

Syllabus: Sonic Arts, Fall Quarter 2015

Course Overview

This course is a beginning-to-intermediate course about sonic and audio arts. We will be using software to develop sound compositions, work with the elements of sound and create work for end results (video and installation). A significant amount of class time will be used for compositional work, but students will also be required to spend extensive time out of class for extended learning.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will:

- Understand the elements of audio.
- Be comfortable creating audio compositions.
- Be comfortable working on multi-channel audio installations.
- Understand (and have the ability to create) all of the sound necessary for video/film work.
- Have created several advanced audio art pieces.

Materials

The materials required for the course:

- There is no text required for this course. Most of the information that will be referenced will be available on the Internet.
- The software we will use in class is available on the University's lab computers. You may choose to purchase licenses for yourself, and are strongly encouraged to use (and bring to class) a personal laptop for your work.
- You should have at least 8Gb of portable storage (flash or thumb drives, iPod or portable hard drive) available for backup and project transfer.

Policies

This class will combine individual work in the lab with individual and group instruction. Students must come to class prepared to work. Showing up without necessary files or equipment is the same as not attending. Although students may also use their home computers to work on projects, this is not a valid reason to not attend. It will be necessary to work outside of class to complete all projects and assignments. Computer failure, equipment malfunction, and file corruption are not accepted as excuses for late or unfinished work so **BACK UP YOUR WORK**. You will need to increment your file saves in order to be sure you do not lose weeks worth of work with one save.

Many students use the computer labs, so the labs are in high demand. Budget time accordingly, because "unavailable computer time" will also not be accepted as an excuse. Participation in all class discussions and critiques as well as constructive use of lab time is considered in the final grade for each project. At any time in the creation process students should be able to produce notes, drawings, charts or other work products, as well as discuss and articulate the nature of their work to their peers as well as to the instructor.

Attendance is mandatory. Attending class is the responsibility of the student. Lectures and demonstrations may be given or changed without notice and every class will start with professional examples of relevant work so punctuality is essential. An individual who is absent, late or sleeps during class will be responsible for getting the information missed. Students will be allowed two (2) absences without penalty. Any absence in excess of two will result in a 10% grade reduction of the final grade for the course per absence. All absences will be counted. A student who misses 15 minutes or more of a class (late or leave early) is considered absent. A student who sleeps will be considered absent. A student who will acquire absences due to a University sponsored activities must provide necessary documentation from the appropriate office prior to the absence to make any special arrangements for missed work.

For any absence due to religious beliefs, written notification should be provided in the first two weeks of the quarter; the student is responsible for any missed work. Any special medical or personal problems that occur, where absenteeism will exceed the allowed two classes, will require verification by a physician or emergency medical association (a letter from Student Affairs merely explains an absence, and will not qualify as an excuse). These situations may require course withdrawal or "Incomplete" status on the final grade. Two late arrivals (less than 15 min.) will equal one absence.

Grading

Grades will consist of the following:

- Weekly Projects 60%
- Midterm Project: 20%
- Final Project: 20%

Projects and assignments will be graded on the following basis, listed in order of importance.

- Development, creativity and originality of concept or problem solution
- Technical development and demonstration of skills
- Craftsmanship and presentation of work
- Participation in classroom discussions and critiques in connection with the work

Your grade will be calculated according to the following standards:

A = Excellent (100-90%)- work pushes far beyond the project stipulations and shows clear evidence of extreme time, dedication, care and thought about the project as evidenced in effective execution of original/thoughtful ideas.

B = Good (80-89%)- work exceeds the basic criteria, provides creative solutions to the problems and shows technical proficiency. Student has made the project "theirs" in that they do not need to explain project stipulations before showing the work.

C = Average (70-79%)- work fulfills all requirements, does not expand on techniques shown in class, ideas are close derivations of popular culture.

D = Unsatisfactory (60-69%)- work might meet basic criteria but in a careless and/or thoughtless way. Technical proficiency is rudimentary and no chances were taken.

F = Failure (0-59%)- the work does not meet the basic criteria.

Late projects are unacceptable. Projects must be presented, without excuse, on the day identified in the syllabus and in class.

Lab Rules

It is your responsibility to adhere to all rules regarding the use of the EDP labs and equipment. You will be given a sheet stating all rules. Please visit the EDP office before class if you need a form to access the EDP lab.

Plagiarism

Solutions to assignments you submit will be your own work. A student who is discovered to have plagiarized others' work will immediately receive a grade of F for the course, and a recommendation for disciplinary action will be forwarded to the Dean of Students.

Please note that I am an active participant most online forums and mailing lists involved in audio arts; if you request others to do your work through any online forum, this will be treated as plagiarism (since you are not doing your own work), and will be subject to the above penalties.

Course Schedule and Downloads

Each class will be in two parts: lecture and lab. During the lecture part of the class, concepts will be discussed and patches examined. During the lab part, students will work on projects to be presented throughout the course. The requirements for these projects will be discussed in class.

The preliminary overview schedule is as follows:

Week 1: Frequency and Pitch
Week 2: Volume and Envelopes/Events
Week 3: Timbre and Filtering
Week 4: Effects and Delay Techniques
Week 5: Midterm Preparation and Presentation
Week 6: Audio Composition for Installation
Week 7: Audio for Video/Film I
Week 8: Audio for Video/Film II
Week 9: Audio for Video/Film III
Week 10: Final Project Preparation
Final: Project Presentation

This schedule is subject to change based on class interaction, class schedules (and/or weather closure) and instructor availability.

If you have any questions or comments, you can email me at darwin.grosse@gmail.com. I do not have regular office hours, but am available for one-on-one meetings subject to prior scheduling.