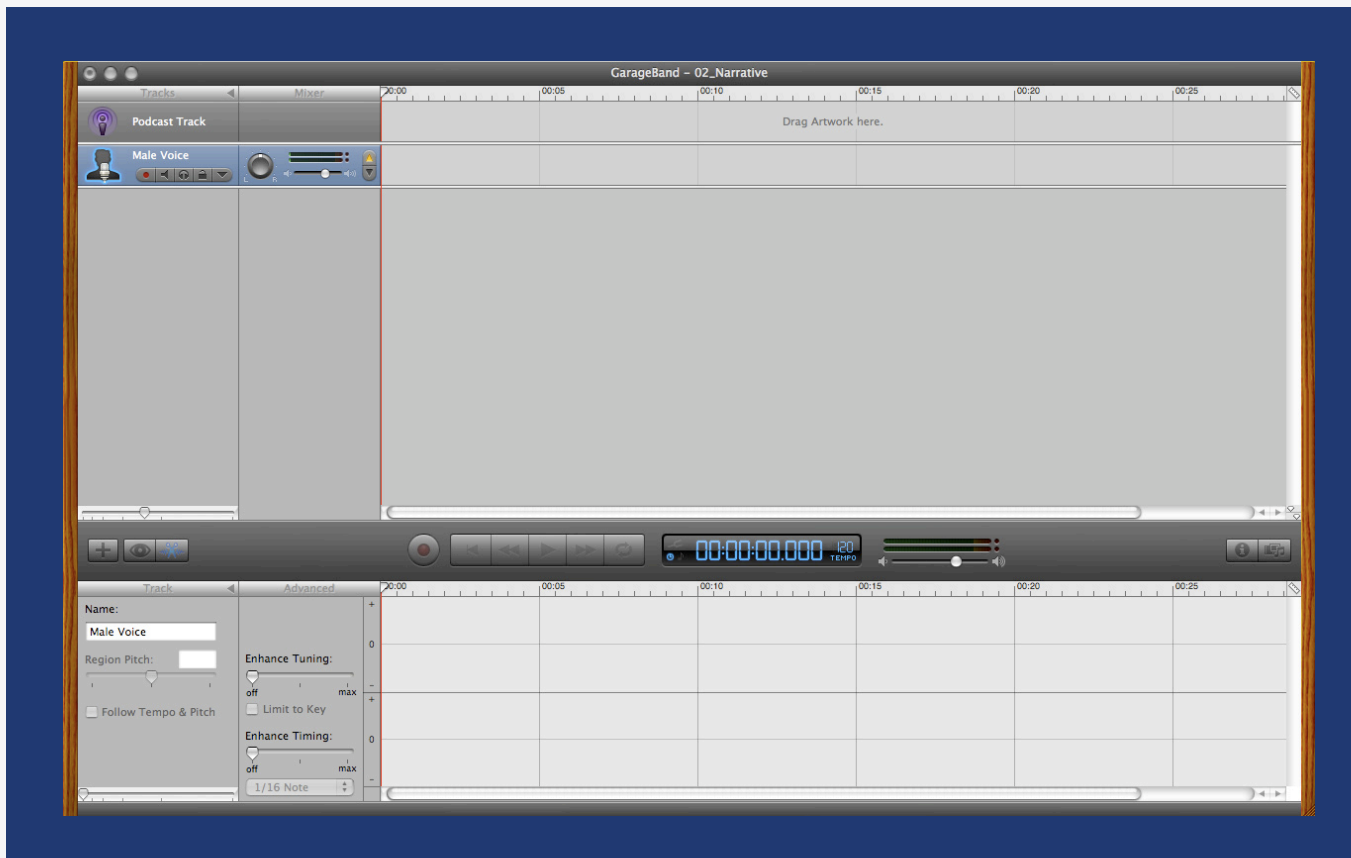
I like to begin my podcasts with a bit of music – both to introduce the theme in a quirky way, and to give my students a moment to adjust the volume, before I begin speaking. As this podcast covers "Narrative," I've decided to extract a line from "Telling Stories" by Tracy Chapman, which for me epitomizes the gap between truth and mimesis: "There is fiction in the space between / The lines on your page of memories / You write it down, but it doesn't mean / You're not just telling stories." As I have the song in my iTunes library, I click on the "media browser" button to re-open the panel, and scroll down listed tracks until I find the artist (*fig.* 08).

fig. 08: **Adding our first song track.**
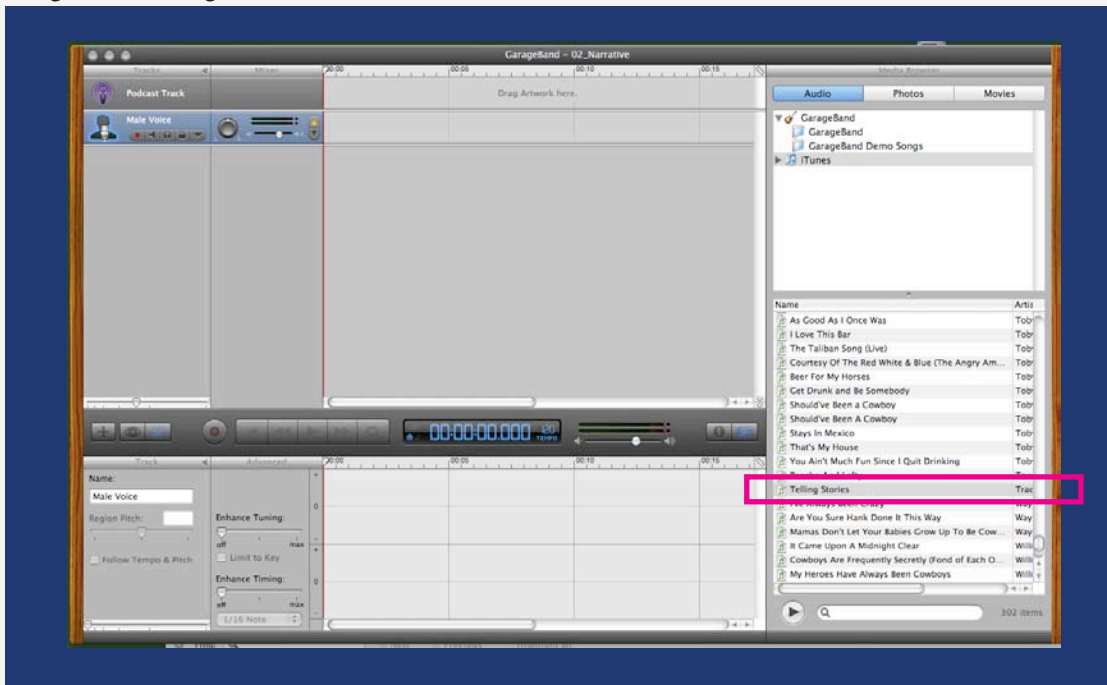
Once I've found the song, I simply drag the file to the track listing, below the track we already have ("Male Voice"), to make sure the file opens as its own track (*fig.* 09):

fig. 09: **A new track's been added.**
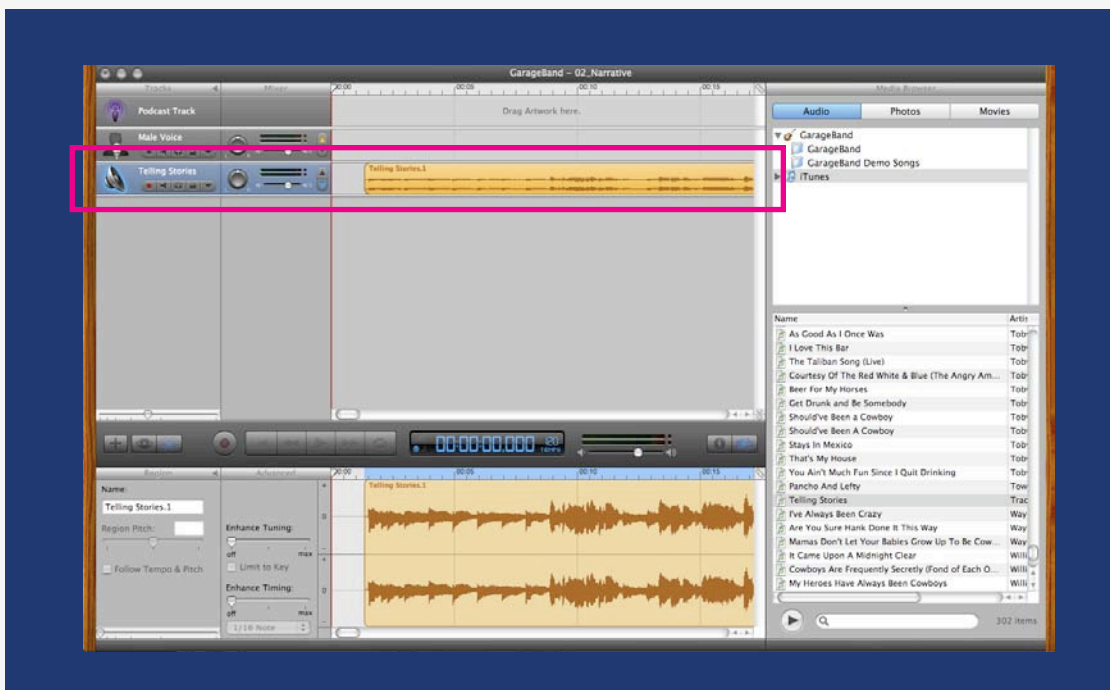
I repeat this step to add, one by one, the eight songs I'm including in this podcast (*fig.* 10):

fig. 10: **All the tracks I need: my own voice; eight songs to discuss; and an introductory track.**
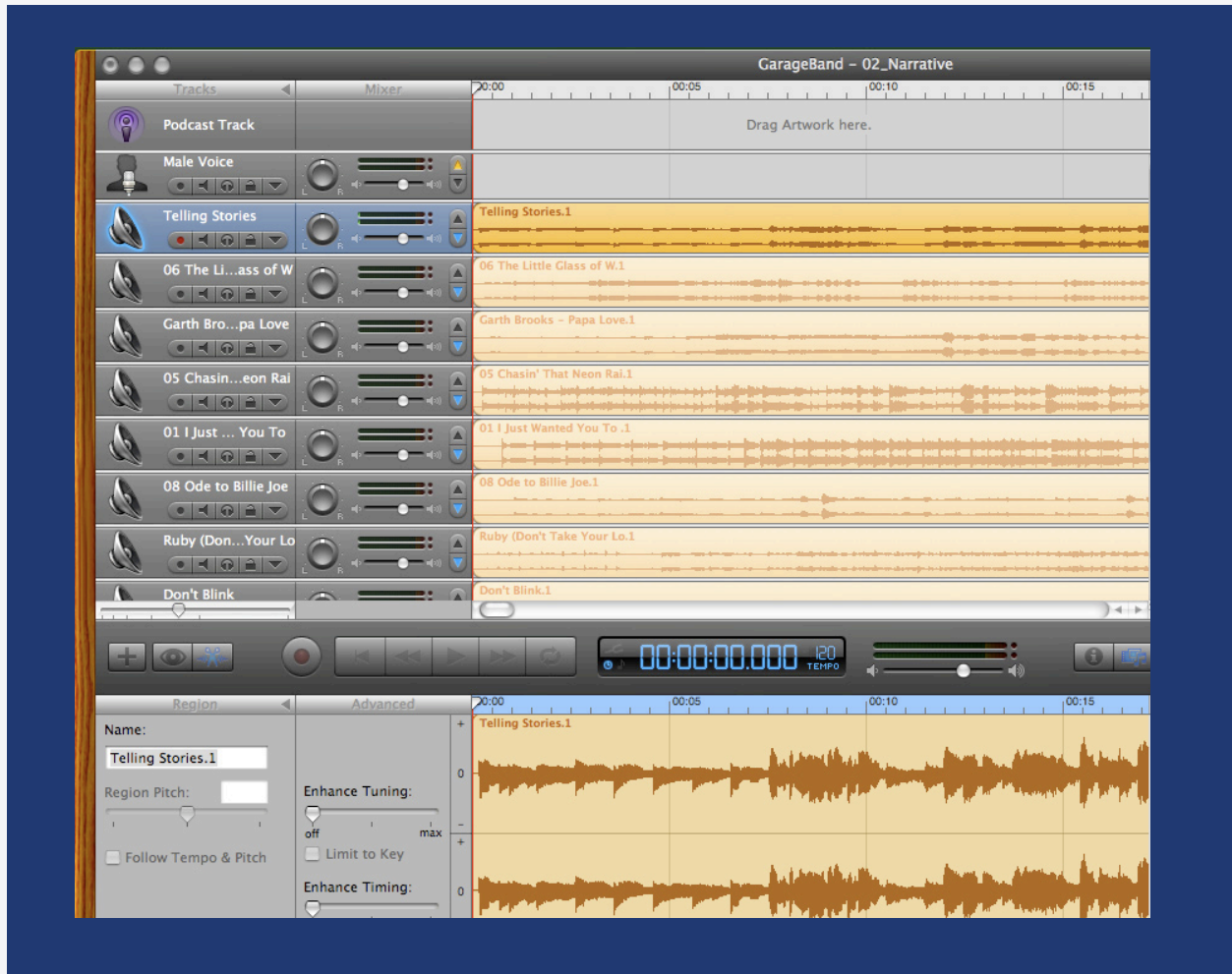
I'd like to rename the tracks, standardizing by the artists' names, which will help me navigate them. To do so, I select the track by clicking on its name on the far left-hand side (*fig.* 11):

fig. 11: **Renaming a track: selection.**
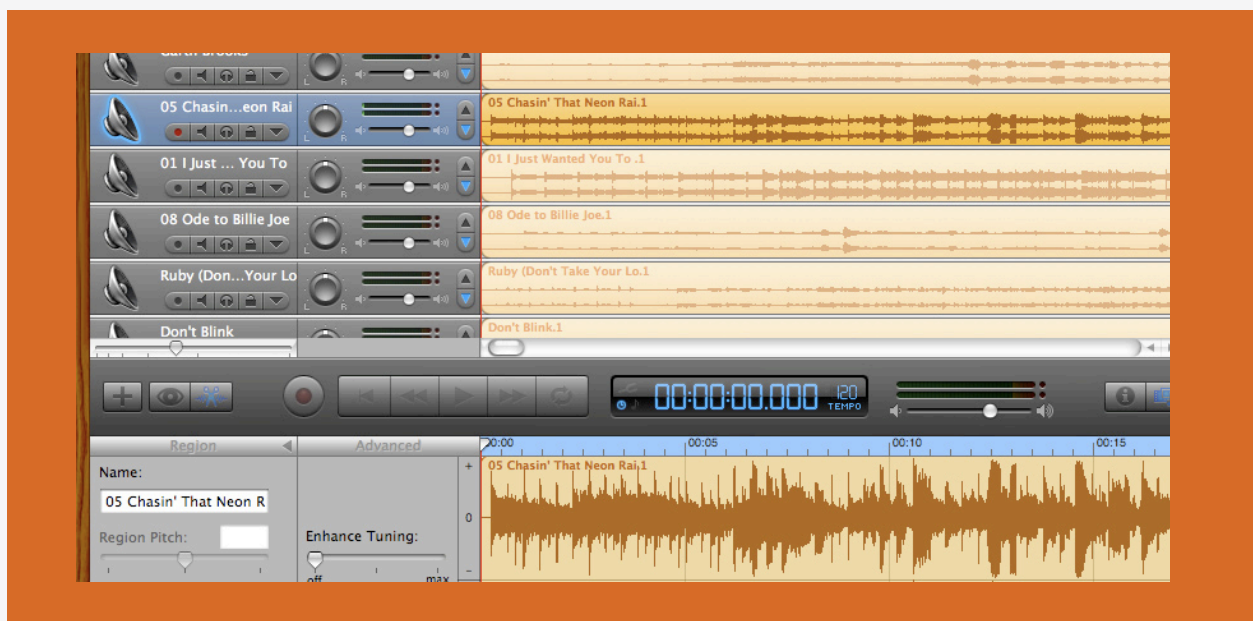
Note that both the track name (in blue) and the track itself (in orange) are currently selected. Click on a light gray field to deselect the track (*fig.* 12):

fig. 12: **Renaming a track: deselection.**
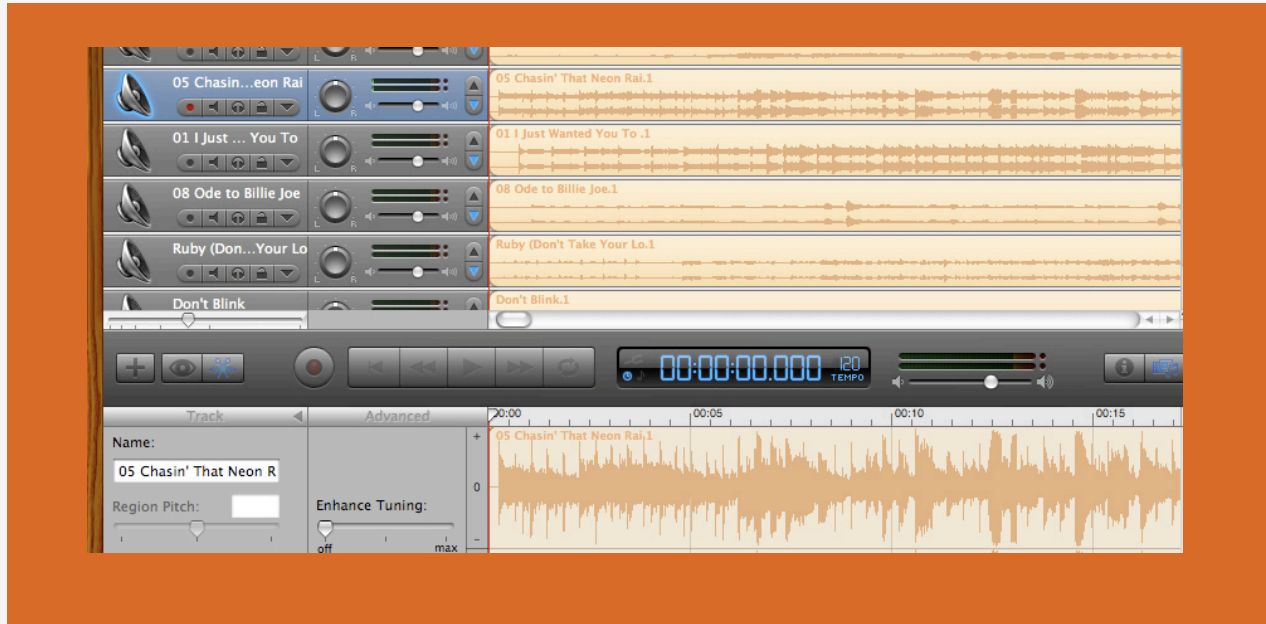
Type an easily-identifiable name in the bottom left-hand box, repeating this step for each track (*fig.* 13):

fig. 13: **All tracks are given standardized names – here, by artist.**
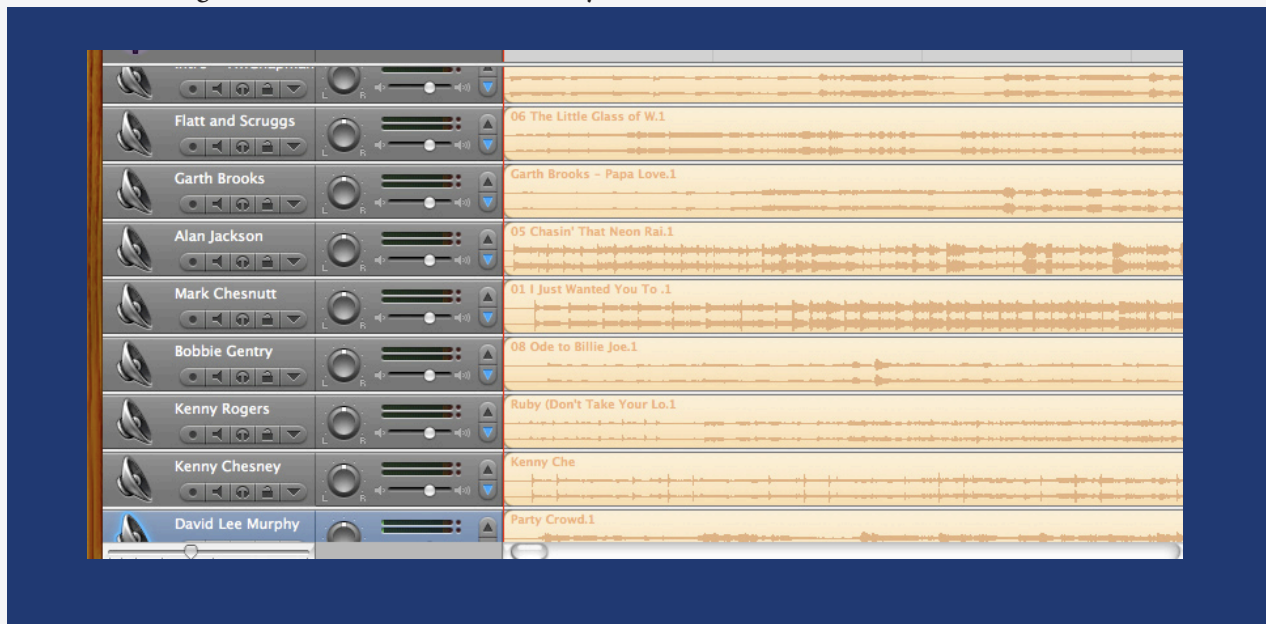
And you're ready to edit your first track. I don't want to include the full length of Tracy Chapman's "Telling Stories" in this podcast – just the first few lines. First, I'll select every other track by clicking on the orange fields and holding down shift. Then, I'll drag them to the right, to get the out of the way for the moment (*fig.* 14).

