

INTRODUCTION TO AUDIO PRODUCTION

Comm 130, Sec. 201, Spring 2017

Mondays: 12:35-3:20pm

WTC, School of COMM - Room 003

Instructor: Casey Puccini

Email: ppuccini@luc.edu

Office Hours: One hour before class in the Classroom (Please email for an appointment)

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, 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 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.

EQUIPMENT (Comprehensive list available on SAKAI)

- Zoom H4n Recorders
- Mics (Shotgun, Cardioid, Lavs, Pressure Contact Mics)
- Sound Device Field Recorder
- Adobe Audition

MATERIALS

- External Hard Drive or USB Key
- Headphones
- Note-Taking Materials

*****The student will be responsible for all backups of all media assets.*****

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENTS (50%)

(More detailed requirements provided in Assignments section of SAKAI)

Audio Interview: Record, log, and edit a short (1.5-3 minute) audio interview with a subject of your choosing, using a recording ratio of at least 10:1. (5%) **Due: Week 4 (2/13)**

Soundscape: Plan and produce a short (1.5-3 minute) audio soundscape or sonic portrait of a specific (physical and/or psychological) environment, person, or event using only sound effects and ambient audio (no interviews or music!). (10%) **Due: Week 6 (2/27)**

Audioplay: Record and edit a short (2-4 minute) audio documentary, radio drama, or spoken word piece into a fully produced, radio-ready audio project. Your project must incorporate voice recordings, SFX, and music. (10%) **Due: Week 9 (3/20)**

Opposing Tone Film Soundtrack: Students choose a short scene from a film, remove the audio and spot, design and build the soundtrack with an opposing tone to the image. [ex. Turn *The Shining* into a comedy, *Anchorman* into a drama, etc]. (10%) **Rough Cut: Week 11 (4/3), Fine Cut: Week 12 (4/10)**

Final Project: Plan, record, edit and mix a short (2-5 minute) creative audio project of your choosing. The form and content are entirely up to you: it could be a short story, poem, comedy sketch show, experimental sound piece, drama- you name it. You must turn in a written proposal beforehand. We will have individual meetings to discuss the project ahead of time. Projects should be a demonstration of your fluency in the concepts and techniques taught throughout the course. You can work individually or in pairs. (15%) **Rough Cut: Week 14 (4/24), Fine Cut: Week 15 (5/1)**

WRITING & OTHER ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

Sound Diary: Keep an ongoing diary of listening exercises. (5%)

Peer Feedback: Written thoughts not vocalized in critique. (10%)

Analysis Paper: Critical analysis of sound design of a film. (10%) **Due Week 10 (3/27)**

Written Proposal for Final Project: Including a script or spotting, a pitch, and a design analysis for final project. (5%) **Due week 12 (4/10)**

TESTS & PARTICIPATION (20%)

Midterm Exam: 5%

Final Exam: 10%

Class Participation: 5%

COURSE SCHEDULE*

Week 1 - January 23 - Introduction

- Instructor/Student Introduction
- Syllabus/Course; Goals for the Semester
- Listening Techniques and Exercises
- Sound/Image Relationship
- Assign Audio Interview Project (**Due 2/13**)

Homework

- Sound Walk and Adaptation (**Due Next Week**)
- Voice and Vision Chapter 15, "Soundtrack for a Film in New York" by Michelangelo Antonioni

Week 2 - Jan 30 - Recording Techniques

- Selected Sound Walks/Adaptations
- Mics: Types, pick up patterns, ways of recording
- Mic/Audio Recorder Demo/Authorization
- Types of Recordings

Homework:

- Record for Audio Interview Project (**Due 2/13**)
- Voice and Vision Chapter 23

Week 3 - Feb 6 - Sound Editing

- Introduce Soundscape Project (**Due 2/27**)
- Listen to select Sound Walks
- File Logging

- Intro to Adobe Audition
 - Transitions
 - Presence
 - Layering
 - Bouncing
- Work on Audio Interview Project

Homework:

- Finish Audio Interview Project (**Due next week**)
- Voice and Vision Chapter 16
- Plan concept for Soundscape Project

Week 4 - February 13 - Soundscapes

- Listen/Critique Audio Interview Project
- Soundscapes
 - Directing the Ear
 - Punctuation and Drones
 - Field Recording Techniques
 - Sound Effects
 - Critical Analysis and Spotting
 - Layering

Homework:

- Collect Field Recordings and Sound Effects for Soundscape
- Construct "Library of Sound"
- Begin Mixing Soundscape Project

Week 5 - February 20 - Sound Design

- Further Sound Editing/Mixing Techniques
 - EQ
 - Reverb
 - Echo
 - Panning
- Students will have time to work on Soundscape/show and discuss with Casey

Homework:

- Finish Soundscape Project (**Due Next Week**)

Week 6 - February 27 - Storytelling

- Review for Midterm
- Assign Analysis Paper
- Listen/Critique Soundscape Project
- Introduce Audioplay Project (Due 3/20)
- Discuss Audioplays, docs, drama, spoken word, Podcasts, etc

Homework:

- Decide concept/begin gathering sound for Audioplay Project
- Study for Midterm
- Voice and Vision Chapter 22

Week 7 - March 6 - SPRING BREAK

- NO CLASS

Week 8 - Mar 13- Sound Perspective, Sound Effects, Editing Dialogue

- Midterm
- Assign Opposing Tone Film Soundtrack Project (**Due 4/10**)
- Sound Effects
- Dialogue Editing

