

# Introduction to Audio

## Fall 2017/COMM130-202

Instructor: Chris Batte  
Email: cbatte@luc.edu  
Office Hours: by appointment

### Course Information

Room: 51 E Pearson, Lower Level, Room 002

Time: Wednesday 4:15PM to 6:45PM

Materials: USB flash external hard drive & quality headphones.

### Course Description

This is an introduction to the world of audio production. It is meant for undergraduate students with an interest in audio and it's 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

- 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.
- Manage effective collaborations. Collaboration is everything!

# Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates

## Production Assignments (60 Points)

Audio Story Part 1 (The Interview): 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 places. (5 Points) Due Week 6

Soundscape Plan and produce a short (3 minute) audio soundscape using only sound effects with NO voices or music. (5 Points) Due Week 7

Audio Story Part 2 (Sound Story): Edit an interview into a fully produced, radio-ready audio project incorporating music and SFX. (10 Points) Due Week 10

Video Sound Design Project: Students will spot, design and build the sound design for a short video. (15 Points) Due Week 13, Rough Cuts 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 Points) Due Week 15, Rough Cuts critiqued Week 14.

## Writing Assignments (15 Points)

Analysis Paper: Critical analysis of sound design of a film -(10 Points) Due week 9

Written Proposal for Final Project: Including a script, a pitch, and a design analysis for final project - (5 Points) Due Week 10

## Tests and Participation (25 Points)

Midterm Exam: (10 Points) Week 7

Class Participation: (10 Points)

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE AT NOON, 4 HOURS PRIOR TO CLASS.**

## 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 (Aug. 30) – Class Overview & Introductory Concepts

Syllabus review and expectations  
Introductions  
Fundamentals of Audio  
How to conduct an effective interview  
**ASSIGN:** Audio Story 1

### Week 2 (Sept. 6) – Basics of Audio & Field Recording

Gear – Microphone basics and recording  
Proper recording techniques and concepts  
Signal Flow  
**ASSIGN:** Object Profiles

### Week 3 (Sept. 13) – Basics of Digital Audio Workstations

Audition Lecture – Editing and DAWs  
Presence and layering  
Basic transitions and techniques  
**ASSIGN:** Soundscape Plan

### Week 4 (Sept. 20) – Storytelling & Dramatic Structure, Basics of Copyright Law

Telling stories using sound.  
Critical analysis and spotting.  
Simple overview of copyright.  
**DUE:** Audio Story Part 1 (The Interview)

### Week 5 (Sept. 27)– The Elements of a Soundtrack Part 1: Dialogue & Sound Effects

What makes up a soundtrack?  
Types and Aesthetics of Dialogue and Sound Effects  
Group Critique of Audio Story Part 1  
**ASSIGN:** Audio Story 2

## Week 6 (Oct. 4) – The Elements of the Soundtrack Part 2: Music

Types and Aesthetics of Music

Music editing workshop

Midterm Review

**ASSIGN:** Analysis Paper

**DUE:** Object Profiles

## Week 7 (Oct. 11) – Midterm Exam

## Week 8 (Oct. 18) – Group Critique (flex day)

**Assign:** Sound Design project.

**Due:** Soundscape

## Week 9 (Oct. 25) – A Multitude of Audio Workflows

Sound from preproduction through postproduction.

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

Production sound with post in mind

Beginning to work with video and time Code.

Spotting to sync.

**DUE:** Analysis Paper

## Week 10 (Nov. 1) – 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

Aesthetics and techniques for mixing.

Mastering: what the heck is it?

Formats and Media

**Assign:** Written Proposal for Final Project

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

## Week 11 (Nov. 8) – Additional Odds and Ends

Review different mixing techniques, general help

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT Proposals

Week 12 (Nov. 15) – Group Critique

**DUE:** Video Sound Design Project Rough Cuts

Week N/A (Nov. 22) – Thanksgiving – No Class

Week 13 (Nov. 29) – Group Critique

Feedback on Rough Cuts of Video Project

**DUE:** Video Sound Design Project

Week 14 (Dec. 6) – Group Critique

**DUE:** Final Project Rough Cuts

Finals (Dec. 13)–Final Project and Group Critique

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT

## Policies and Expectations

**Policy on Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted. It will receive an F. You are 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 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 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.