fig. 14: **Moving tracks.**
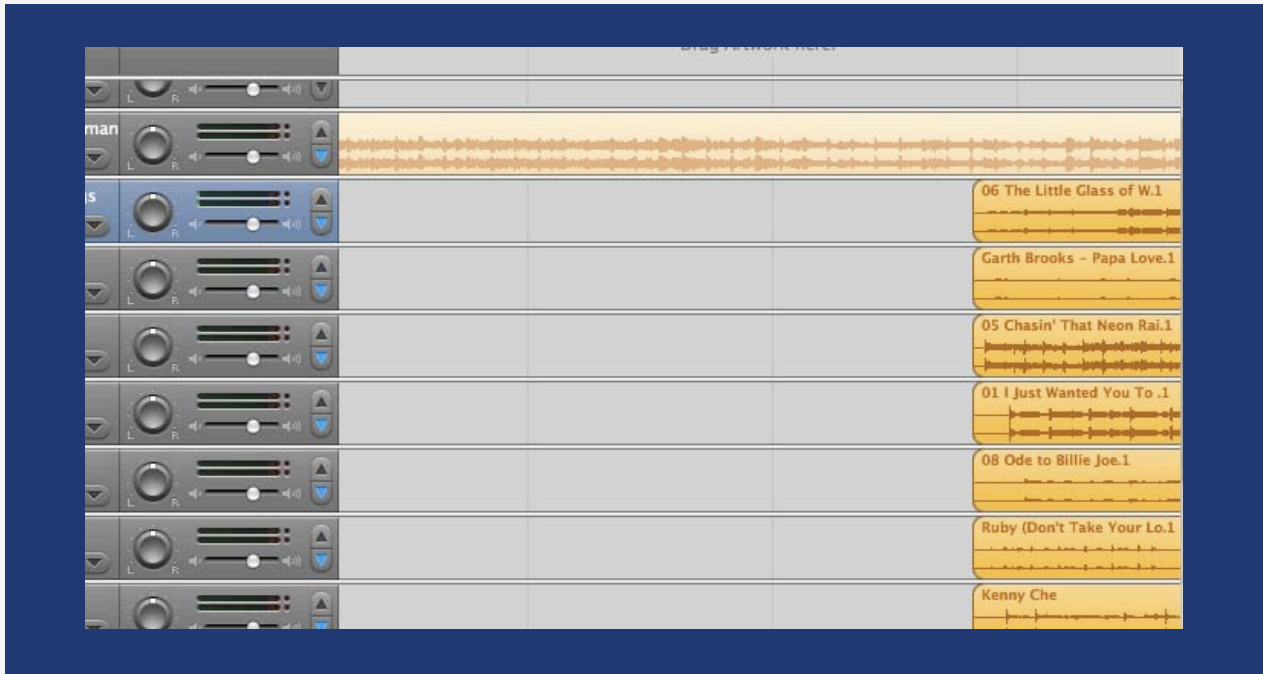
Now that the other tracks are out of the way, I navigate back to the Chapman track and play the song (*fig. 15*):

fig. 15: **Playback: Track One.**
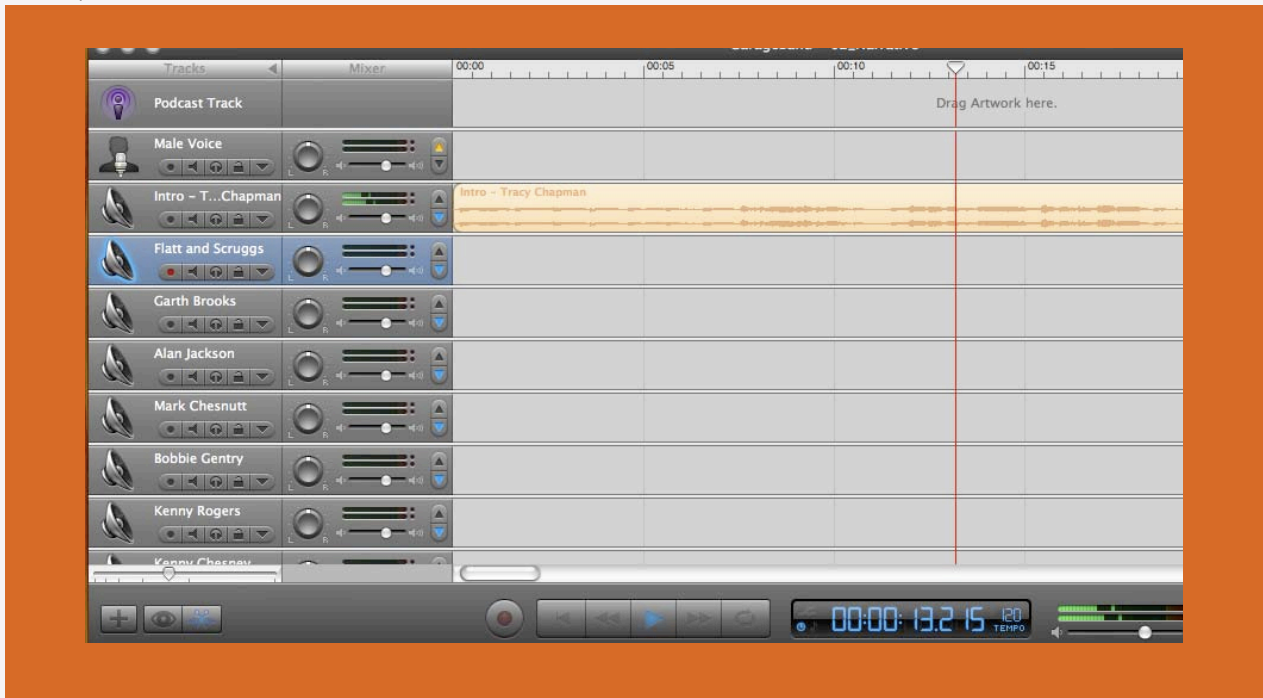
When I've identified a good point at which I'd like the song to stop, I stop the playback and make sure the red line is near the point where the music should completely end (*fig. 16*).

fig. 16: **Identifying a point at which to cut.**
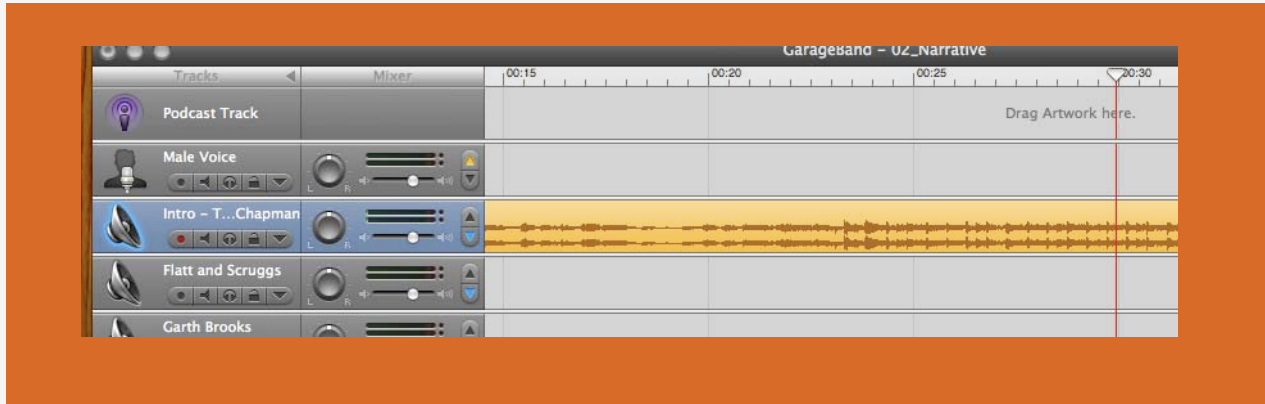
I then select "Edit" and "Split" (shortcut Command-T) to cut the audio track into two pieces (*fig.* 17):

fig. 17: **Splitting the track.**
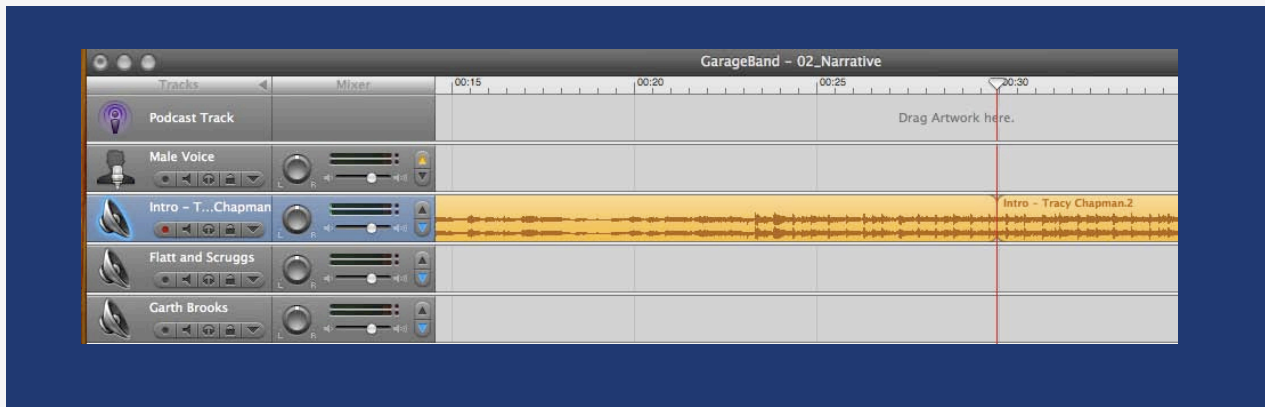
After making sure the latter part of the track – the stuff I don't need – is the only segment selected (*fig.* 18), I select "Edit" and "Cut" (shortcut Command-X) (*fig.* 19):

fig. 18: **Selecting the portion to discard.**
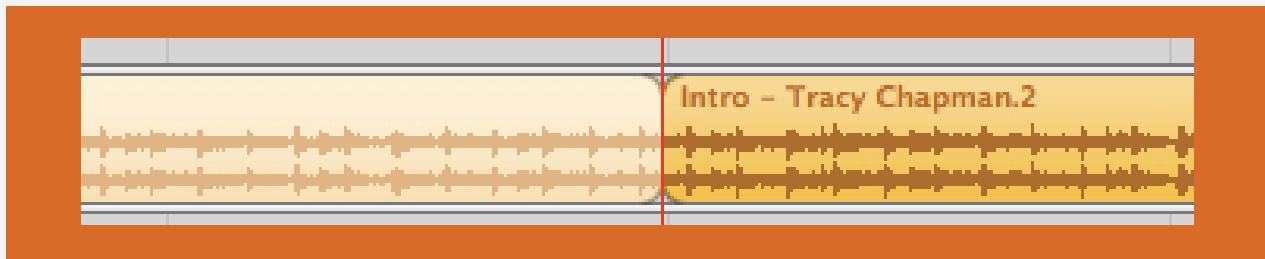
fig. 19: **Cutting the split track.**
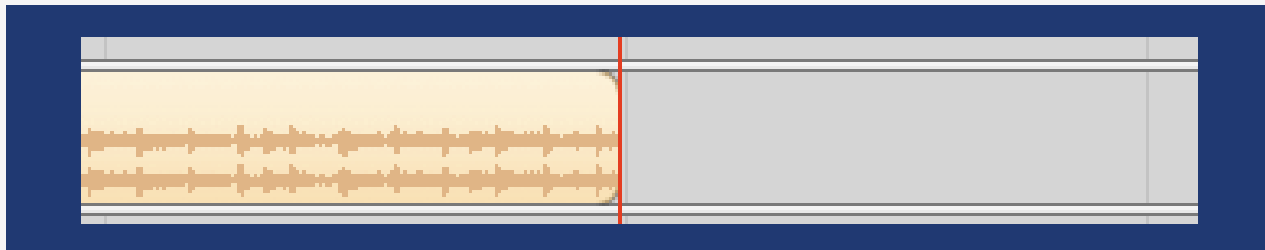
Nor do I need the very beginning of the song (*fig.* 20):

fig. 20: **Splitting again.**
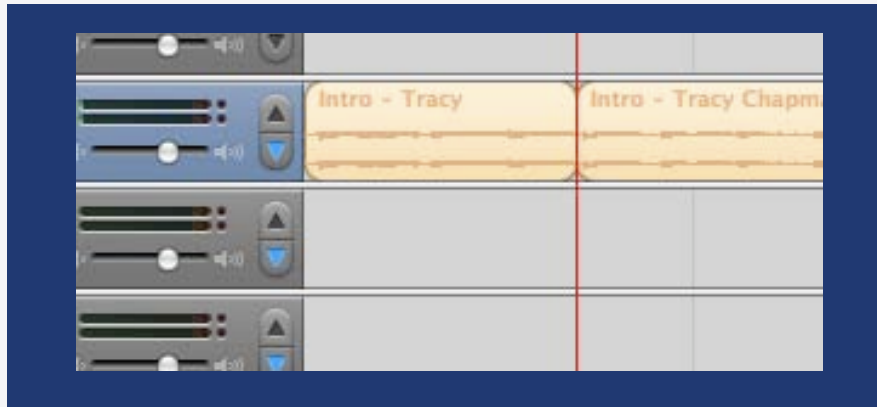
This leaves me with roughly thirty seconds of the song, which I then move to the very beginning of the podcast by selecting the orange track and dragging it to the left (*fig.* 21):

fig. 21: **Shifting the clipped track to the beginning of the cast.**
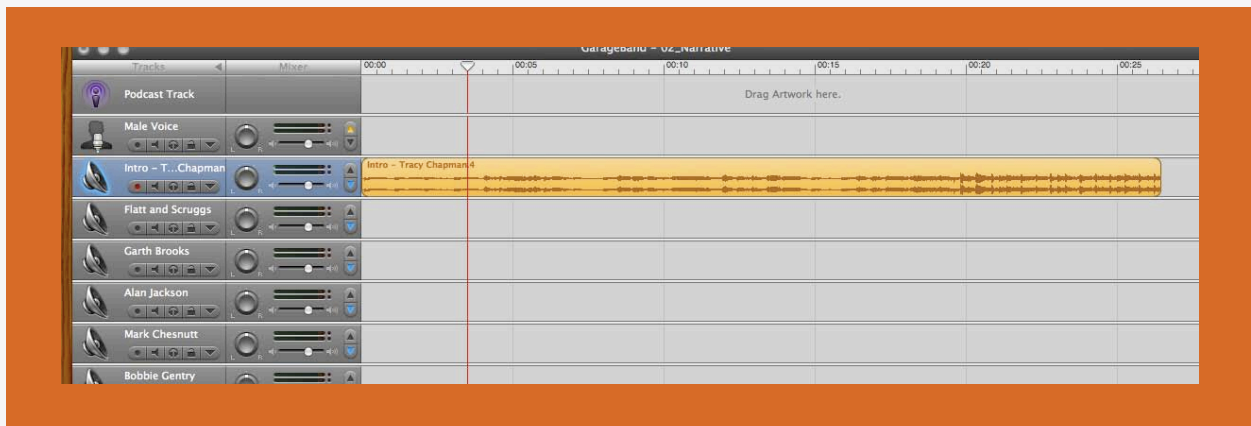
If I left the track in this state, it'd be very obvious where it picked up and left off. I'll adjust the audio levels, so that the sound gradually increases at the beginning, then gradually decreases at the end of the track – making the sound seamless, and also giving my students a chance to adjust their volume before the song blares in their ears. To do so, I'll have to click on the "track volume" button, the triangular button beneath the name of the track (*fig.* 22):
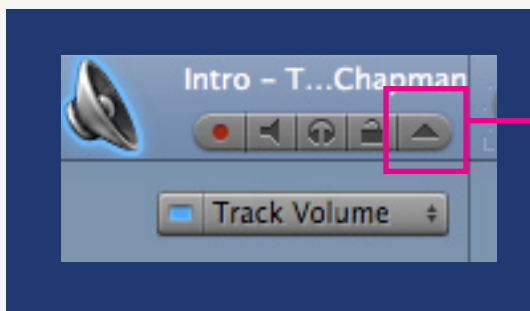
*fig. 22:* **Track Volume controls.**

This will reveal the volume information for the given track – the blue field that now appears beneath the orange track (*fig. 23*):

*fig. 23:* **The track volume field.**
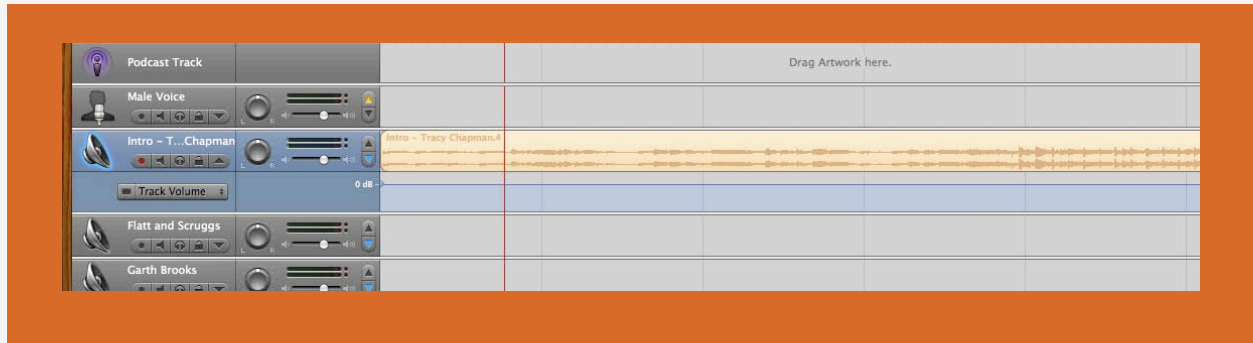
I can, at any point on the track volume line, add bullets to indicate the volume. I add one at the very beginning, where I'd like the volume to be low, and then another at the point where Chapman's voice should kick in at full strength (*fig. 24*):

fig. 24: **Adding bullets to indicate volume levels.**
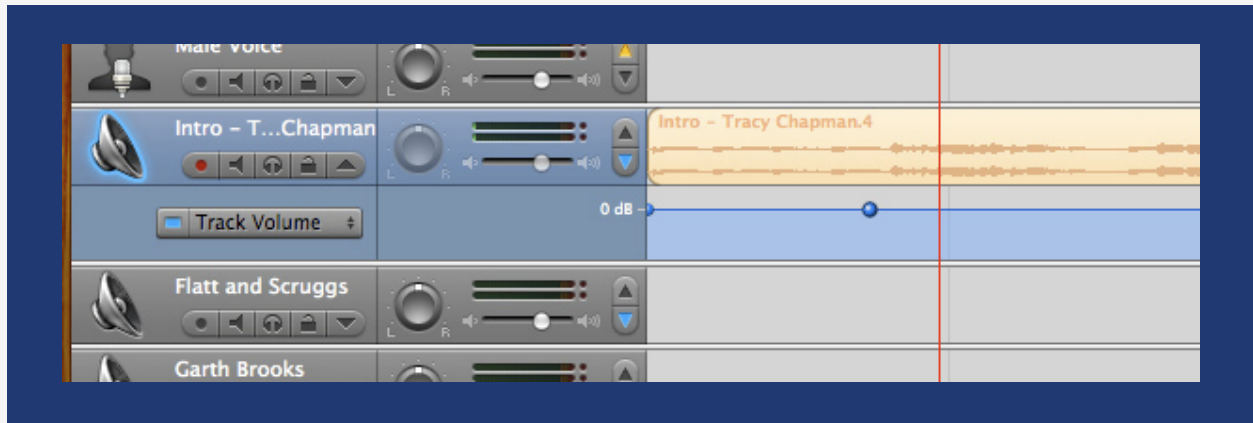
I then simply drag the first bullet to the bottom of the track volume panel, leaving the second at its current position, to ensure that the introductory track "fades in" nicely (*fig. 25*):

