

Introduction to Audio Spring 2017/COMM130

Instructor: Chris Batte
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Office Hours: Available upon request

Course Information

Room: 51 E Pearson, Lower Level, Room 002
Time: Thursday 4:15PM to 6:45PM
Materials: USB flash drive or 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 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

- 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 & 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 (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 soundtrack for a short video. (15 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. (20 Points) Due Week 15, Rough Cuts will be 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, design analysis and production schedule for final project - (5 Points) Due Week 10

Tests and Participation (25 Points)

Midterm Exam: (15 Points) Week 7

Class Participation & Peer Review: (10 Points)

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 19) – Class Overview & Introductory Concepts

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

Week 2 (Jan 26) – Basics of Audio & Field Recording

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

Week 3 (Feb 2) – Basics of Digital Audio Workstations

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

Week 4 (Feb 9) – Storytelling, Dramatic Structure & Copyright

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

Week 5 (Feb 16)– 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 (Feb 23) – The Elements of the Soundtrack Part 2: Music

Types and Aesthetics of Music
Critical Analysis Exercise 2
Music editing workshop
Midterm Review
ASSIGN: Analysis Paper
DUE: Object Profiles

Week 7 (Mar 2) – Midterm Exam

Week N/A (Mar 9) – Spring Break – No Class

Week 8 (Mar 16) – Group Critique

Due: Soundscape

Week 9 (Mar 23) – 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.

Soundscape critiques

Assign: Sound Design project.

DUE: Analysis Paper

Week 10 (Mar 30) – Dialogue Editing

Working with selects

Noisefloor

Assign: Written Proposal for Final Project

Assign: Final Project

DUE: Audio Story Part 2 (Sound Story),

Week 11 (Apr 6) – 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.

DUE: FINAL PROJECT Proposals

Week 12 (Apr 13) – Mixing and Mastering

Aesthetics and techniques for mixing.

Mastering: what the heck is it?

Formats and Media

DUE: Video Sound Design Project Rough Cuts

Week 13 (Apr 20) – Additional Odds and Ends

DUE: Video Sound Design Project

Week 14 (Apr 27) – Group Critique

DUE: Final Project Rough Cuts

Finals (May 4)–Final Projects 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 and mid-term. Please check with me prior.

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.