- Worldizing Sound
- Copyright Free Sound Effects & Found Sound

Homework:

- Finish Audioplay Project (**Due Next Week**)
- “Phantom Audio Vision” by Michel Chion, “Sound Edit and Creative Sound” by Dancyger

Week 9 - March 20 - Sound for Film I

- Listen/Critique Audioplay Project
- Film Sound: Preproduction through post
- Elements of a Soundtrack
- Scripting a Soundtrack

Homework

- Finish Analysis Paper (**Due Next Week**)
- “Stretching the Sound to Help the Mind See” by Walter Murch

Week 10 - March 27 - Sound for Film II

- Field Recording vs. Foley
- In class Foley exercise with scene from *Psycho*

Homework:

- Finish Opposing Tone Film Soundtrack Project Rough Cut (**Due Next Week**)

Week 11 - April 3 - Mixing & Mastering

- Assign Final Project (**Due 5/1**)
- Listen/Critique Opposing Tone Film Soundtrack Rough Cuts
- Mixing: Techniques and aesthetics
- Mastering
- Formats and Media
- Bussing, Compression, etc.

Homework:

- Finish Opposing Tone Film Soundtrack Project Rough Cut (**Due Next Week**)
- Finish Written Proposal for Final

Week 12 - April 10 - Film Soundtrack Project

- Listen/Critique Opposing Tone Film Soundtrack
- Review for Final Exam
- Discuss final proposals with students

Homework:

- Finish Final Project Rough Cut (**Due 4/24**)

WEEK 13 - April 17 - EASTER

- NO CLASS

WEEK 14 - April 24 - MIXING AND MASTERING

- Final Exam
- Listen/Critique Final Project Rough Cuts

Homework:

- Finish Final Project Fine Cut (**Due Next Week**)

Week 15 - May 1 - FINAL PROJECT CRITIQUES

- Evaluations
- Final Project Fine Cuts

Homework:

- Have a great summer break!

GRADE BREAKDOWN

50% Production Assignments

5% Midterm

20% Final

5% Sound Diary

10% Analysis Paper

5% Written Proposal for Final Project

5% Attendance & Participation (includes readings & SAKAI participation)

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

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA & METHODS OF EVALUATING STUDENTS

- Attendance and punctuality.
- Completion of all assigned readings.
- Participation in all discussions, group projects, and critiques.
- Productive use of class time.
- Completion of all production exercises and assignments.
- Projects will be evaluated on their technical, aesthetic, and conceptual merit. The amount of effort you put into each project will guide the grading.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Treat the class like a job
- Show up on time
- Come to class prepared
- Pay attention
- Do the work
- Stay for the entire class period
- Be fully engaged in class
- Pay attention and take good notes
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Be resourceful
- Take the initiative to learn and succeed
- Communicate
- Make no excuses
- Don't wait until the last minute to do the assignment.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

PARTICIPATION

Student participation is important in making this class vital and useful to everyone. All students need to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading(s), and with creative assignments fully completed and ready to show. During critiques, it is expected that everyone give constructive feedback. Attendance alone does not constitute participation. In-class participation that contributes to raising the level of informed dialogue in the course, will be taken into account during grading.

READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS & QUIZZES

Readings and assignments must be completed at the beginning of class on the date to which they are assigned. Production assignments must be in the correct media format, properly labeled, within the running time specifications and within all other specifications provided.

- Always test your media before turning it in.
- Always make a safety copy of your project and bring it with you on screening days in case of any technical difficulties.
- Production Exercises and Projects include the assigned paperwork.
- 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/drama project, but they are mandatory for the Film Soundtrack 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.
- Quizzes will be drawn from material covered in readings, class lectures and discussions. Some topics will be covered only in the readings, some topics will be covered only in lectures and some will be covered in both readings & lectures. Students are responsible for ALL of the material.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS & DUE DATES

- A penalty will be assessed for any assignment that is not turned in or uploaded to Sakai by the beginning of the class session that it is due.
- Assignments turned in one class late will lose one full letter grade.
- Assignments not turned in within the first 15 minutes of class will be considered late and lose one full letter grade.
- Assignments turned in two classes late will lose two full letter grades.
- NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER IT IS MORE THAN 2 WEEKS LATE.
- Late projects will not be screened in class
- You must turn in a FINAL PROJECT in order to PASS the class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- The class will meet every Monday from 12:35pm - 3:20pm. Attendance and punctuality are mandatory and will be reflected in your grade. If it is unavoidable that you will have to miss class, you must consult the professor about the situation beforehand (via email or in person) and may be asked to provide a written excuse for the absence. If a student is more than 20 minutes late to class they will be marked absent. Three or more absences or frequent tardiness, whether or not for a reasonable cause, may result in the student failing the class if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W."
- It is the student's responsibility to find out any important information missed in their absence. You are expected to come to every class on time, prepared and ready to engage in classroom discussions and participate in group projects.

DEVICE POLICY

Laptops and other note taking devices may be used during lectures. All devices should be turned off and stored away during screenings and presentations. Phones must be turned off during class time. Texting and all forms of social media communication should happen outside of the classroom, during class breaks. Use of desktop computers in class is for course related work only and NOT for updating your facebook status, checking email or other activities not directly related to this course.

FOOD POLICY

To minimize distraction and the possibility of damage to equipment, food and beverages are not allowed in the classroom, editing area or studios. A water bottle is OK but please keep it capped or put away when working with the equipment or computers.

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>

ACCOMODATIONS

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.

Syllabus is subject to change and students will be updated and informed of any change immediately.