*fig. 25:* **The track gradually increases in volume.**
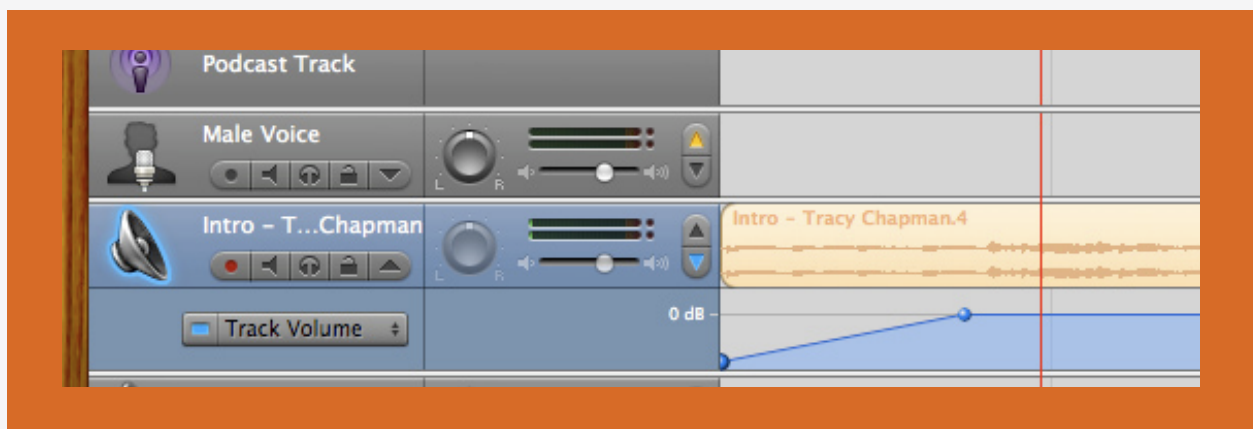
Finally, I repeat this step for the end of the track, to ensure it will "fade out" (*fig.* 26):

fig. 26: **The track gradually decreases in volume.**
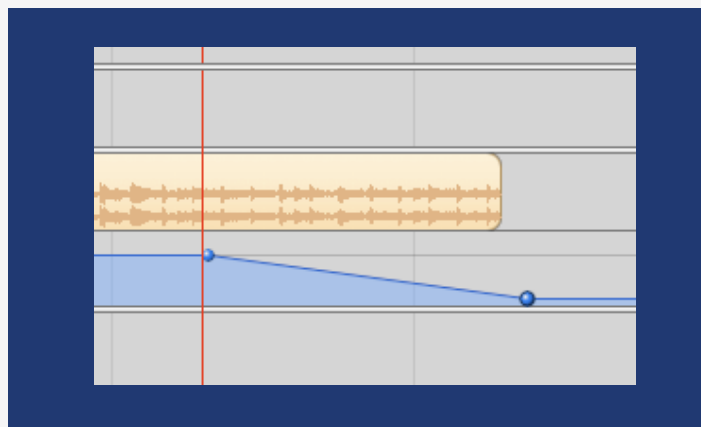
Now that the very beginning of my podcast is prepared, I'm ready to start recording. Select "Male Voice" or "Female Voice," and make sure that the red circular button is activated under the name of the track – that's how you know it's enabled for recording (*fig.* 27):

fig. 27: **We're ready to record!**
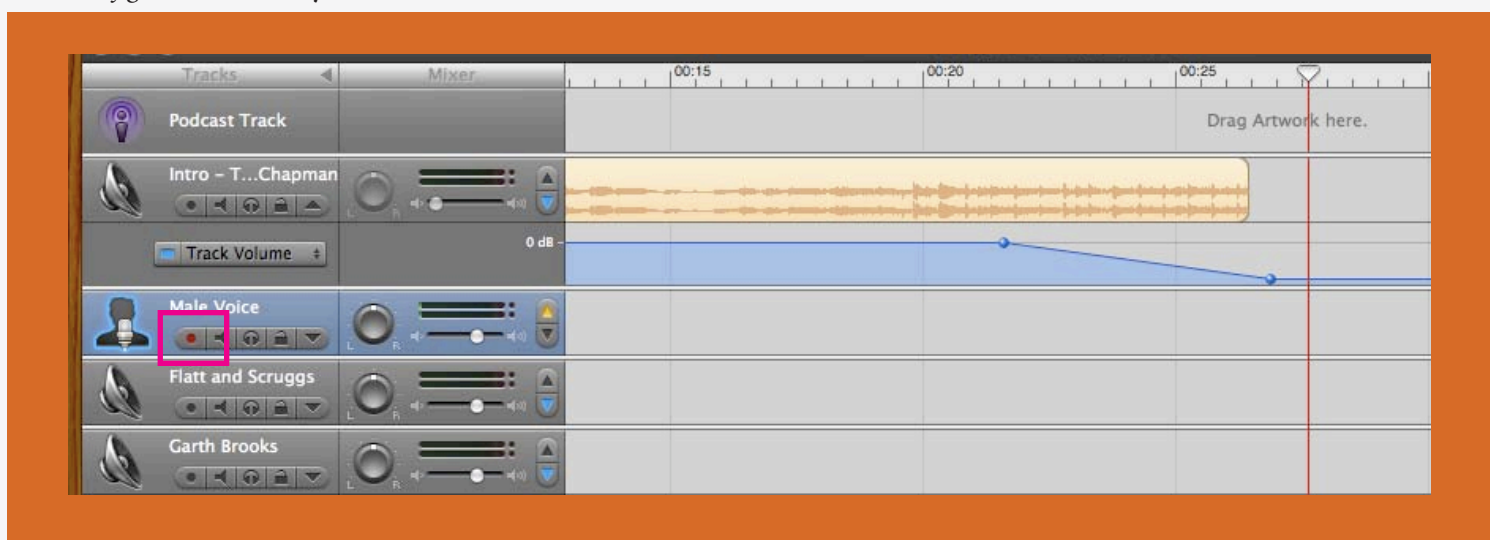
At this point, I plug in my microphone, and "OK" the GarageBand pop-up that lets me know the mic's connected (*fig.* 28):
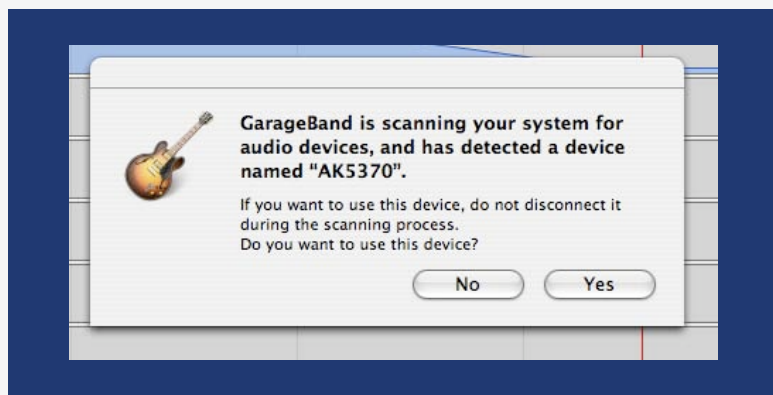


fig. 28: **Detecting the microphone.**

If you're using an external microphone, it's a good idea to check your system preferences, and make sure "sound" is set to capture from an external source, in lieu of the internal mic. Make sure your input level is set relatively high, so the microphone has no problems capturing your voice loud and clear (*fig.* 29):

fig. 29: **Checking your sound preferences.**
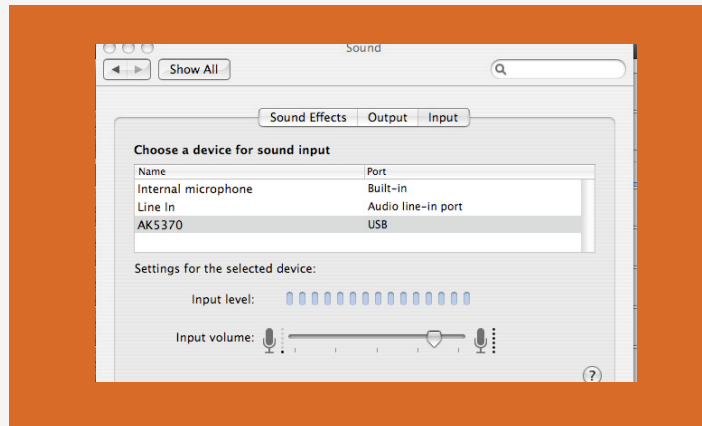
After making sure you've got enough space between your tracks to record your introduction to the podcast, simply click "record" and start speaking into the microphone (*fig.* 30):

fig. 30: **Click record.**
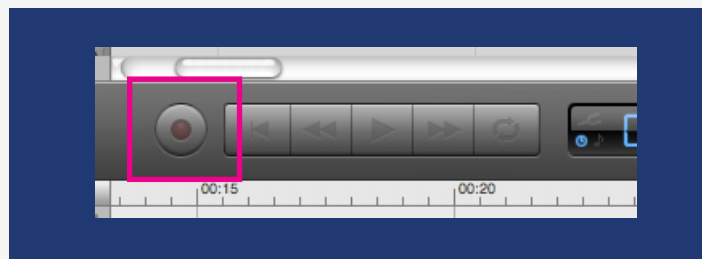
How you introduce your podcast is entirely up to you. As an example, though, here's how I handled it:

> That was Tracy Chapman's "Telling Stories," and this is Kevin Bourque. You're listening to the second podcast for Rhetoric 309K: *The Rhetoric of Country Music*. Our theme for this podcast is "Narrative," or "Country Songs That Tell Stories." The songs range from the years 1947 to 2007, and I've included eight songs: by Flatt and Scruggs; Garth Brooks; Alan Jackson; Mark Chesnutt; Bobbie Gentry; Kenny Rogers and the First Edition; Kenny Chesney; and David Lee Murphy.
>
> Before listening to the podcast, please read my "Brief Introduction to Narrative," available in the course packet. You'll find examples of some of the ideas I discuss in the reading here in the songs I've selected.
>
> For all of the songs, I'd like you to concentrate both on the *story* and the *narration*: that is, both on what happens, the plot; and on how the events are told.

Regardless of what you say, I think it's a good idea to include your name, the name of the course, what "texts" you've included, and any "global" direction you want to give your students – here, I've indicated the accompanying reading, and what students should be thinking about for the entire podcast.

Here's what my project looked like, once I was done recording the introduction (*fig.* 31):

fig. 31: **Vocal track recorded.**
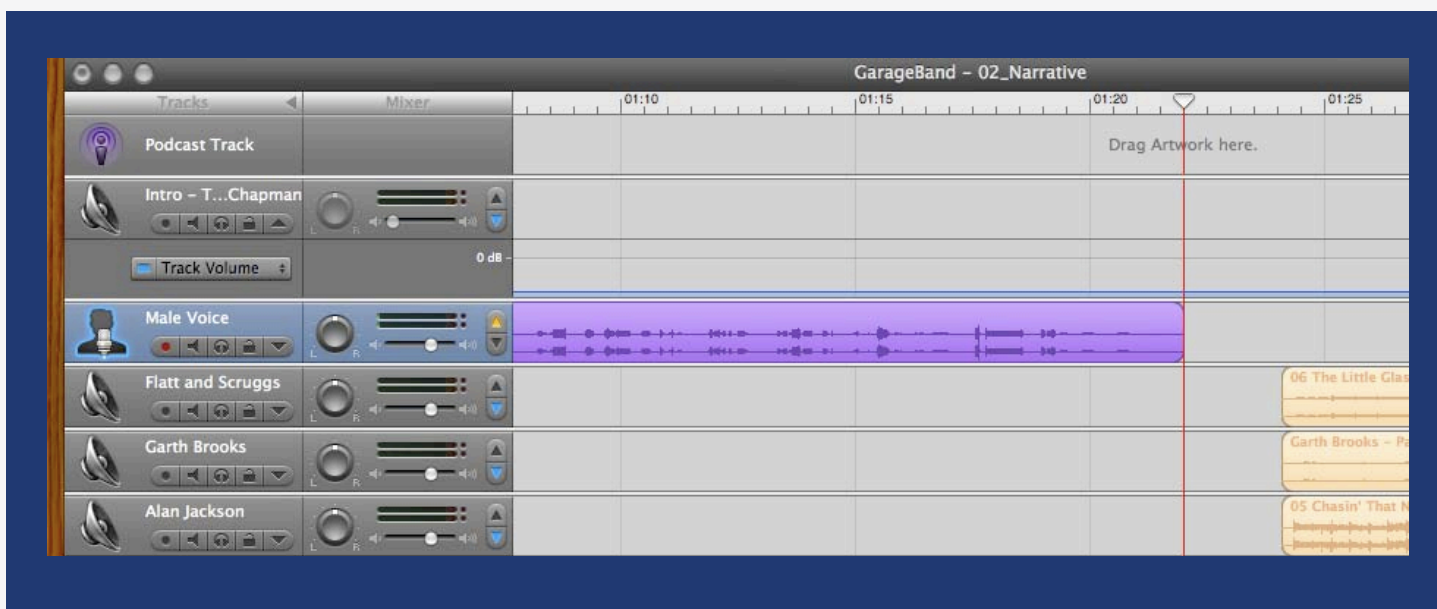
Alas, I flubbed one of my lines. When you're recording, you might mispronounce a word, or a phone might ring, or you might find yourself coughing (or belching!) halfway through. Unless you feel such artifacts serve a greater pedagogical purpose, you can use what you've already learned about splitting tracks to excise the offending noise (*fig.* 32 *and* 33):
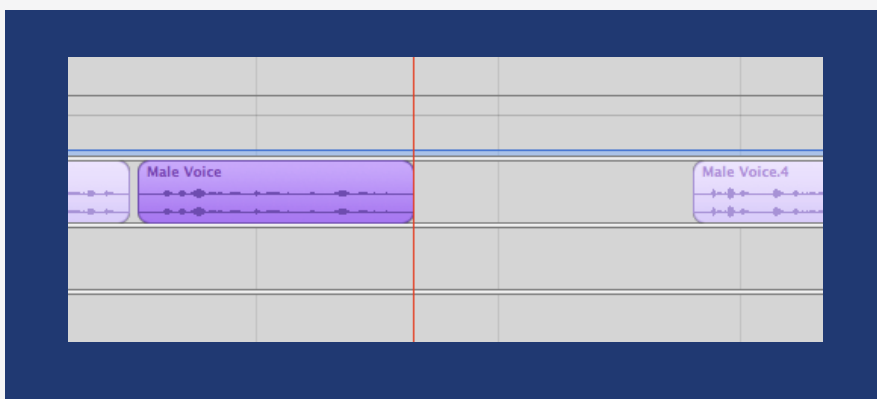
fig. 32: **Splitting the vocal track.**
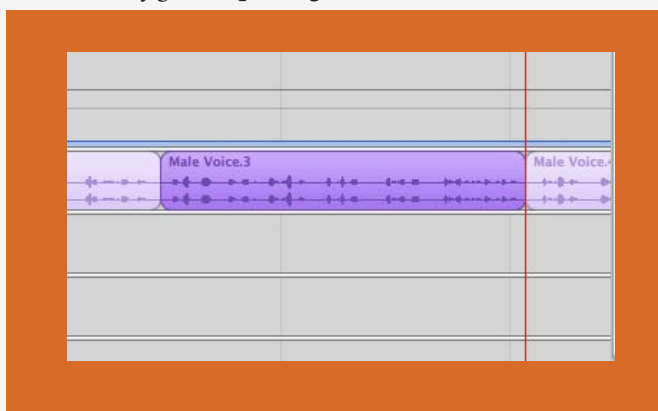
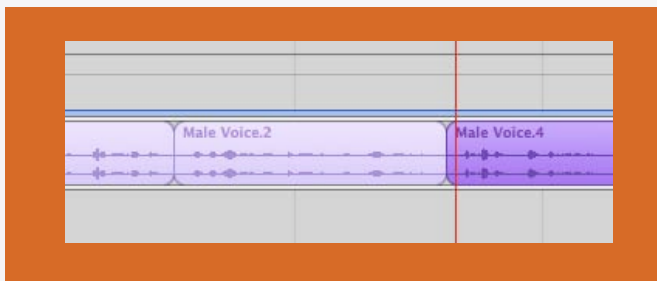*fig. 33:* **Cutting the portion to delete.**
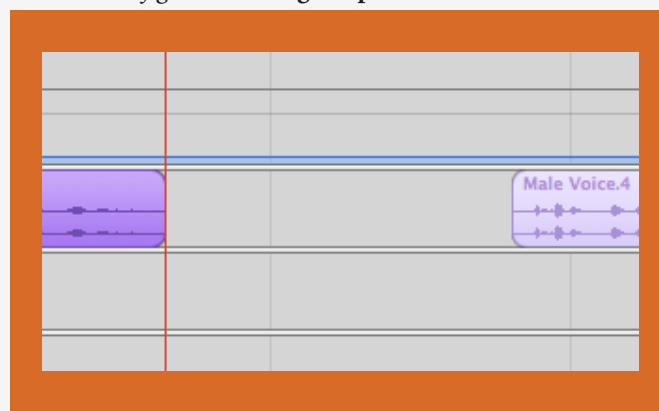
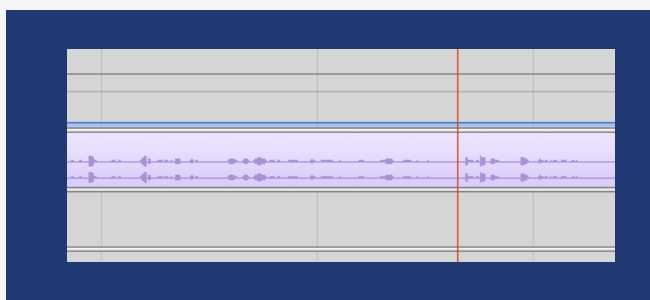And then re-record the part you flubbed (*fig.* 34):

fig. 34: **Re-recording.**

Once I'm done re-recording that portion, I can line up the three segments so they play seamlessly (*fig.* 35):

fig. 35: **Lining up track segments.**

And, after selecting all three, select "Edit," then "Join" (shortcut Command-J) to reincorporate them as one complete track (*fig.* 36):

fig. 36: **Joining the track.**

Now that my first vocal track is complete, I review it for volume by pressing play, then watching the audio levels in track information. Notice that, as of now, it's a bit too loud, per the red bars (*fig.* 37):

fig. 37: **Checking the track volume.**

So I decrease the volume level for the track by sliding the volume button leftward, to ascertain that the sound ranges within the green-to-orange levels, but doesn't enter the red (*fig.* 38). It's a good idea to do this with each of your tracks, to keep an even-keeled volume throughout the podcast.
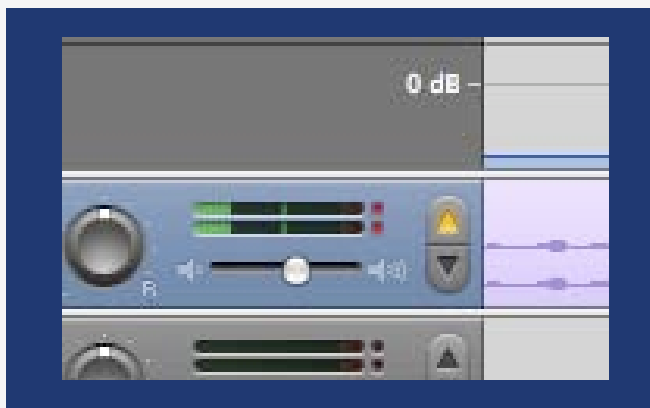
fig. 38: **Adjusting track volume.**

Once that's done, I'm ready to drag the vocal track so it slightly overlaps with the introductory track (*fig.* 39). Now, when you play, the two tracks will seamlessly blend into one another.
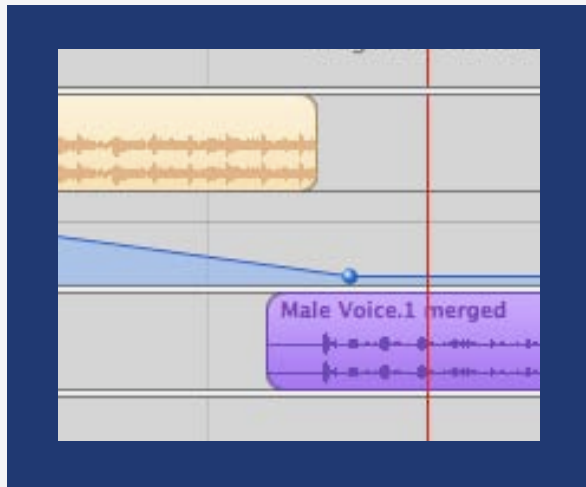

fig. 39: **Positioning the second track.**

GarageBand also features "ducking," which automatically instructs one track to defer, in volume, to another track. Note, for example, that "Male Voice" in the following example is set to automatically overpower the "Tracy Chapman Intro" (*fig.* 40, as indicated by the yellow "up" and blue "down" triangles). Because the volume reduction can be drastic, I prefer to work with the volume controls manually, and deselect each triangle by clicking it (*fig.* 41). Play with both approaches, and find what best works for your purposes.
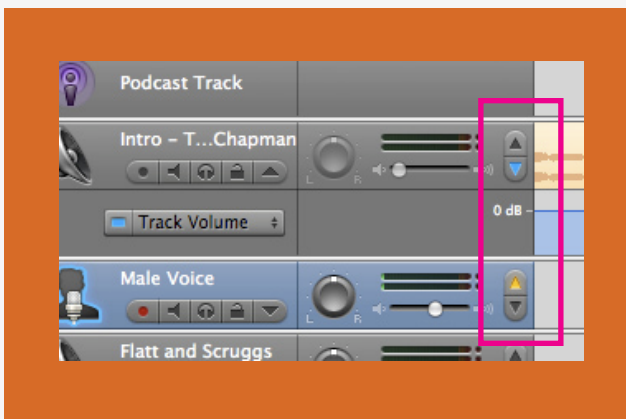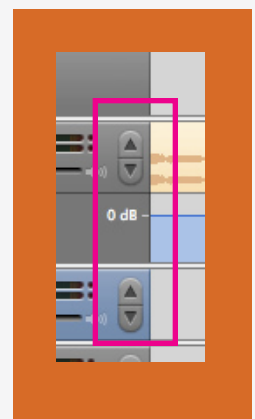

fig. 40: **"Ducking."**

fig. 41: **"De-ducking."**

From this point onward, you're mainly retracing the same steps for each "text" in your cast. Next, I'll record the introduction to the first song on the podcast:

> We're starting with "Little Glass of Wine," performed by Flatt and Scruggs in 1949. Flatt and Scruggs are probably the most famous bluegrass band ever. They were active from 1948 to 1969, and in 1985, they were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.
>
> Think about the use of dialogue in this song: who speaks, when? When does the voice of the narrator emerge? And how does the narration, particularly at the end of the song, change the listener's interpretation of the story?

