

# Introduction to Audio

## Spring 2014

Comm 130-201 and Comm 130-202

Instructor: William Cox  
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Office Hours available by appointment

### Course Information

Room: 51 E Pearson, Lower Level, Room 002

Time: Tuesday or Wednesday 4:15 pm – 6:45 pm

Text:

Materials: SD card and USB flash drive or external hard drive

### Course Description

This is an introduction to the world of audio production. It is meant for undergraduate students with an interest in audio and its applications in modern media and art. Students will learn to employ audio as a creative tool for documentary story telling, fiction filmmaking, video art, news media, radio production, comedy sketches, commercials and internet production.

Creativity and careful execution are major factors in the grading of ALL projects.

### Course Goals

- Understanding of basic audio concepts and terminology.
- Develop critical listening skills, and learn how to effectively discuss sound.
- Gaining a working knowledge of signal flow and basic audio technology including microphones, recorders, mixers, and DAWs.
- Conceptualizing, planning, and executing effective sound designs.
- Ability to utilize audio software programs such as Audition to edit and design audio.
- Practice the art storytelling using sound.
- Developing directing and writing skills in regards to audio production.
- Understanding of audio workflows, practices, and standards.
- Developing interviewing skills.
- Learning basic music editing and concepts.
- Learn how sound and image work in tandem to tell stories.
- Providing and incorporating constructive criticism to and from your colleagues.
- Manage effective collaborations. Collaboration is everything!

## Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates

### Production Assignments

**Audio Interview** – Record, log, and edit a short (2 minute) interview with a subject of your choosing, using a recording ratio of at least 10:1. (5%) **Due Week 4**

**Audio Documentary** – Plan and produce a short (3-5 minute) audio documentary using voice, sound effects, and music, on an instructor approved subject of their choosing (10%) **Due Week 6**

**Video Sound Design Project** Students will spot, design and build the soundtrack for a short video. (15%) **Due Week 13, Rough Cuts will be critiqued Week 12.**

**Final Project** – Plan, record, edit and mix a short (5-7 minute) creative audio project of your choosing. It could be a short story, poem, comedy sketch show, abstract, drama – you name it. Projects should be a demonstration of your fluency in the concepts and techniques taught throughout the course. (20%) **Due Week 15, Rough Cuts will be critiqued Weeks 13-14.**

### Writing Assignments

**Critical analysis of sound design of a film** - (10%) Due week 9

**Peer feedback** - (5%) Ongoing – especially critical during screening of roughs.

**Written proposal for final project** - (5%) DUE:03/29

### Tests and Participation

**Midterm Exam** (10%) Week 7

**Final Exam** (10%)

**Class Participation** (10%)

### Grading Scale

93-100%	A = 4.0
90-92%	A- = 3.67
87-89%	B+ = 3.33
83-86%	B = 3.00
80-82%	B- = 2.67
77-79%	C+ = 2.33
73-76%	C = 2.00
70-72%	C- = 1.67
67-69%	D+ = 1.33
60-66%	D = 1.00
0-59%	F

## **January 14, 15 – Week 1 – Class Overview**

Syllabus review and expectations  
Introductions  
Gear – Microphone basics and recording in a nutshell  
Fundamentals of Audio

ASSIGN: Interviews Project, field recording exercise

## **January 21, 22, – Week 2 – Terminology and Physics, Interviewing Basics**

Proper recording techniques and concepts – how to capture good audio  
Signal Flow  
How to conduct an effective interview  
Audition Lecture Part 1 – What the heck is a DAW?

## **January 28, 29 – Week 3 – Digital Audio Workstations**

Audition Lecture Part 2 – Editing basics  
Presence  
Basic Audio Transitions  
Sound Effects Libraries and Internet Sources

ASSIGN: Audio Documentary; subjects must be approved

## **February 4, 5 – Week 4 – The Elements of a Soundtrack: Dialogue**

What makes up a soundtrack?  
Critical Analysis: Radio Drama vs. Radio Documentary  
Types of Dialogue  
Aesthetics of Dialogue

DUE: Interview Projects  
ASSIGN: Critical Analysis of Soundtrack Paper

## **February 11, 12 – Week 5 – The Elements of a Soundtrack: Sound Effects**

Types of Sound Effects  
Aesthetics of Sound Effects

## **February 18, 19 – Week 6 – The Elements of the Soundtrack: Music**

Peer Feedback  
Midterm Review  
DUE: Audio Documentary

## **February 25, 26 – Week 7 – Midterm Exam**

## **March 4, 5 – Week 8 – SPRING BREAK – No Class**

## **March 11, 12 – Week 9 – Storytelling and Dramatic Structure**

Telling stories using sound.  
Final project ideas.

Critical analysis.

DUE: Sound Design Critical Analysis Paper

**March 18, 19 – Week 10 – Spotting and Dialogue Editing**

Beginning to work with video.

Time Code.

Spotting to sync.

Assigned: Sound Design project. This will have a large lab component.

**March 25, 26 – Week 11 – A Multitude of Audio Workflows**

Sound from preproduction through postproduction.

Sound for radio.

Sound for podcasting.

Sound for theater/live/etc.

Production sound with post in mind: Mock film shoot

Assign: Written Proposal for Final Project

**April 1, 2 – Week 12 – Advanced Audition: Bussing, Compression, EQ, and more**

A wide variety of tools and methods discussed.

Organization and flow of a session.

Foley and ADR for cheapskates.

**April 8, 9 – Week 13 – Mixing and Mastering**

Aesthetics and techniques for mixing.

Mastering: what the heck is it?

Formats and Media

DUE: FINAL PROJECT Proposals

**April 15, 16 – Week 14 – Additional Odds and Ends**

Feedback on Rough Cuts of Video Project

**April 22, 23 – Week 15 – Workshop Final Projects**

DUE: Video Project Final

DUE: Rough Cut of Final Project

**April 29, 30 – Finals – Final Exam**

Final Project Critique

DUE: FINAL PROJECT

**Policy on Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted. It will receive an F. You are, however, allowed to redo most projects. There will be no make up exams.

**Policy on Absences:** Attendance is crucial. We will be covering a large amount of information and work each session. Since this is a production class that meets only once a week, if you are to miss more than two classes without a reasonable excuse (family emergency, etc.) you will receive one letter grade reduction on your final grade. Any further absences will equal a full grade reduction per missed class. It is the responsibility of the student acquire notes or materials for any missed class.

**Rough Cuts:** The days we go over rough cuts are for you. They are meant to help you complete the best possible project with the peer feedback you receive. They are not mandatory for the interview and the audio documentary project, but **they are mandatory for the Sound Design and Final Project**. This means that if you do not submit a rough cut, you will receive a significant grade reduction on your final cut on the given project.

**Redoing Projects:** You are almost always allowed to redo any project for a better grade, barring the final project. Please check with me before you do this.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University the most serious being permanent expulsion. If you have questions about what proper source referencing looks like, see someone at the Tutoring Center in the Sullivan Center, Suite 260, extension (773) 508-7708.

It is also dishonest to turn in the same work for two classes, turn in a paper you have not written yourself, copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Visit and review Loyola's policies on Academic integrity here. <http://luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

### **Additional Notes**

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

**This syllabus may be amended by the instructor at any time during the semester.**

**Students will be informed of any changes.**