

# Introduction to Audio Production

## Spring 2019 - COMM130.203

Instructor: Chris Batte

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Office Hours: by appointment

## Course Information

Room: 51 E Pearson, Lower Level, Room 002

Time: Mondays at 4:15PM to 6:45PM

Materials: 5 GB or larger USB3.0 external hard drive (formatted MacOS), 6 AA batteries & quality headphones (Sony MDR7506 or equivalent, no Bluetooth, no noise cancelling).

## 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 storytelling, fiction filmmaking, 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

- Understand basic audio concepts and terminology.
- Develop critical listening skills, learn how to effectively discuss sound.
- Gain a working knowledge of signal flow and basic audio technology including microphones, recorders, mixers, and DAWs.
- Conceptualize, plan, and execute effective sound designs.
- Familiarity with audio editing, mixing, and design processes and methods.
- Practice the art of storytelling using sound.
- Develop directing and writing skills in regards to audio production.
- Understand audio workflows, practices, and standards.
- Develop interviewing and field recording skills.
- Learn basic music editing and concepts.
- Learn how sound and image work in tandem to tell stories.
- Provide and incorporate constructive criticism to and from your colleagues.

# Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates

## Production Assignments (75 Points)

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

**Object Profiles:** Create a library of at least 100 sound effects profiling no fewer than 10 different objects and/or places. (5 Points) Due Week 6

**Soundscape:** Plan and produce a short (3 minute) audio soundscape using only sound effects, no voices or music! (5 Points) Due Week 8

**Audio Story Part 2:** Edit a (3 minute) interview into a fully produced, radio-ready audio project incorporating music and SFX. Apply standards learned in previous assignments. (10 Points) Due Week 10

**Video Sound Design Project:** Students will spot, design and build the soundtrack for a short video. (20 Points) 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. (30 Points) Due Week 15, Rough Cuts will be critiqued Week 14.

## Writing Assignment (5 Points)

**Analysis Paper:** Critical analysis of sound design of a film - (5 Points) Due week 9

**Written Proposal for Final Project:** Including a script, a pitch, and a design analysis for final project - (incorporated into Final Project grade) Due Week 10

## Tests and Participation (20 Points)

**Peer feedback:** Ongoing – especially critical during group critiques. (8 Points)

**Midterm Exam:** (12 Points) Week 7

## 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 =0

## Session Schedule

### Week 1 (Jan 14) – Class Overview & Introductory Concepts

Syllabus review and expectations

Introductions

Fundamentals of Audio

How to conduct an effective interview

**ASSIGN:** Audio Story 1

### Week 1.5 (Jan 21) – NO CLASS

### Week 2 (Jan 28) – Basics of Audio & Field Recording

Gear – Microphone basics and recording in a nutshell

Proper recording techniques and concepts – how to capture good audio

Signal Flow – how stereo works

**ASSIGN:** Object Profiles

## Week 3 (Feb 3) – Basics of Digital Audio Workstations

Audition Lecture – Editing and DAWs

Presence and layering

Basic transitions and techniques

Mono vs stereo, how to separate them

**ASSIGN:** Soundscape Plan

## Week 4 (Feb 11) – Storytelling & Dramatic Structure, Basics of Copyright Law, Group Critique

Telling stories using sound.

Critical analysis and spotting.

Simple overview of copyright.

Group Critique of Audio Story Part 1

**DUE:** Audio Story Part 1 (The Interview)

## Week 5 (Feb 18)– The Elements of a Soundtrack Part 1: Dialogue & Sound Effects

What makes up a soundtrack?

Types and Aesthetics of Dialogue and Sound Effects

Shepard's Tone, EQ, SFX

**ASSIGN:** Audio Story 2

## Week 6 (Feb 25) – The Elements of the Soundtrack Part 2: Music

Types and Aesthetics of Music – emotion

Music editing workshop, ReVerb

Midterm Review

**ASSIGN:** Analysis Paper

**DUE:** Object Profiles

## Week 7 (Mar 4) – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

## Week 8 (Mar 11) – Midterm & Group Critique

**Due:** Soundscape

## Week 9 (Mar 18) – Working with Video, Spotting

Video and time-code.

Spotting to sync.

Syncing & Editing dialogue, Automation & Keyframes

**Assign:** Sound Design project.

**DUE:** Analysis Paper

## Week 10 (Mar 25) – Advanced Audition: Bussing, EQ, SFX & COMPRESSION

Organization and flow of a session

Compression, EQ, SFX & bussing,

Foley & ADR on the cheap

**Assign:** Written Proposal for Final Project

**DUE:** Audio Story Part 2 (Sound Story)

## Week 11 (Apr 1) – Mixing and Mastering, Formats, Group Critique

Aesthetics and techniques for mixing.

Mastering: what the heck is it?

Formats and Media

Group Critique of Audio Story Pt2

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT Proposals

## Week 12 (Apr 8) – Additional Odds and Ends

Sound from preproduction through postproduction.

Sound for radio, podcasting, theater/live/etc.

Production sound with post in mind

**DUE:** Video Sound Design Project Rough Cuts, First minute

## Week 13 (Apr 15) – Group Critique

Video Sound Design Project critiques

**DUE:** Video Sound Design Project

## Week 14 (Apr 22) – Final Project Review & Rough Critique

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT Rough Cuts, First minute

## Week 15 (Apr 28) – Final Projects & Group Critique

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT

## Policies and Expectations

**Policy on Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted. It will receive a zero. You are allowed to redo most projects. There will be no makeup 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 to 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 mandatory for the Sound Design and Final Project.

**Redoing Projects:** You are almost always allowed to redo any project for a better grade, barring the final project or the mid-term. 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.