I line up the tracks so that "Little Glass of Wine" follows my introduction (*fig.* 42), and record the introduction to the next song – Garth Brooks's "Papa Loved Mama." Then I align the second song introduction so my voice kicks in soon after "Little Glass of Wine" ends. Most of the songs I used for podcasts faded out nicely on their own, but for songs that didn't, I could again adjust the sound levels to achieve a smooth fade (*fig.* 43).

fig. 42: **Introduction to song, followed by the song track proper.**

fig. 43: **Using track volume to ensure a correct fade.**
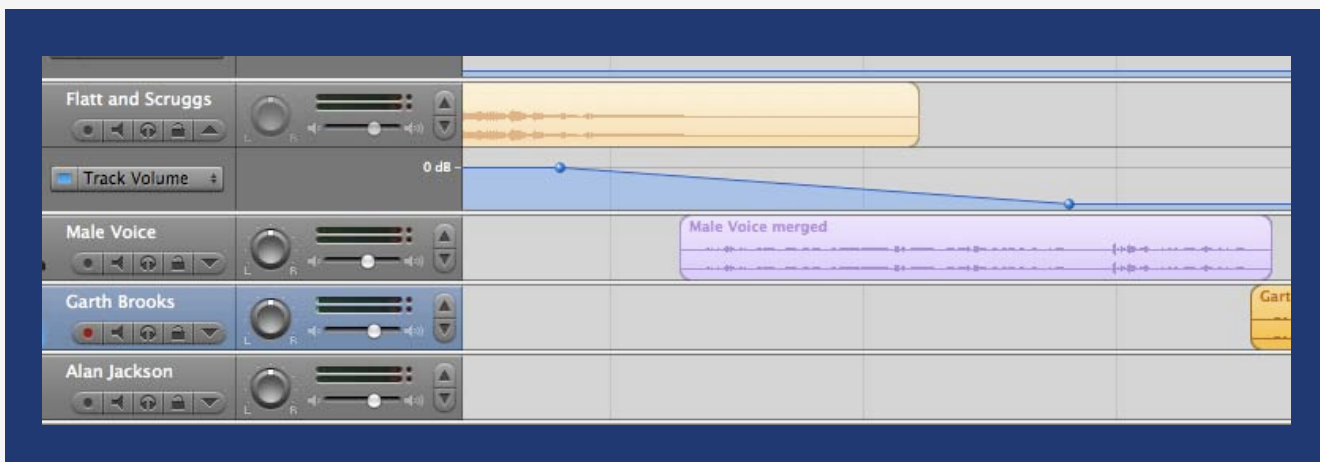
I then repeat the steps to bridge Garth Brooks with Alan Jackson (*fig.* 44), Jackson with Mark Chesnutt (*fig.* 45), and so forth.
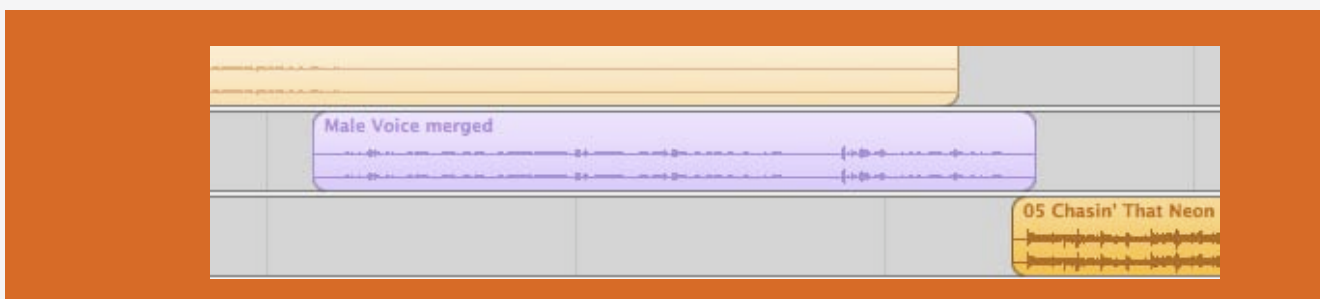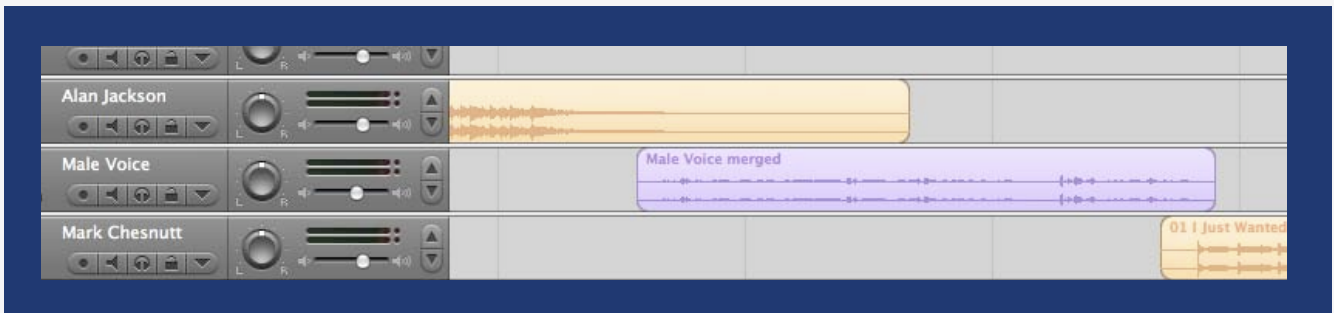
fig. 44: **Introducing the third song.**

*fig. 45:* **Introducing the fourth song.**

Once all of my "texts" have been introduced and all my tracks lead nicely into one another, I simply wrap up the podcast, using a script like the following:

> You've reached the end of the second podcast for Rhetoric 309K: *The Rhetoric of Country Music.* Thanks for listening. Our topic for this meeting was "Narrative"; next time, we'll shift our attention to "Small Towns and Hometowns."

When I'm finished recording, I'll give the entire cast a test listen, paying close attention to transitions. At that point, I'm done: all that's left to do is to export the podcast to iTunes, and then to host it for distribution. Select "Share," then "Send podcast to iTunes," and GarageBand will begin the compression process (*fig. 46*):

fig. 46: **Compressing the project.**
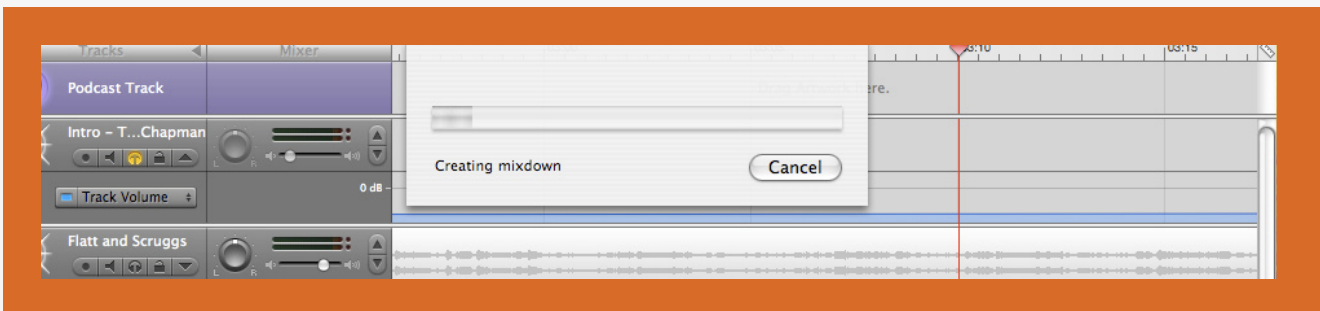
iTunes should open automatically, and, when the file is finished compressing, the podcast should begin to play in your iTunes folder. At that point, you're free to rename the podcast, and to alter the artist and album fields to indicate your course. You're ready to find a host for your cast – and in section five, I cover hosting at UT.

One final troubleshooting note: if, when you're attempting to add song tracks to GarageBand, you encounter the following error message (*fig. 47*):
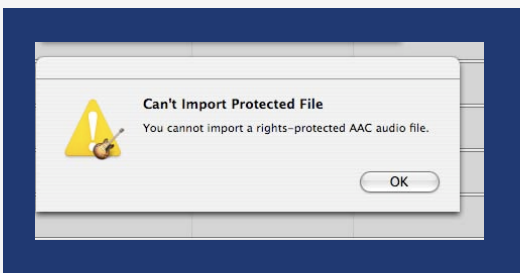

fig. 47: **Error message:**
"**You can't import a rights-protected AAC audio file.**"

It means the file is DRM-protected, and that you probably purchased it through an online music service (like iTunes). To avoid the problem, you can either purchase iTunes-Plus files; import the music directly from a CD; or burn the purchased (rights-protected) file to CD, then drag the file directly from the burned disc. Generally, I make a note of any rights-protected files before beginning the podcast, and then burn them all at once onto a single disc.

Audacity

Audacity's got some great stuff going for it: first of all, it's completely free. Also, there are versions for PC, Macintosh, and Linux platforms. Unfortunately, it offers neither GarageBand's attractive, intuitive interface, nor its fancy ducking, splicing, and joining options. Nevertheless, the program's not difficult to learn – and it can be a definite asset, when you're podcasting for your courses.

The first step, of course, is to download the program. Visit <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> and select the appropriate version for your platform. After it's installed, open up the program. The interface should look something like this (*fig. 1*):

fig. 1: **Audacity: the basic interface.**
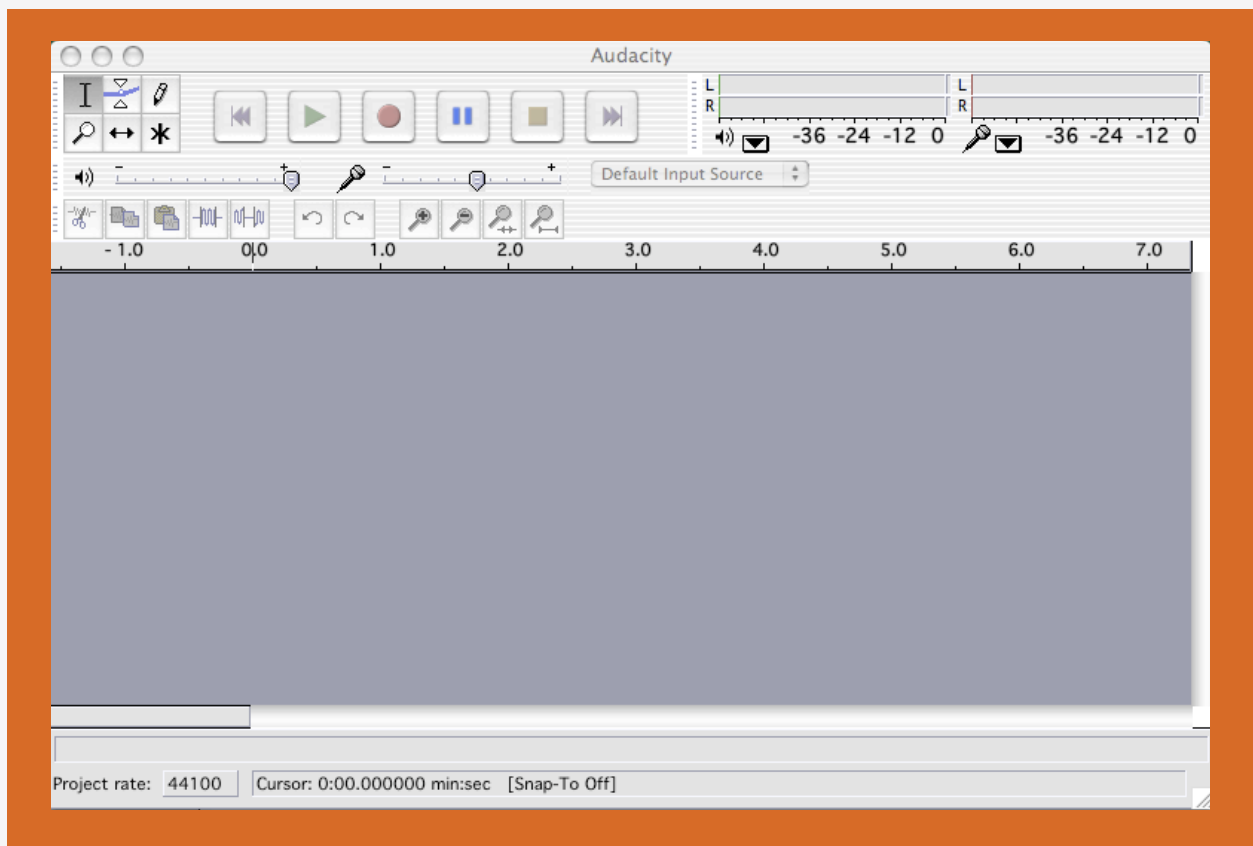
For this project, I'll be building the ninth podcast for my course, on "Authenticity." I already have the eight sound files I'll need saved to my desktop: seven songs we'll discuss in class, and one song I'll be using for the introductory soundbite – Sylvester's disco classic and anthem of gay liberation, "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)." I'll first import the first track into Audacity, by selecting Project – Import Audio, and locating the file (*fig.* 2). After clicking "open," the track is imported to my project panel (*fig.* 3).
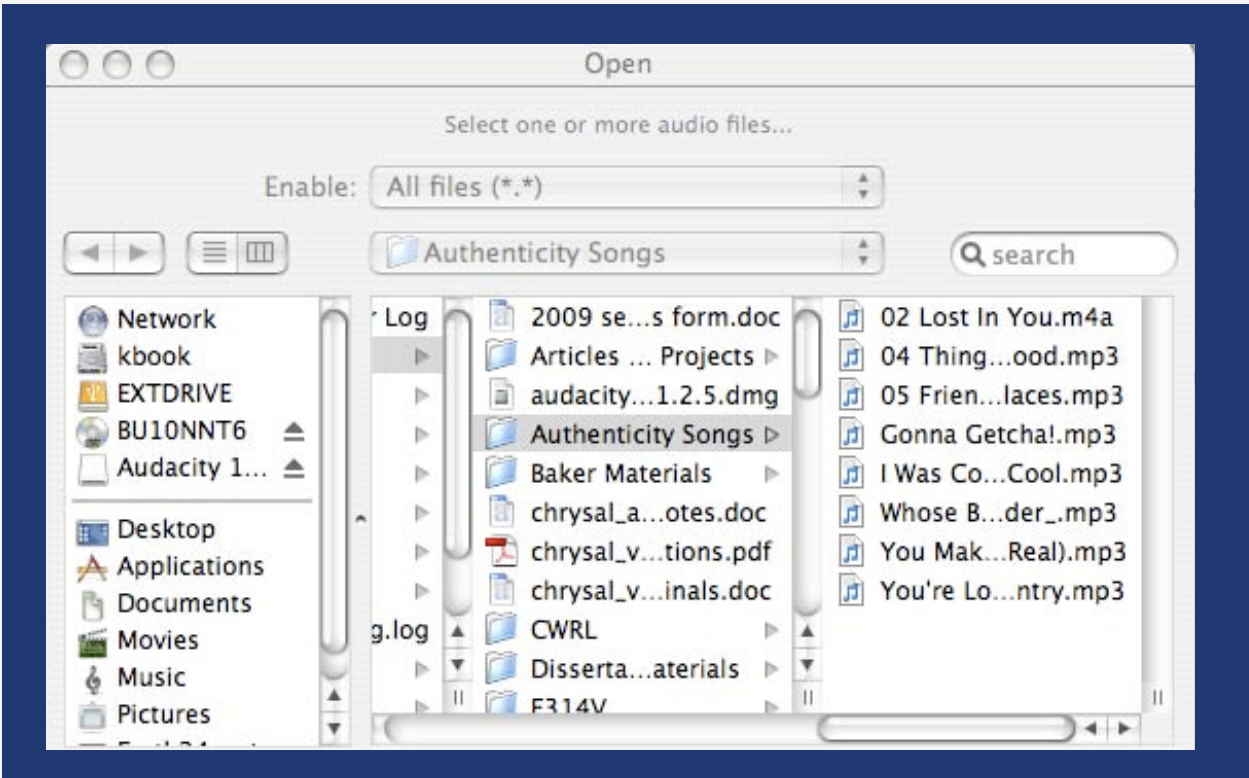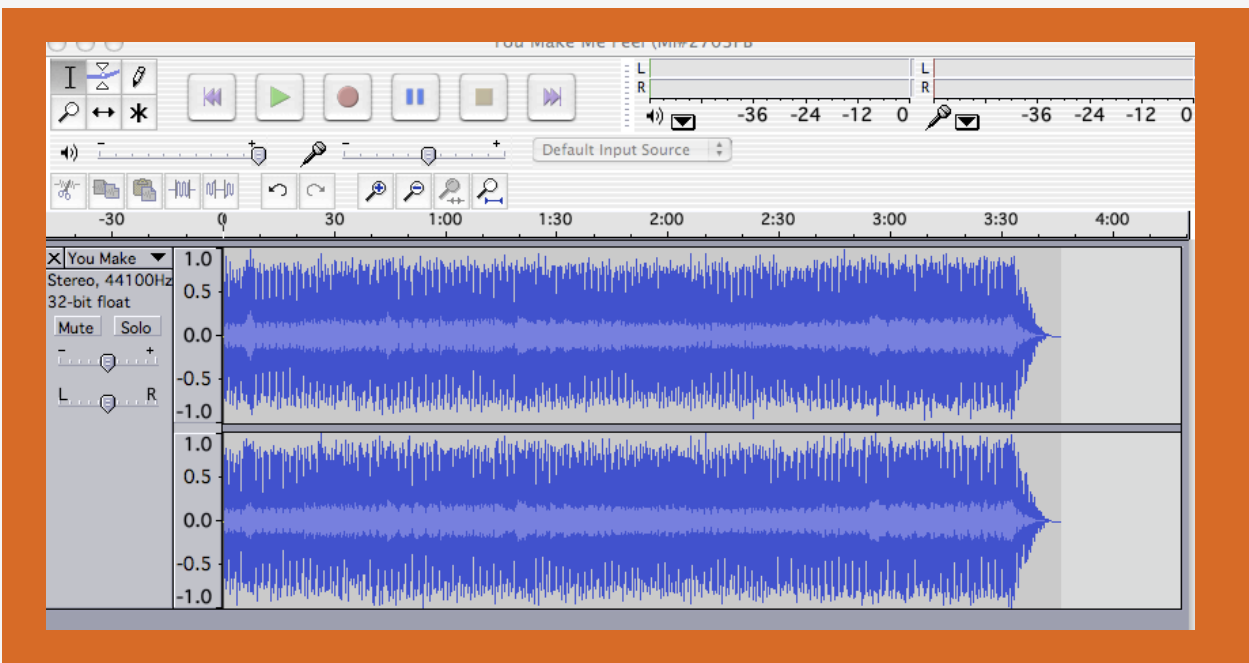
fig. 2: **Finding the first sound file.**


fig. 3: **The first track, in Audacity.**

I complete this step for each track. At this point, my panel includes eight tracks. I can rename them or reposition them by clicking on the downward-facing arrow next to the name of the track (*fig.* 4) and selecting "Name," "Move Track Up," or "Move Track Down." At this point, I rename every track so it's easily identifiable, and position them in the order they'll appear on the podcast.
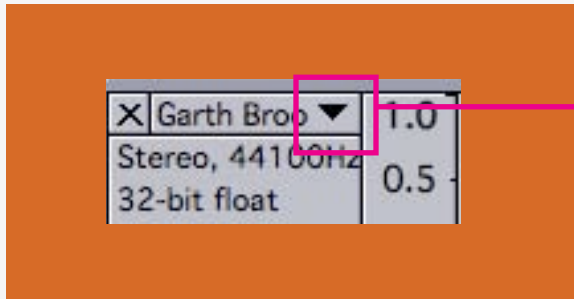
*fig. 4:* **Renaming and repositioning tracks.**

Now I'm ready to start editing. First, I'd like to alter the song by Sylvester, so only a brief selection plays – in this case, the chorus, "You make me feel mighty real." I scroll up to the track, and click on "solo" (*fig.* 5); this will make sure that I can listen to this song exclusively, without every other track playing simultaneously.

*fig. 5:* **"Soloing" the given track.**
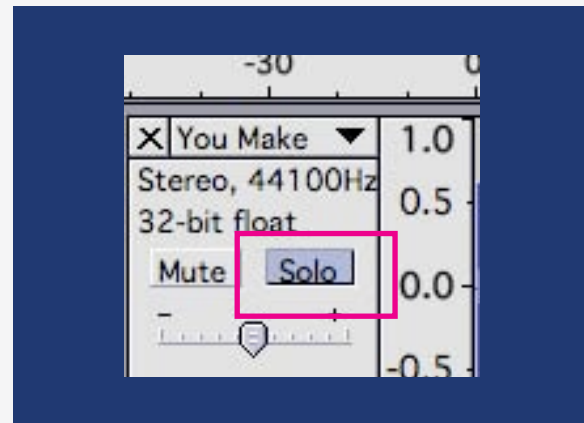
Next I play the track, by clicking on the green "play" button in the upper left-hand corner of the panel. As the track plays (*fig.* 6), I listen closely for the appropriate stopping point for the musical intro.

fig. 6: **Playing the first track.**
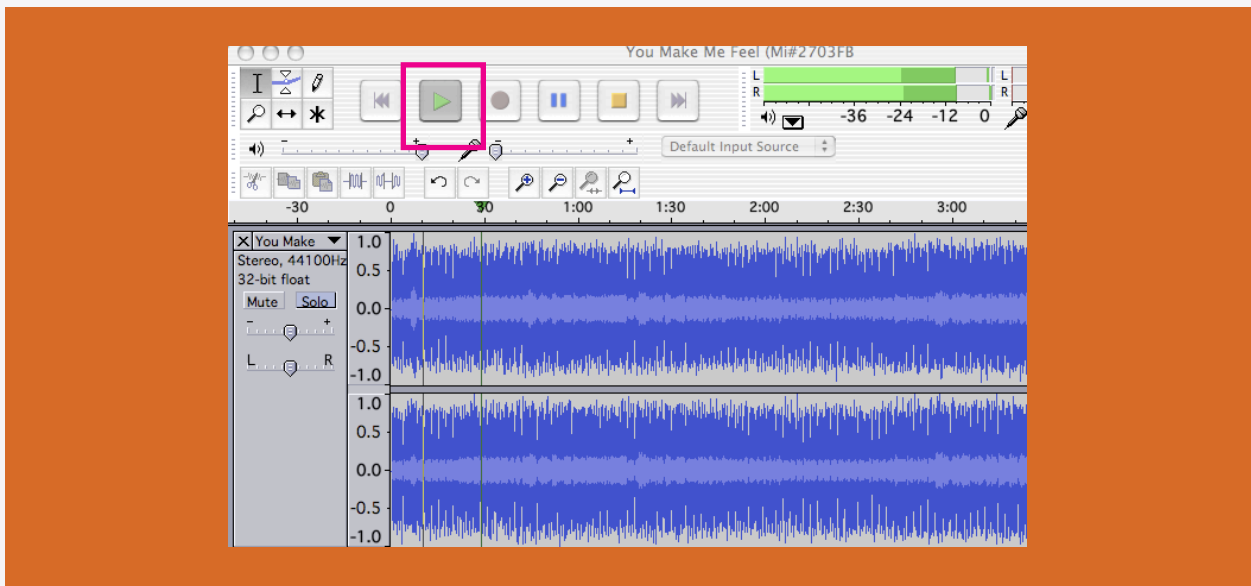
At the moment, my panel has pretty large intervals between minutes. To get a closer view of the track, and to fine-tune my stopping point, I might use the control panel's "zoom in" tool (*fig.* 7). Note that the "zoom out" tool is to this button's right.

fig. 7: **The "zoom in" tool.**
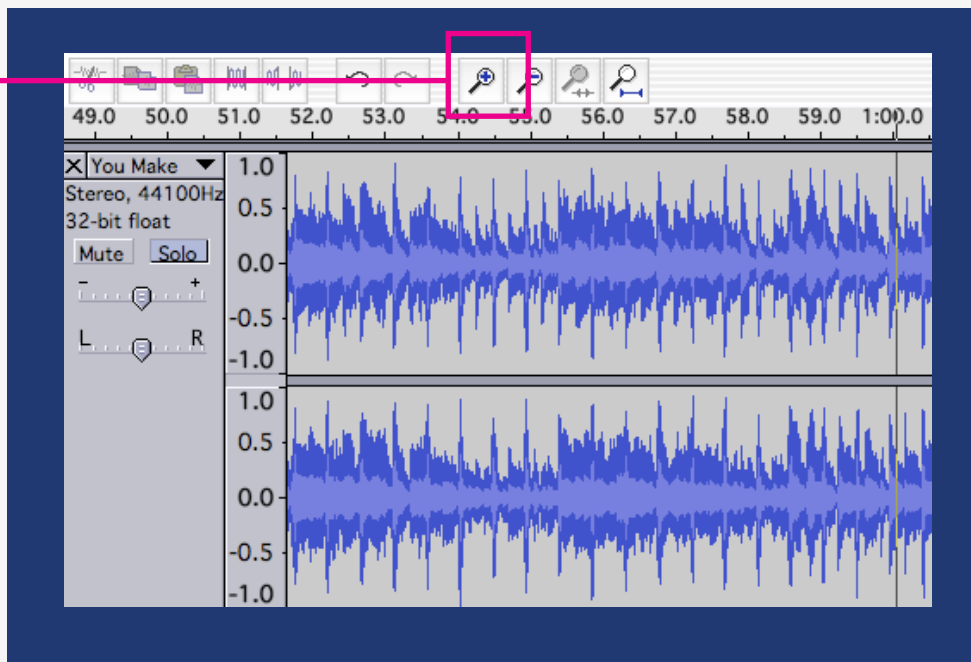
I've found the point at which I want the "intro" to stop completely; it's at about the one-minute mark, where the play bar is now situated (*fig.* 8):

fig. 8: **Our stopping point for the musical introduction.**
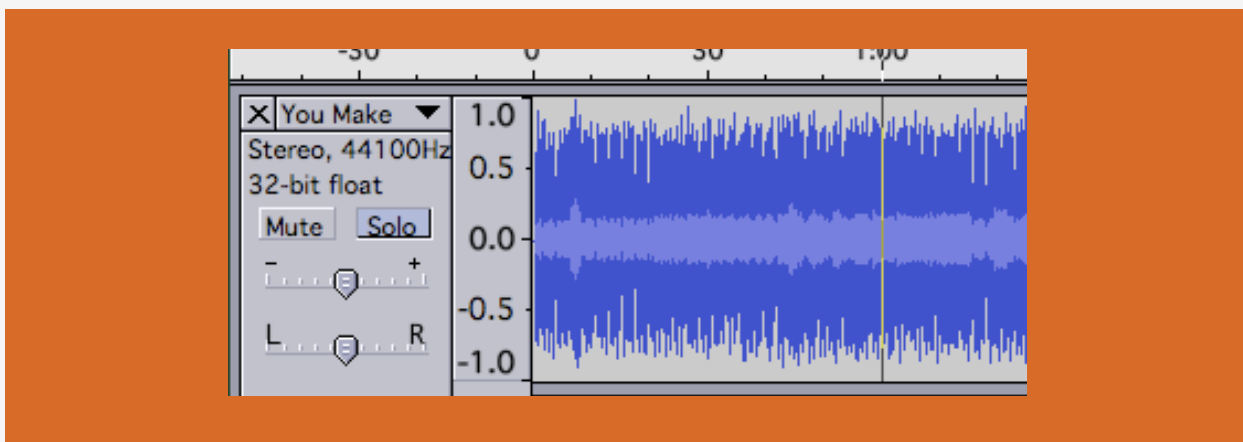
After making sure that the "selection" tool is active (*fig.* 9), I click at this stopping point, then drag the cursor rightward so that all sound information following the stopping point is highlighted (*fig.* 10)
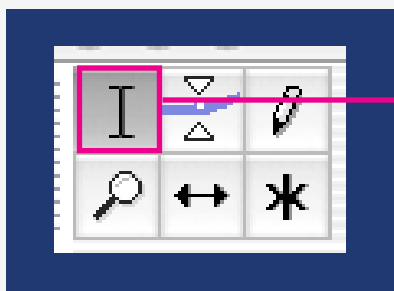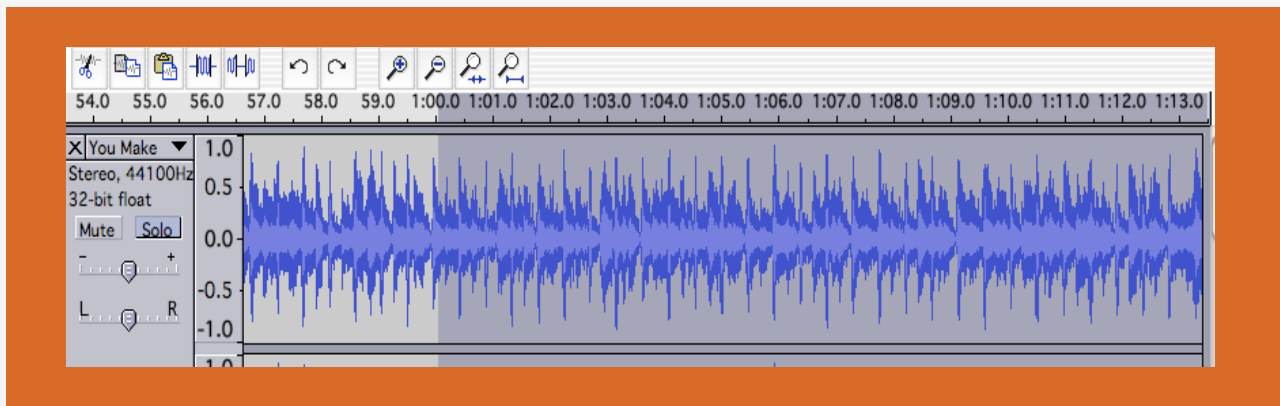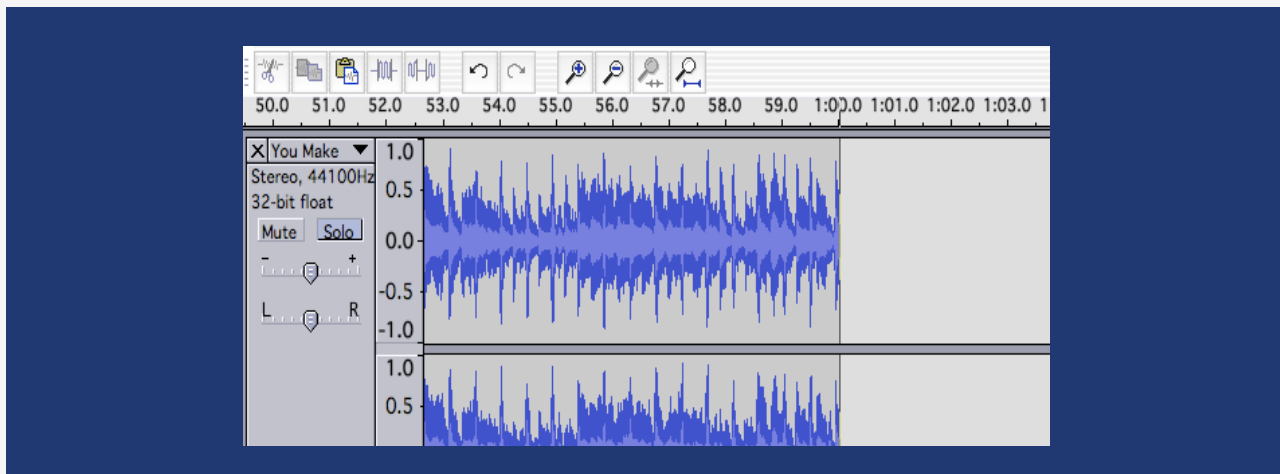

fig. 9: **Activating the "selection" tool.**

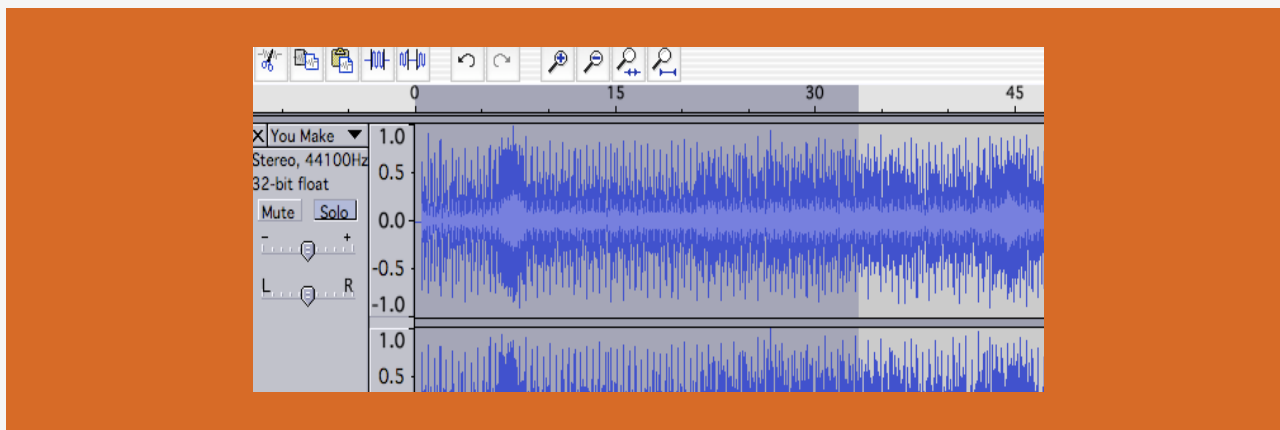*fig. 10:* **I've highlighted all the stuff I don't need.**

This done, I select Edit – Cut to excise the portions of the track I won't be including (*fig.* 11):

*fig. 11:* **The freshly-trimmed sound track.**

I then repeat the process, to cut the opening measures of the song. Here, I won't need the first thirty-odd seconds (*fig.* 12):

fig. 12: **Cutting at the beginning of the track.**

Alternately, you might instead simply highlight the segment you *do* want, and then select Edit – Trim, leaving you just with the important parts of the track (*fig.* 13):

fig. 13: **Using "trim selection" to cut everything *except* the highlighted segment.**
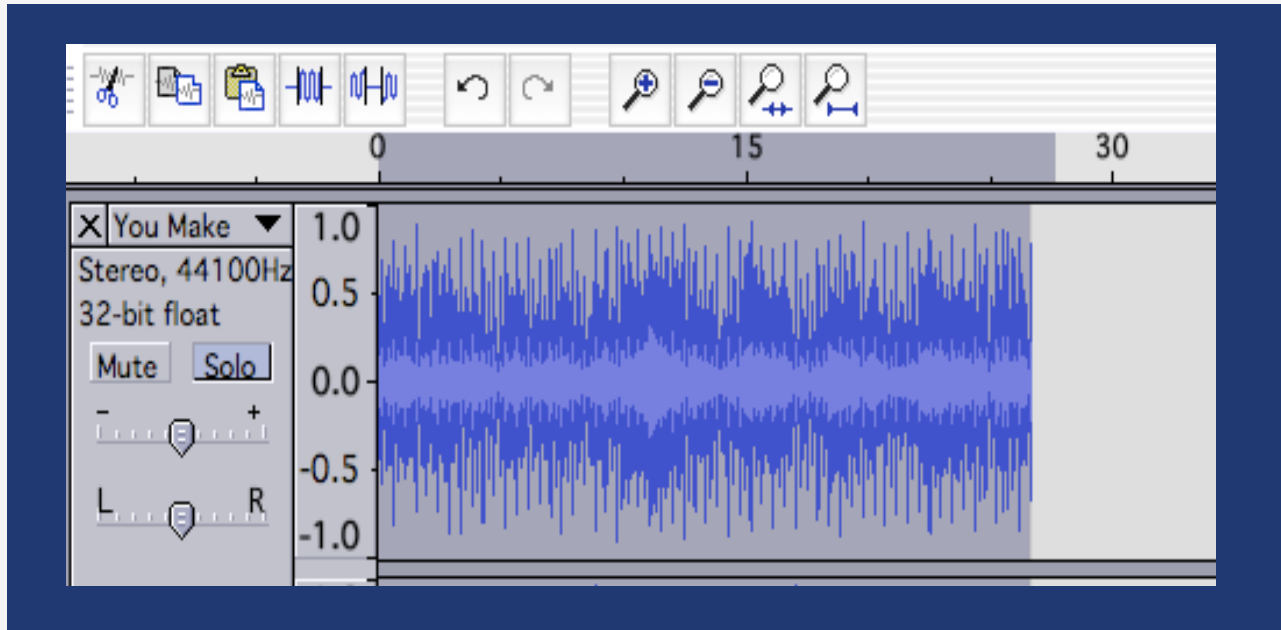
Next, I want to make sure that this intro fades in and out nicely – both to make the finished product sound as seamless as possible, and to use the beginning of the cast to let my students adjust their volume levels. To do so, I select the very beginning of the track, before the most important words (the chorus, in this case), kick in (*fig.* 14). I then select Effect – Fade in, and Audacity automatically increases the volume of the opening track for me (*fig.* 15):
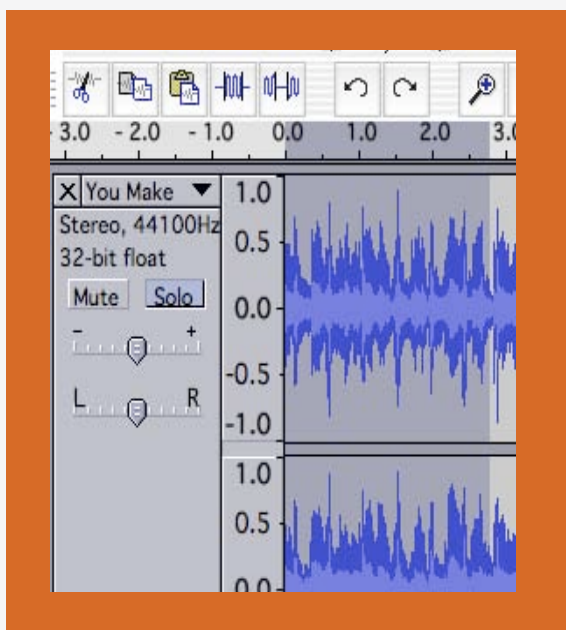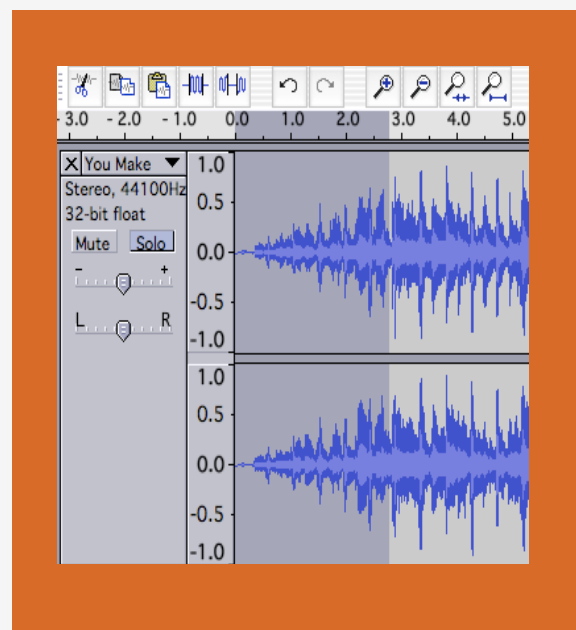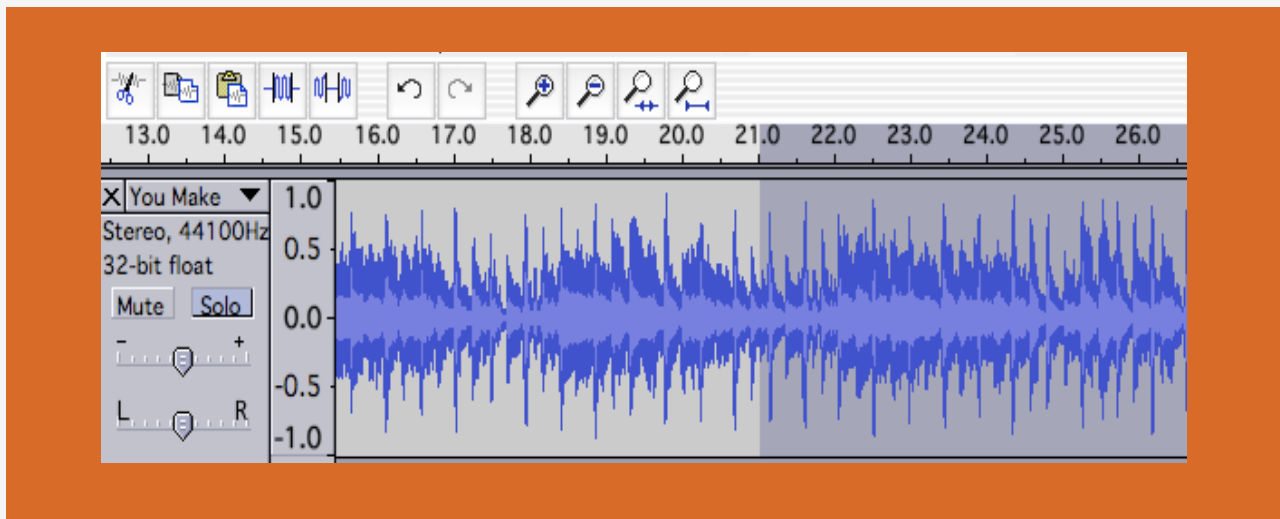
fig. 14: **Highlighting the portions to "fade in"...**

fig. 15: **...and using "Effects" to fade in the track**

I ensure an appropriate "fade out" at the end of the track by highlighting its ending (*fig.* 16), and then selecting Effects – Fade Out.

*fig. 16:* **Selecting the portion of the introductory track to "fade out."**

Now that my musical intro is completely prepared, I'm ready to start recording! After plugging in the microphone, I check my system preferences to make sure that "Sound" is set for the external device, and that the input levels are high enough for my voice to ring loud and clear. I also check the Preferences in Audacity to ascertain that the selected device is correct for my audio equipment and OS. (If you're not sure about this step, you might visit <http://audacityteam.org/wiki/index.php?title=Creating_a_simple_voice_and_music_Podcast_with_Audacity#Create_your_Voice_Track>.)

There's a microphone icon at the top right-hand corner of the panel. Click on the downward-facing triangle next to it, and select "Monitor Input." This will let you test the input levels for your voice, before you start recording. Speak into the microphone; your levels (*fig.* 17) should peak out at between -12 and -6 on the meter. If they're too low or too high, adjust them accordingly on the mic meter on the left-hand side (*fig.* 18).

fig. 17: **Checking the mic levels.**
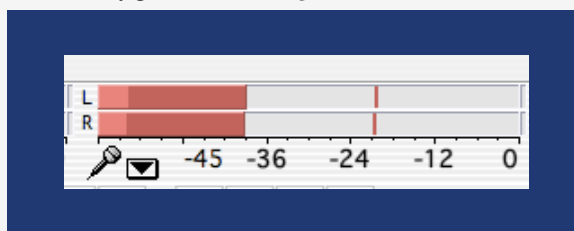
fig. 18: **Adjusting the mic meter.**
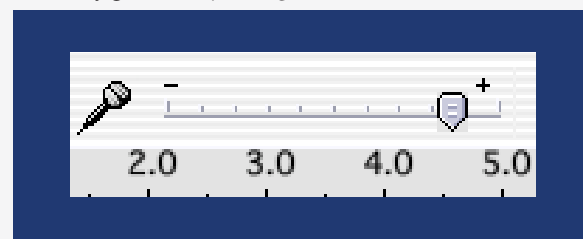
When my levels look good, I'm ready to record. I typically use a prepared script for podcasting, and will begin by introducing the podcast at large:

> This is Kevin Bourque, and you're listening to the ninth podcast for Rhetoric 309K: The Rhetoric of Country Music. We began with a bit of Sylvester's "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)," and our topic is authenticity: that is, what it means to be *real*, to be who you seem to be, to be – in this case – "real country." We'll start off by listening to three songs which establish "country authenticity" in different ways – by Loretta Lynn; Barbara Mandrell and George Jones; and Deryl Dodd. We'll then listen to two songs each by Garth Brooks and Shania Twain, two artists for whom the question of authenticity has taken center stage in public discourse.

Before listening, please read Joli Jensen's "The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercial-ization, and Country Music," as well as two very short pieces: Mark Morford's concert review "Is Sha-nia Twain Human?" and David Cantwell's Salon.com review of Garth Brooks's Chris Gaines record, which is entitled "Garth Brooks Had Friends in Low Places; Chris Gaines Is Just Weird." I'll also be bringing the infamous Chris Gaines record to class, and we'll take a look together at how the disc was packaged.

As you listen to these songs, I'd like you to think about the different ways authenticity is established in country music. Authenticity happens in any number of ways, but I think the most im-portant would include regionalism; working-class values; appeals to established artists; mention of country accessories, such as hats, boots, or pickup trucks; a live sound; anti-commercial sentiments; and finally, the honky tonk, which acts as an urban space in which a country sensibility can thrive.

When I'm ready to start recording, I simply click the red "record" button in the control panel. Audacity will automatically begin a new track. When I'm done, I hit stop, and take a look at the track I've just recorded (*fig.* 19):

fig. 19: **The newly-recorded vocal track.**
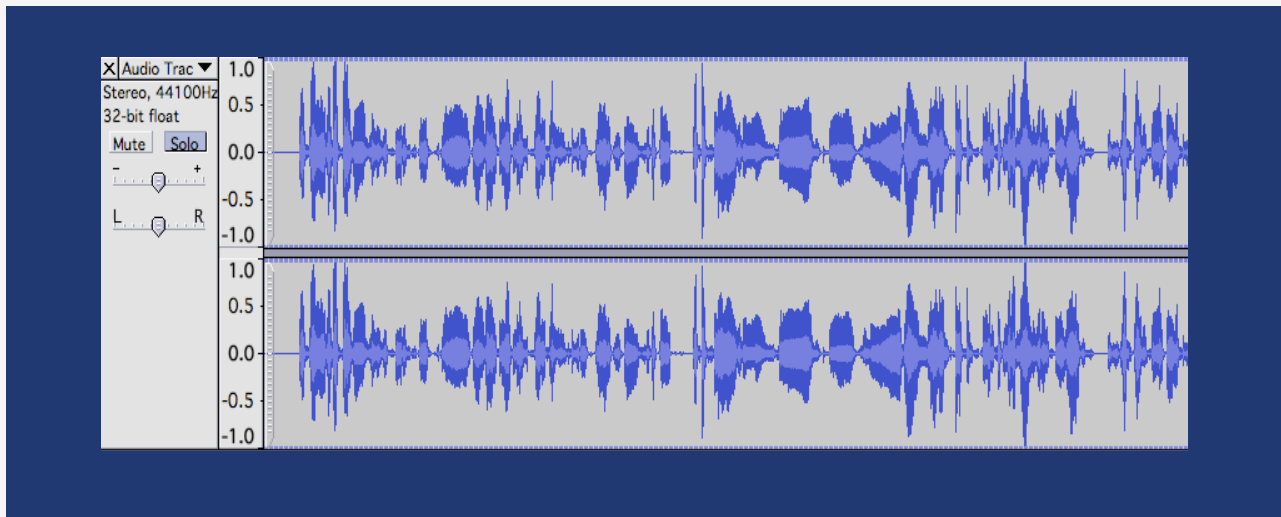
I first want to position the vocal track so that it begins when the musical intro fades out. To do so, I make sure that the "time shift" tool (*fig.* 20) is active, and drag the new track until an appropriate overlap is achieved (*fig.* 21).

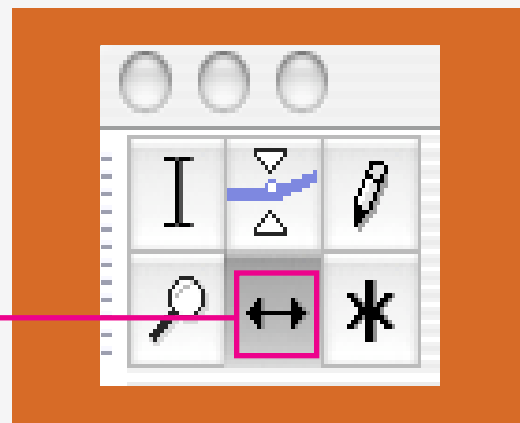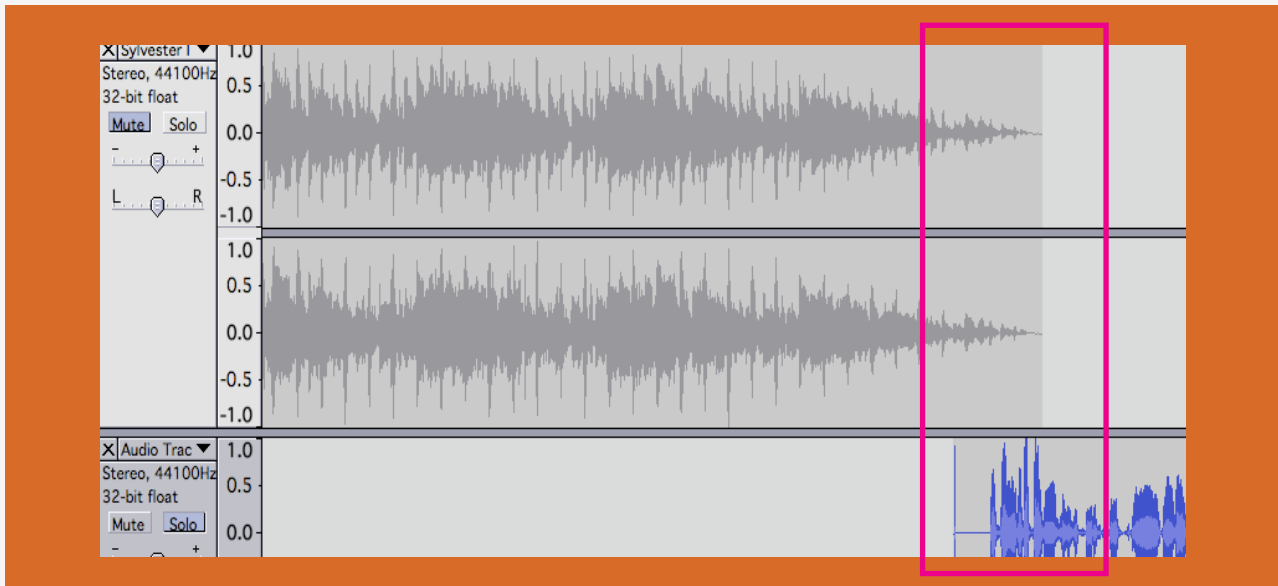*fig. 20:* **Activating the "time shift" tool.**

fig. 21: **Positioning the first and second tracks.**

If I've flubbed at some point, or if there's sound I'd like to excise (*fig.* 22), I can use the "trim selection" tool to cut the offending matter (*fig.* 23):
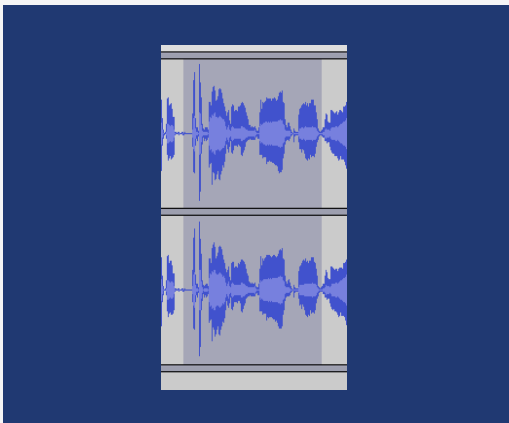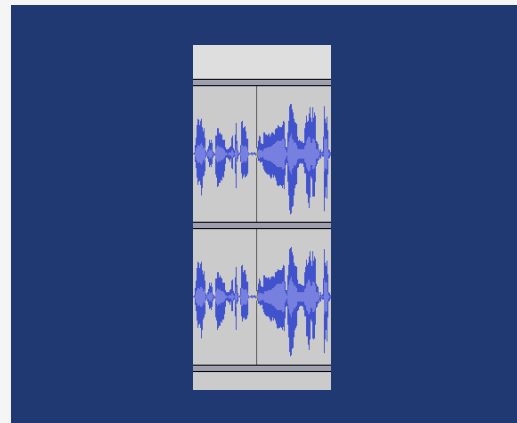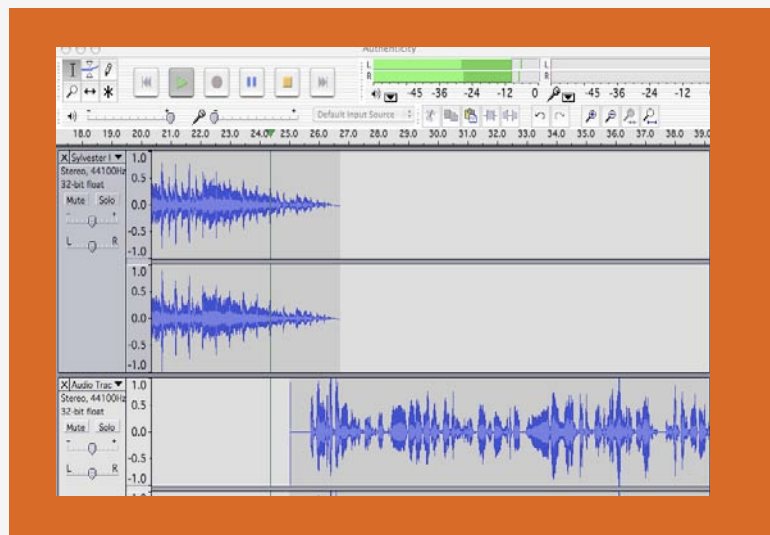
fig. 22: **Selecting a portion to cut.**   *fig. 23:* **Trimming the selection.**

Finally, I playback this portion of the podcast, to insure a good overlap (*fig.* 24).

fig. 24: **Playback.**

Now I'm ready to record the introduction to the first song we'll be discussing in class. I hit "record" again, Audacity begins a new track, and I read the script:

> We're starting with "You're Lookin' at Country," a 1971 top ten country hit for Loretta Lynn. Loretta Lynn is, in some accounts, the most important woman in country music history – and she made her career, in part, by being "proud to be a coal miner's daughter." Notice the particular elements Lynn uses to define "country" – be they cultural references or values, morals, and ethics. Pay attention, too, to the city/country divide that she establishes; as we know, it's a typical device by which country authenticity is signaled. Finally, think about how Lynn's definition of "country" ultimately establishes her own *ethos.* How does Lynn play with this, to "sell" country values? And how is country sexy, because Lynn herself is sexy?

Once it's recorded (*fig.* 25), I position the track so it falls neatly between the end of my general introduction to the podcast (*fig.* 26), and the beginning of the Loretta Lynn track (*fig.* 27).
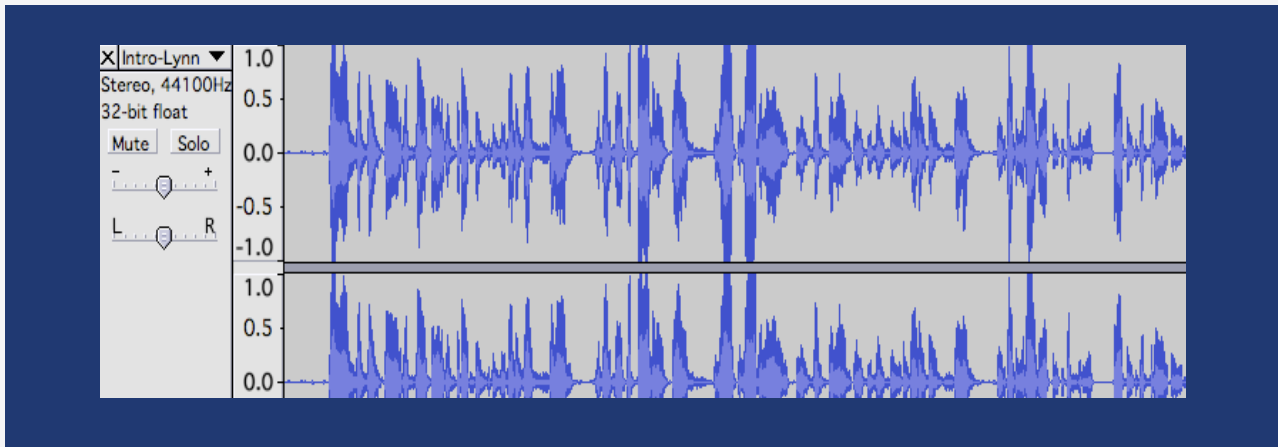
fig. 25: **The second audio track.**

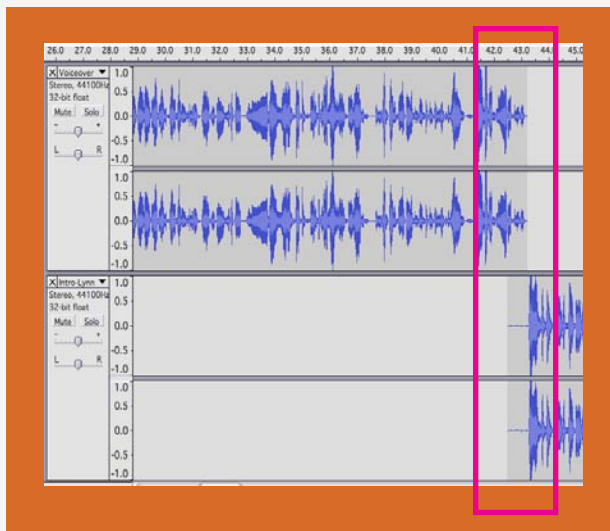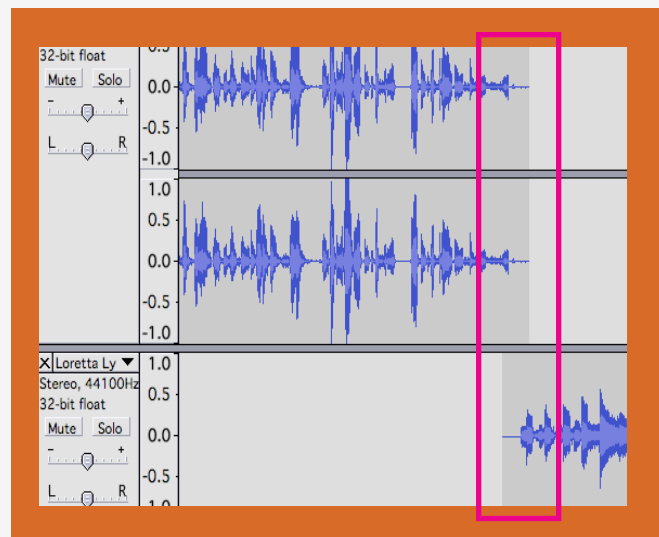*fig. 26:* **Positioning the new track, after the general intro...**

fig. 27: **...and before the first song.**

I repeat the steps for the rest of the podcast, bridging Lynn and Mandrell (*fig.* 28); Mandrell and Dodd; Dodd and Brooks; Brooks and Gaines; and so forth. Finally, I'll record a brief "outro" for the podcast (*fig.* 29); here, something as simple as:

> You've reached the end of the ninth podcast for Rhetoric 309K: The Rhetoric of Country Music. This podcast addressed authenticity; next time, we'll talk about a related topic: nostalgia.

fig. 28: **Introducing the second song.**
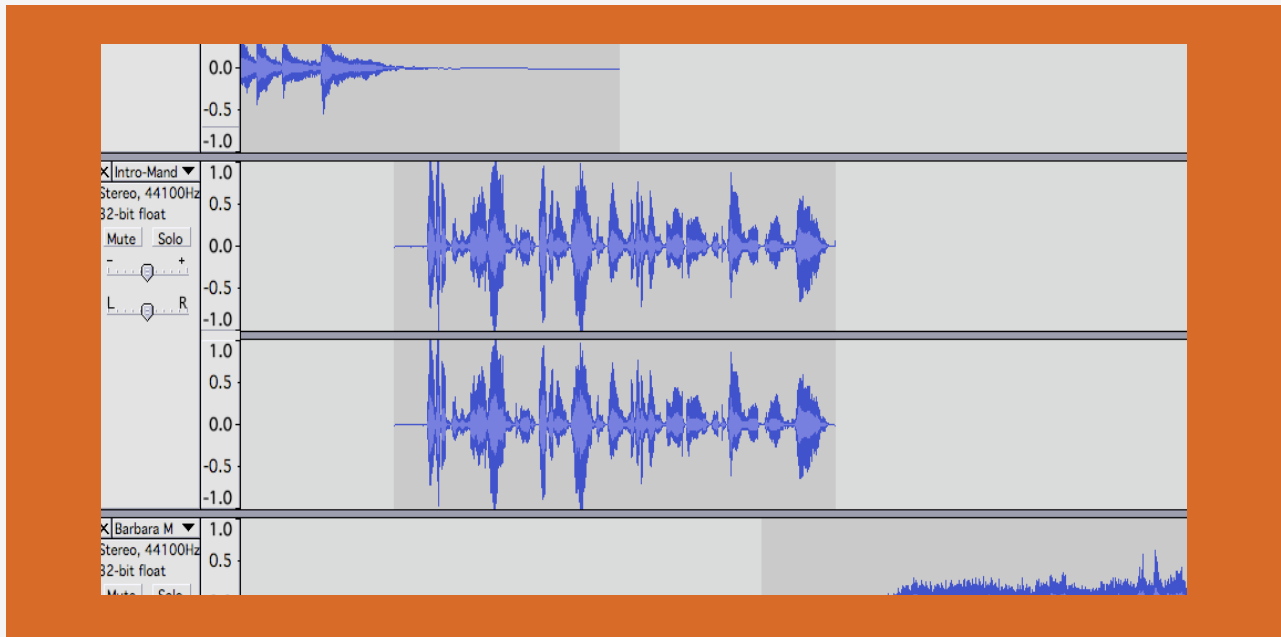
fig. 29: **Positioning the "outro."**
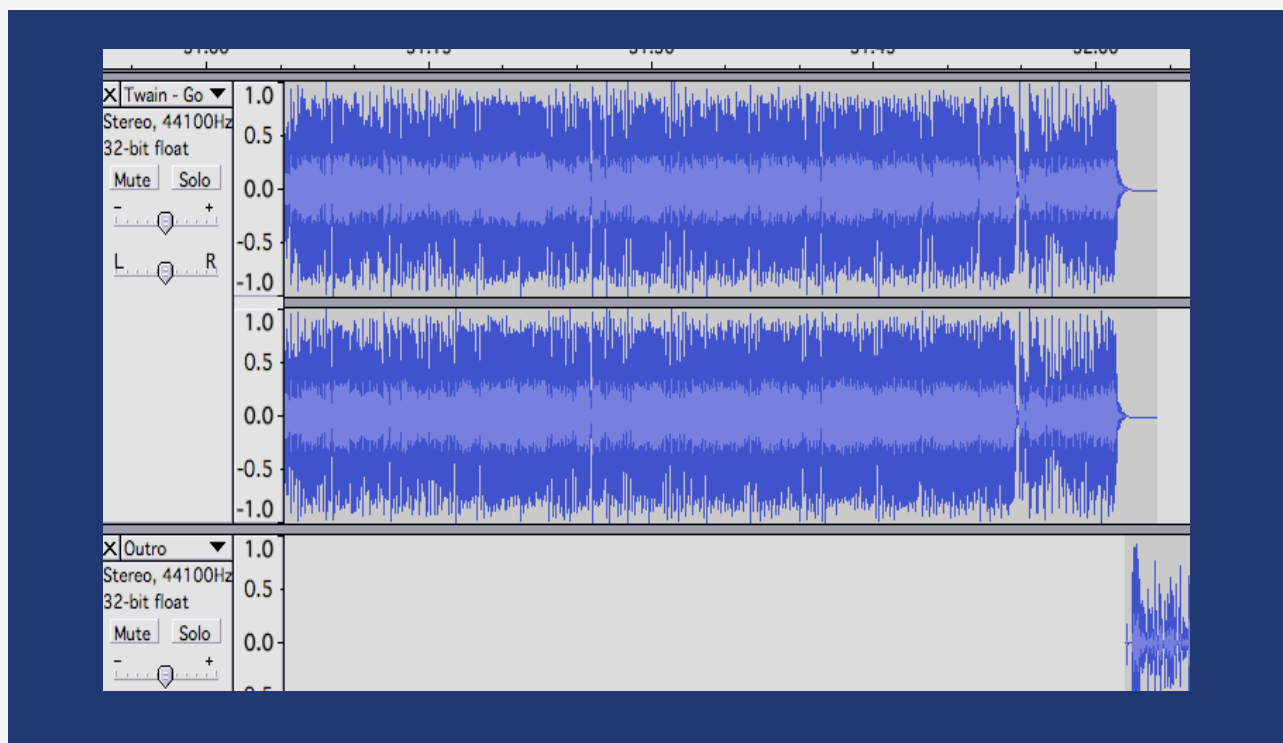
I'm nearly done. All that remains is to compress the project and export the finished podcast as an .mp3 file. I select File – Export as MP3. After I've chosen an appropriate name for the finished podcast (*fig.* 30) and click "save," the project should export (*fig.* 31).

fig. 30: **Naming the podcast.**
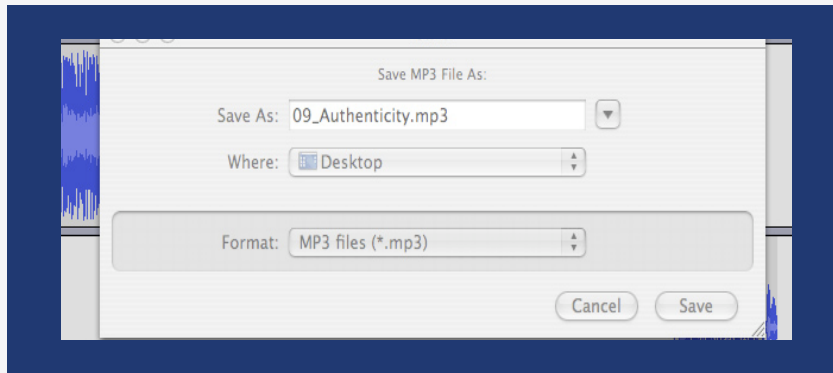
fig. 31: **Exporting the file.**
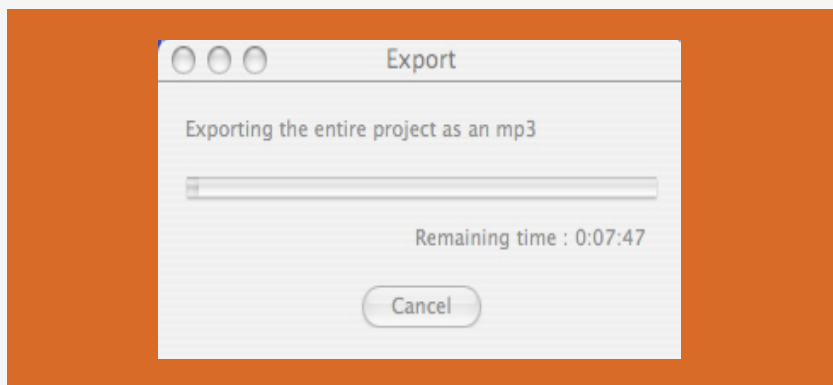
Note that you may need to download additional software to convert your file to an .mp3. If so, Audacity will alert you during the compression process, and direct you to the necessary page: in my case, a page hosting the LAME .mp3 encoder, and amusingly titled "Lame Installation" (*fig.* 32).

You're done, and you're ready to find a good place to host the file.

fig. 32: **Just one more step: additional software required.** *Laaaaaaaame.*
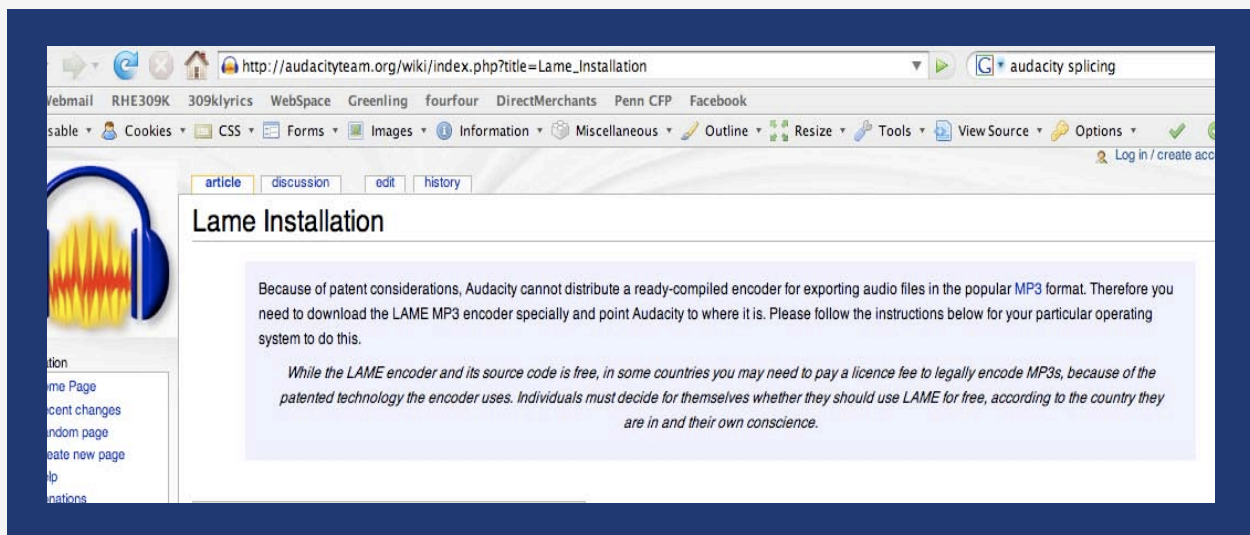
Hosting

There are two excellent places to host your podcasts, if you're teaching at the University of Texas. The first is at WebSpace, "a resource for Web publishing and file storage for students, faculty, and staff at the University of Texas at Austin." As WebSpace has recently increased its disk storage quota to 1000 MB (1 GB), it's now a superb location to host *all* your podcasts, regardless of whether you record one or thirty. The second option, should you be teaching in the CWRL, is at your course website; this is ideal because it gives students *one* central location for course documents, links, and casts. I host my course podcasts at both locations, and will walk you through both options here.

Again, regardless of how or where you host the podcasts, keep in mind that copyright law extends to material included on podcasts. Accordingly, you may want to take measures to limit access to any podcasts you post which include copyrighted recordings – for example, changing your sharing permissions in WebSpace to allow access only to users with registered EID accounts; and/or password-protecting the section of your course website which hosts the casts.

Using WebSpace is a pretty straightforward affair. Type webspace.utexas.edu into your browser window, and you'll be directed to the login page (*fig.* 1). Simply enter your EID and password into the given window. Your account will open, and you can simply click "Upload" (*fig.* 2), find the podcast file on your hard drive, and click "OK" (*fig.* 3).

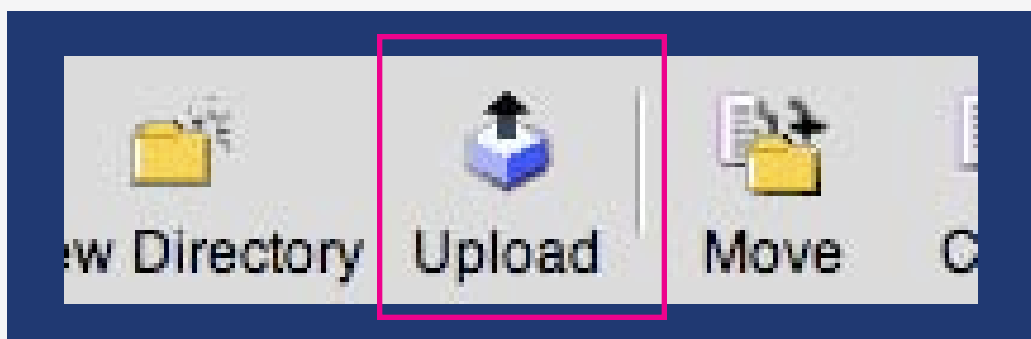*fig. 1:* **Logging in to WebSpace.**

fig. 2: **Select "Upload."**

fig. 3: **Find the file and upload.**
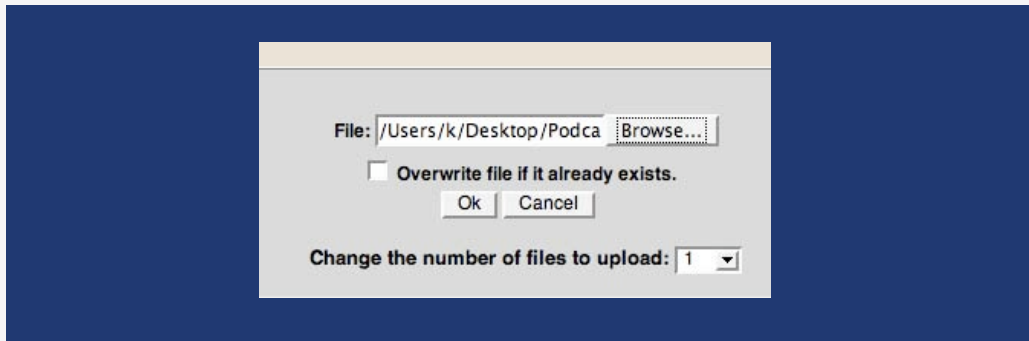
Make sure that your file is set to be "shared" – click on the "share" icon, and allow either those with EID accounts or the public at large to "read" the file. Provide your students with the page address (it should be webspace.utexas.edu/, followed by your EID), and they should be able to listen to them directly on the machine they're using (*fig. 4*).

fig. 4: **The file plays directly within my browser.**
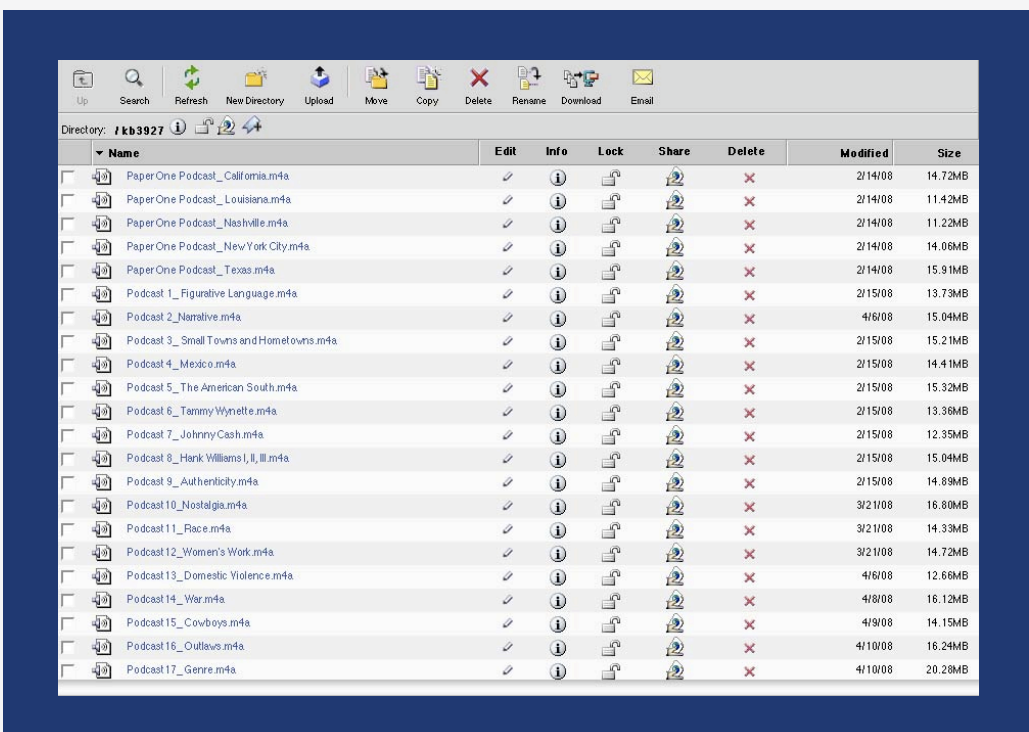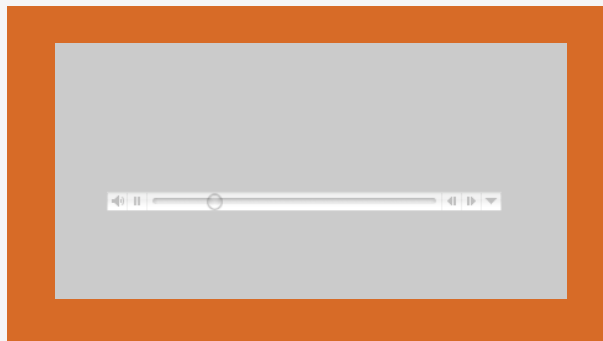
The Rhetoric of Country Music: **The Podcasts at WebSpace**

Your second option is to host the files on your course website. To do so, you'll need some way to transfer files to your Teacher Folder. Should you prefer to connect from your home machine, please refer to the CWRL tutorial, "How Can I Access the Teacher Folder From Home?" Guides, written by Tracey Watts and Bill Wolff and for users on Mac and PC platforms,[2] are available at the following web address:
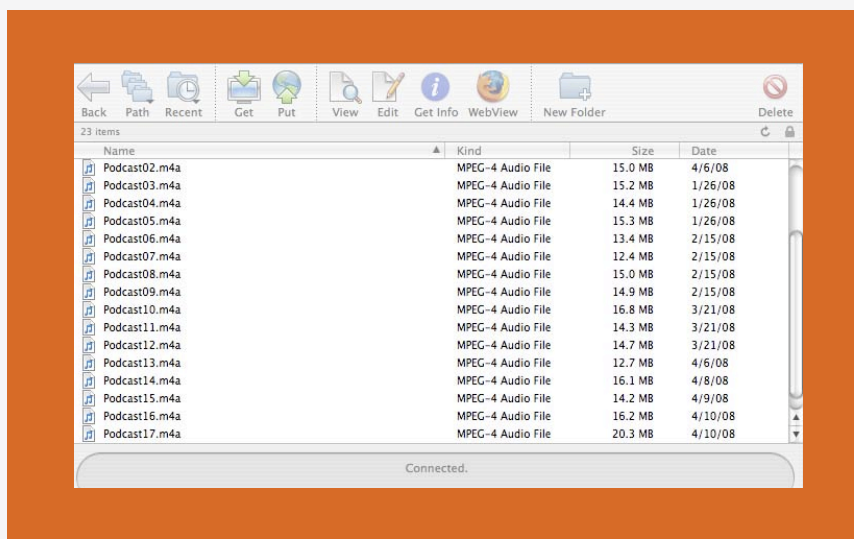
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/node/34

Once you've connected to your Teacher Folder, per the online instructions, simply transfer the podcasts from your home machine to the folder. As a Mac user, I connect through Fetch, rename the podcasts using standard numbers, then transfer them to the folder (*fig.* 5):

fig. 5: **Podcasts, by number, within the Teacher Folder.**

At the course website, I devote a page to podcasts. In order to link each file with markup code, add a line which reads PODCAST TITLE. For example, my first podcast (on figurative language) is marked Figurative Language, since my CWRL account is "bourque," the podcast is saved in the Teacher Folder as Podcast01, its extension is .m4a, and its title is "Figurative Language." In my example, the full listing as code is written as:

```
<strong>Monday, January 28</strong>
• <a href=
"http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~bourque/Podcast01.m4a">Figurative Language</a>
<dd>Randy Travis: Deeper than the Holler (1988)
Alabama: Love in the First Degree (1980)
Garth Brooks: The Dance (1989)
George Strait: She'll Leave You With a Smile (1997)
Sylvia: Nobody (1982)
Brooks and Dunn: Lost and Found (1991)
Alison Krauss and Brad Paisley: Whiskey Lullaby (2003)
-
VIDEO: Josh Turner: Long Black Train (2003)</dd>
```

---

2. Tracey Watts and Bill Wolff. "How can I access the Teacher Folder from home?" The Computer Writing and Research Lab at the University of Texas. 22 August 2008. <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/node/34>

And appears as the following (*fig.* 6), where "Figurative Language" acts as the link for downloading the podcast (*fig.* 7):

fig. 6: **The podcast as listed at the course site, with clickable link.**

fig. 7: **The podcast, downloading to my home machine.**
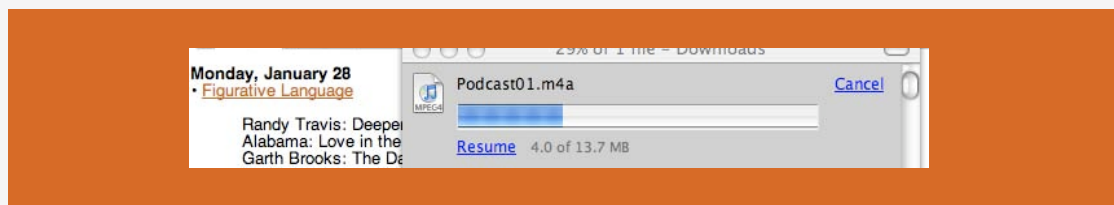
On rare occasions, I've had students have trouble downloading directly from the course site. For this reason – and because it takes little additional work – I've hosted my podcasts both at the course site and at WebSpace, specifying the latter is ideal for listening on a lab machine, while the former is good for downloading to a portable player.

Using *American Rhetoric*

6

In sections 6 and 7, I'll be applying podcasting technology to materials available online, and providing some ideas for podcasts that would complement course sections of 306, 309S, and 309K. I'll briefly describe potential podcasts using two online resources: in this section, a podcast on figures of speech, using sound clips available through the American Rhetoric website; and in section seven, we'll convert YouTube videos to audio files, and consider a podcast where several pundits "weigh in" on the same controversy.

American Rhetoric is a fantastic resource for instructors of rhetoric. The website features an "online speech bank," which includes more than 5,000 "public speeches, sermons, legal proceedings, lectures, debates, interviews, [and] other recorded media events"– ranging from Abbott and Costello's classic "Who's on First" to Zell Miller's 2004 address to the Democratic National Convention. Many of them are available and downloadable as sound files – which makes them ideal raw materials for podcasting. The site also has a "rhetorical figures in sound" section, "a compendium of 200+ brief audio (mp3) clips illustrating 40 different figures of speech." I'll use these resources to build two sample podcasts: one which closely considers a single speech, incorporating an instructor's comments and guidance; and a second which prepares a lecture on diverse figures of speech, using audio examples for each.

American Rhetoric: http://www.americanrhetoric.com

American Rhetoric: the Online Speech Bank, and Rhetorical Figures in Sound

First, I'll select a compelling bit of rhetoric from the online speech bank – perhaps George W. Bush's 9/11 Address to the Nation, "A Great People Has Been Moved to Defend a Great Nation." American Rhetoric has an audio version available (*fig.* 1):

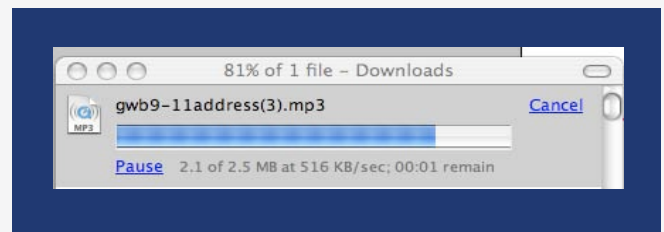fig. 1: **George W. Bush's 9/11 Address to the Nation.**

After clicking on the title, I scroll down the page to locate the file in audio format (*fig.* 2) and then instruct my browser to download the file to my desktop (*fig.* 3). On my Mac, all it requires is option-click.

fig. 2: **Locating the audio file.**
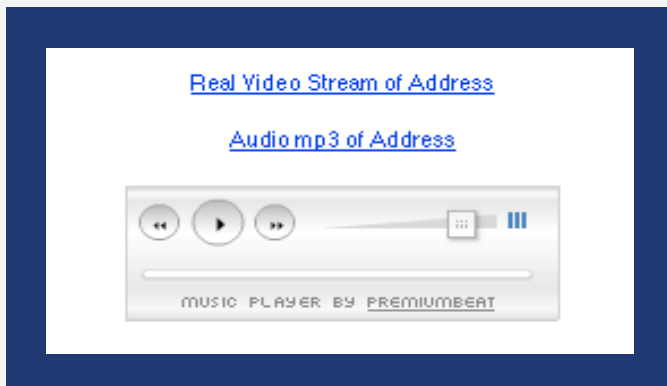
fig. 3: **Downloading to my machine.**

Now that I have the sound file, I can simply import it as a track in my editing software. The great thing about this approach, in lieu of simply asking students to read the text file or listen to the full version online, is that I can split the track at crucial pauses, adding my own recorded voice (*fig.* 4), and pointing out critical examples of word choice, tone, figurative or persuasive tropes, etc. Because I have full control over assembling the file, I can help my students see how rhetoric works by giving play-by-play commentary *as they listen* to the original speech.

fig. 4: **Adding "play-by-play" commentary.**
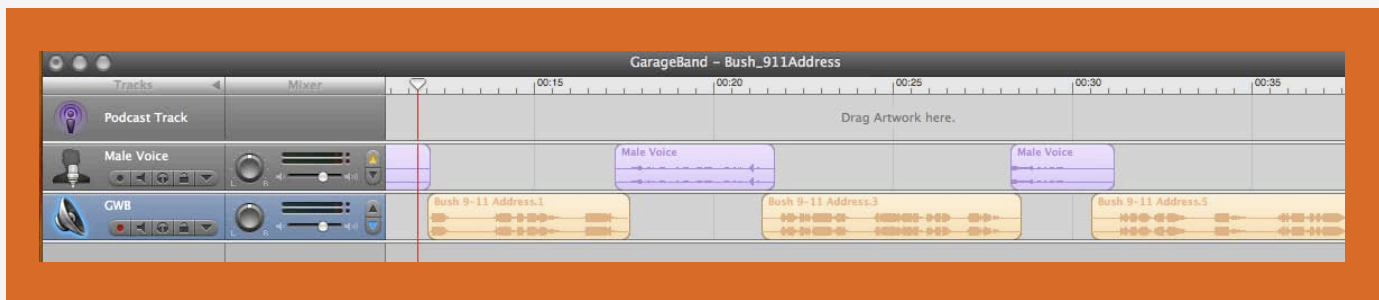
Similarly, I could use the audio files available in American Rhetoric's "Rhetorical Figures in Sound," carefully select ideal examples, and then assemble them together in one podcast, providing attributions and a little context for each. In this example, I present examples of epistrophe from *Patton*, Nelson Mandela, and Malcolm X, and anaphora as used by Hillary Clinton, Pat Robertson, and Mario Cuomo (*fig.* 5).

fig. 5: **Building a podcast lecture on "figures of speech."**
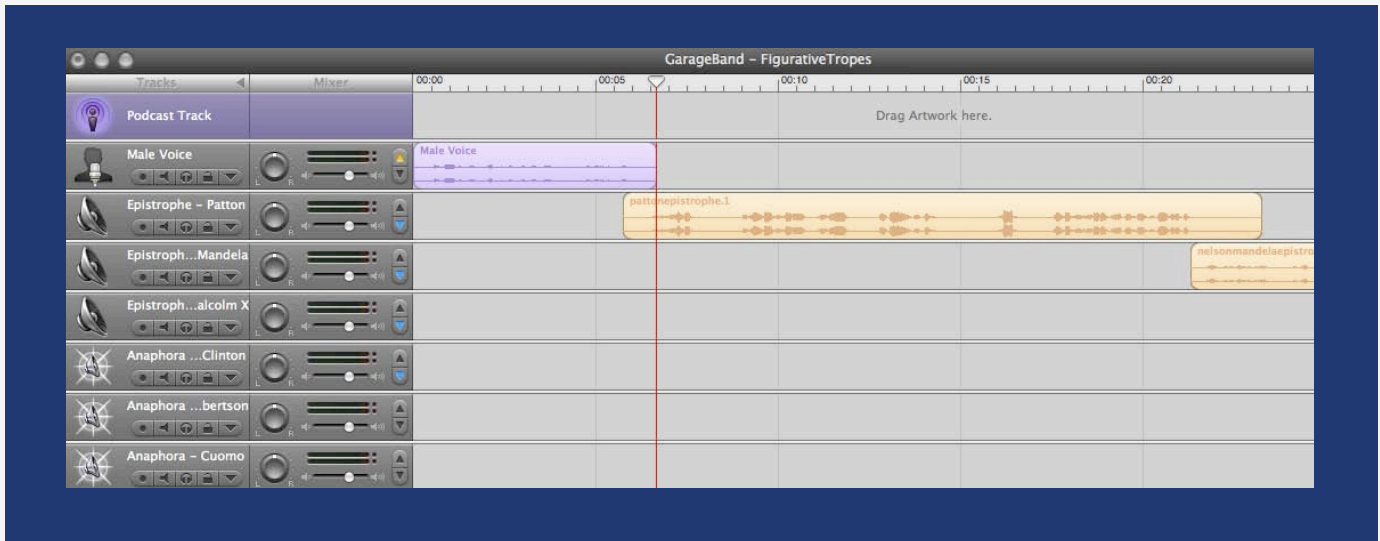

Because the sound files at American Rhetoric are so easily to download, it takes very little additional work to string them together, thereby building a full lecture, in podcast form, on "figures of speech" (or, with a little extra ingenuity, on any number of topics in rhetoric – such as fallacies, tone, styles of argument, etc.).

Using *YouTube*

YouTube can act as a fantastic resource for instructors teaching rhetoric and argumentation. Because videos posted at YouTube are so topical, they document controversy in American political rhetoric *as it happens*. Thanks to websites which will covert YouTube files to audio, an instructor could select a central "flashpoint" in national discourse – for example, Hillary Clinton's on-camera tears, George Bush's flight suit, and so forth – and, by converting the videos to audio, assemble them together *in one place* to talk about how different pundits, different media, and different networks "spin" pivotal moments in different ways. In this example, I've selected an ongoing controversy – comments made by the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Barack Obama's pastor – and have, just in a few minutes, found many different "takes" on his preaching, from his supporters, pundits, and mainstream news networks.

Obama church: "God DAMN America!" "US of KKK-

OBAMA'S PREACHER
THE WRIGHT MESSAGE?
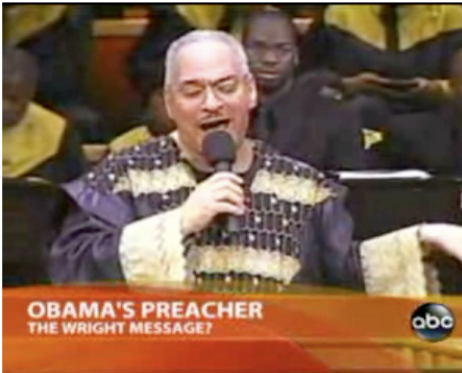
Fact Check: Barack Obama's Church

Jane Fisler Hoffman
Minister, United Church of Christ
Attends Barack Obama's church

Obama's Pastor Jeremiah Wright of Trinity Church "

Obama's church

TRINITY UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
REV JEREMIAH WRIGHT
STERDAY SHE WOULD CONTINUE TO RAISE MONEY FOR

How Questionable is Barack Obama's Church? part1

HANNITY & COLMES
A LOOK AT OBAMA'S CHURCH IN
CHICAGO & ITS UNUSUAL DOCTRINES
JOHN MCCAIN (R-AZ) REVEALS HELL RUN FO

CNN - LOU DOBBS TO BARACK OBAMA "YOU CHO

OBAMA'S
PASTOR

LOU DOBBS
YNCHS FOUNDATION DONATES $1 MILLION TO IOWA STUDE

After listening to several examples, and selecting the most compelling ones, I make note of the URL address for each. Now, I'm ready to convert video to audio format, and I'll begin with Minister Jane Fisler Hoffman's response (she attends Obama's church, and supports his campaign; in fact, the video was posted by "BarackObamadotcom"). The web address for this video is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioaChVw_pUw>.

Vixy.net is one of several websites which will convert YouTube to audio files. After directing my browser to <http://vixy.net>, I "plug in" this video's URL into the converter (*fig.* 1), select "MP3" in the "coverts to" field, and click "start." After a brief wait, the file downloads to my desktop (*fig.* 2). I do a quick test-play to make sure the audio file works (*fig.* 3).

fig. 1: **Converting at vixy.net.**
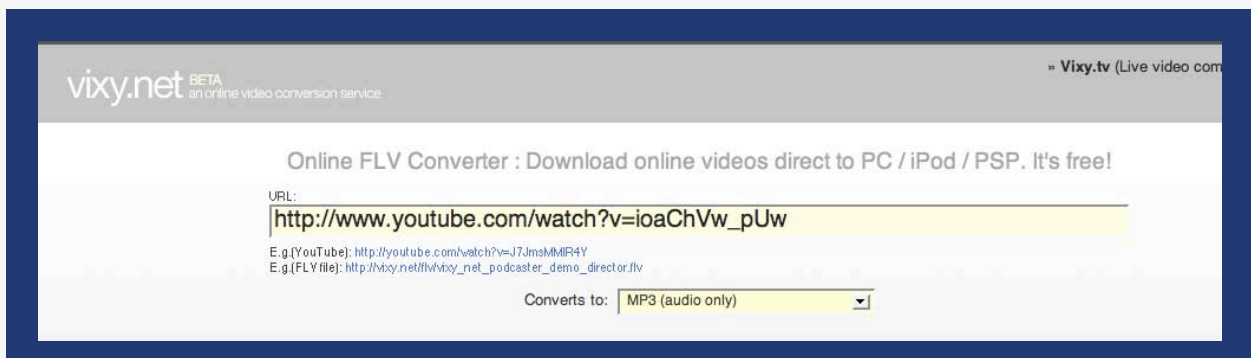

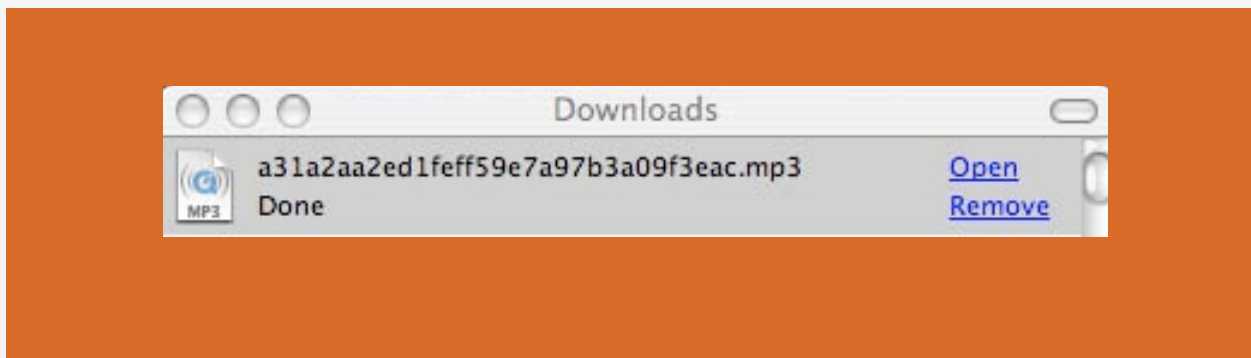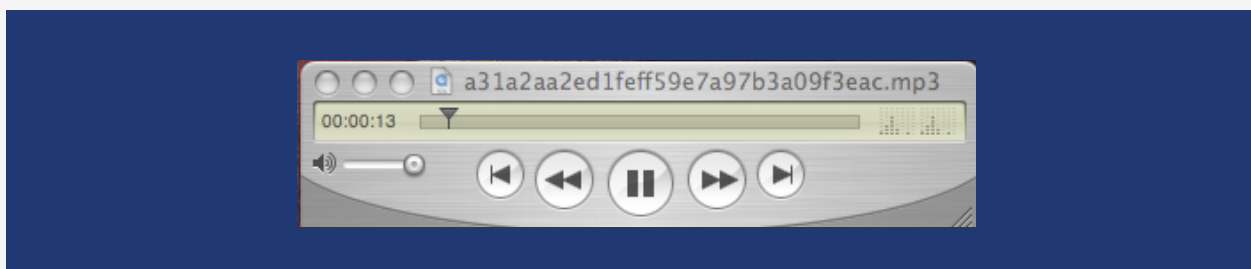*fig. 2:* **Downloading the converted file.**

fig. 3: **Testing the audio file.**

The audio sounds good! Using my mad podcasting skillz (as garnered from Section 3 or 4), I import the .mp3 in Audacity or Garageband (*fig.* 4), renaming it to reflect its content. I can then repeat the process until I've assembled a number of different soundbites on the same central issue, and have imported each text as a track in the sound editing program (*fig.* 5). Once that's done, I'm ready to cut, edit, and provide voiceover, giving my students some indication of the contexts, media biases, and argumentative strategies characteristic of each "take" on the issue.
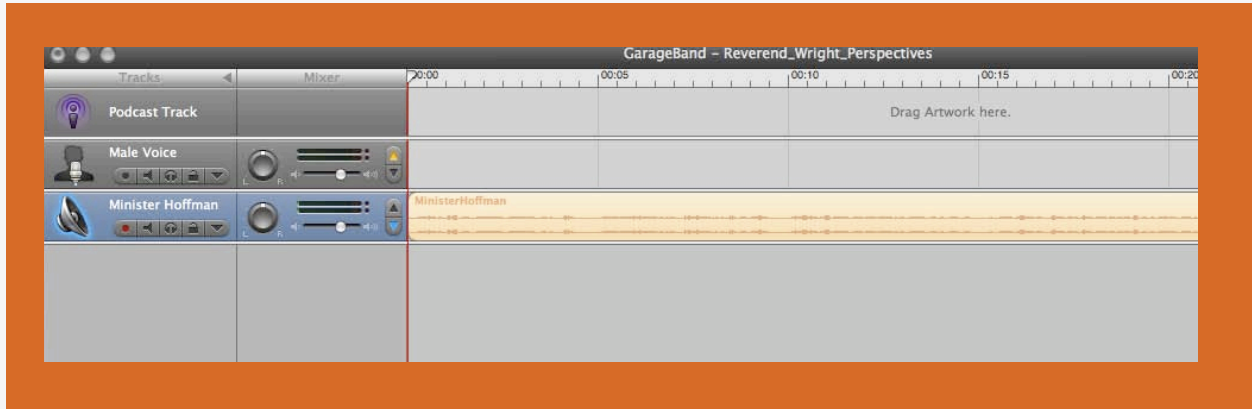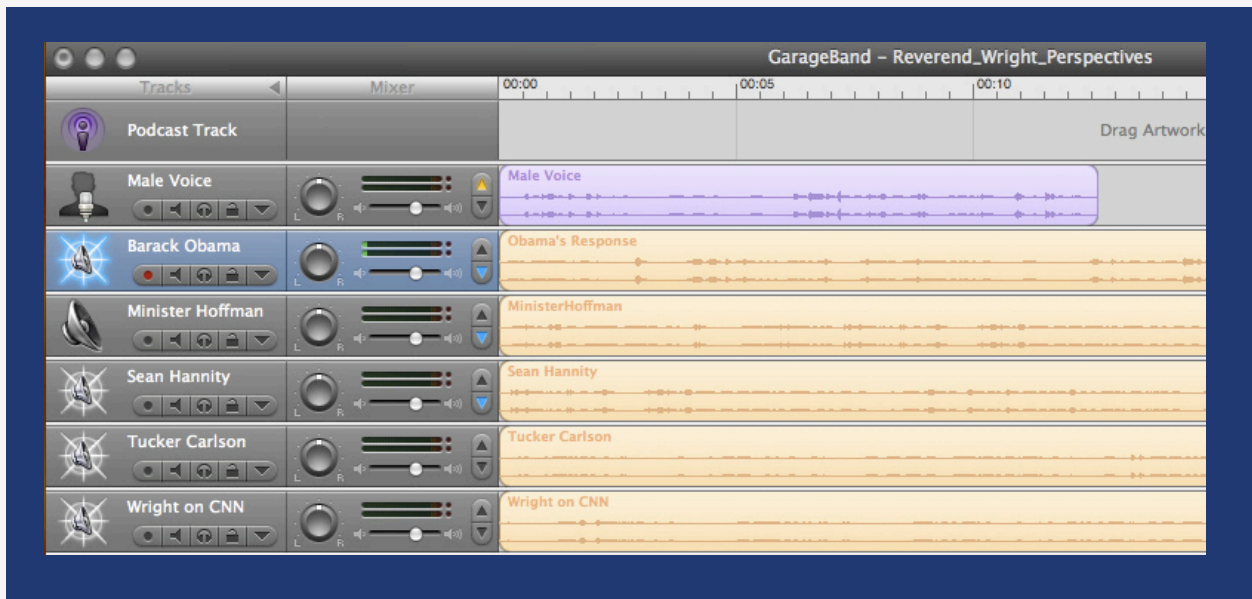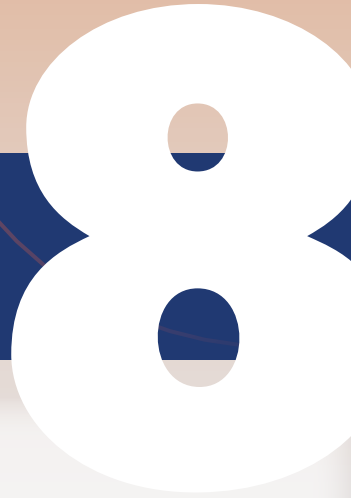
fig. 4: **Importing the new .mp3.**

fig. 5: **Adding new tracks.**

For More Information

8

For more guidance, advice or assistance, you're very welcome to contact me directly (Kevin Bourque; interrobang@mail.utexas.edu). For support issues directly related to CWRL technology, please write support@support.cwrl.utexas.edu. I also recommend the following books, guides, and tutorials:

Morris, Tee, and Evo Terra. *Podcasting for Dummies*. ISBN 047027557X.

Ratcliffe, Mitch, and Steve Mack. *The Podcasting Bible*. ISBN 0470043520.
> *NB:* I have a copy of this one, and am happy to loan it to fellow instructors.

GarageBand Tutorial: "Creating a Podcast."
> <http://www.apple.com/ilife/tutorials/#garageband-podcast-51>

The Audacity Wiki, including tutorials and tips.
> <http://audacityteam.org/wiki/index.php?title=Audacity_Wiki_Home_Page>

Mazzoni, Dominic, and Scott Granneman. *Podcasting with Audacity: Creating a Podcast with Free Audio Software.* <http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0132366576>

Carnegie Mellon University. "Podcasting: A Teaching With Technology White Paper."
> <http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/PublicationsArchives/StudiesWhitepapers/Podcasting_Jun07.html>