

# **Sonic Landscapes**

## **CoCo 8/Music 17.1/Film & Media Studies 47.2**

**Winter 2014**

**Instructors: Carlos Casas (Film & Media Studies) and Ted Levin (Music and AMES)**

**Teaching Assistant: Sarah Wang**

**Office: 62A Hopkins Center (adjacent to Paddock Music Library)**

**Office Hours: by appointment**

### Course Description:

This experimental interdisciplinary course explores the intersection of ethnography and art as means of documenting how humans interact with landscape and soundscape in some of the earth's most extreme environments. Examples are drawn from music and sound art, field recordings, film, photography, writing, and emerging multimedia practices, with a focus on the "cross-breeding" of documentary media and methodologies that are mutually enriching. In addition to reading, writing, listening, and viewing assignments, students will conduct their own empirical exploration of the interrelationship of landscape and soundscape through a self-designed audiovisual project. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to develop their own critical, creative, and sensorial understanding of the relationship of nature and culture, and of the relevance of artistic practice to the human sciences.

This course satisfies the ART Distributive Requirement and the NW (Non-Western) World Cultures Requirement.

### Course Requirements

- Regular class attendance (see attendance policy below)
- Timely completion of reading, viewing, and listening assignments
- Submission of all written work in accordance with the deadlines stated in the syllabus; late submissions may be subject to grading penalties.
- Attendance at the following Hopkins Center concert: Thursday, Feb. 27, 7:00 pm, Rollins Chapel: Phill Niblock (tickets purchased by the Music Dept. will be distributed in class free of charge).

### Course Materials:

Viewing, listening, and reading assignments will be made available on Course Reserves with the exception of the three complete books that class members are asked to read: R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape*; Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*; and Theodore Levin with Valentina Süzükei, *Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond* (the latter can be purchased through the Music Dept. with accompanying CD-DVD for the discounted price of \$10). Wheelock Books has ordered copies of *The Soundscape* and *The Songlines*.

### Sonic Landscapes Blog

The Sonic Landscapes blog will serve as a "virtual blackboard" for the course that provides access to complementary materials, links to issues of interest, and updates to the syllabus. The blog address is:

<http://soniclandscapes.tumblr.com/>

### Course Work:

Course work consists of weekly assignments that include a combination of reading, viewing, listening, and writing. A hands-on audiovisual project will be developed in consultation with the instructors beginning early in the term. Work on this project, which may be conducted individually or in a small group, will continue throughout the remainder of the term.

### Monday Evening Film Screenings:

Tuesday class meetings will typically be devoted to discussion of film and visual culture, while Thursday class meetings will typically focus on sound, soundscape, and audio culture. Each Monday evening (with the exception of the first and last week of winter term), we will screen one film in the Black Family Visual Arts Center (BFVAC), beginning at 7:00 pm. You are strongly urged to attend these screenings. If you cannot be present, your alternative is to watch the film on CoCo 8 Course Reserves sometime before the class in which it will be discussed. Film screenings are open to the public, and you are most welcome to invite friends.

### X-Hours:

X-hours will initially offer instruction in the use of audio and video recording and documentation. Subsequent X-hours will offer group listening sessions. The location and content of each session will be announced in advance.

### Attendance Policy

The CoCo 8 attendance policy follows from the general attendance policy of Dartmouth College detailed in the ORC:

“Regular class attendance is expected of all students. Though academic schedules may sometimes conflict with College-sponsored or College-recognized extracurricular events, there are no excused absences for participants in such activities. Students who participate in athletics, debates, concerts, or other activities should check their calendars to see that these events do not conflict with their academic schedules. Should such conflicts occur or be anticipated, each student is responsible for discussing the matter with his or her instructor at the beginning of the appropriate term. Instructors may be accommodating if approached well in advance of the critical date. Such accommodations can be made only when the conflict occurs because of a scheduled College-sponsored or College-recognized event. No participant should expect to be excused in order to attend a team meeting or orientation session, practice session, meal, or other such activity.”

The only excused absences from class are in the event of illness or a family emergency (if you are absent for one of these reasons, please ask your dean or a health service professional to submit a note to the CoCo 8 TA, Sarah Wang, confirming the reason for your absence). Attendance will be taken at random times throughout the term. Unexcused absence from class will affect the class participation component of your course grade.

### Evaluation and Grading:

Class members will be evaluated and graded on the following basis:

- Attendance and contribution to class discussions (15%)
- 4 critical response papers on reading, listening, viewing @ 15% (60%)
- Term project (25%)

Criteria for grading are those detailed in the ORC under “Scholarship Ratings”:  
<http://dartmouth.smartcatalogiq.com/2013/orc/Regulations/Undergraduate-Study/Requirements-for-the-Degree-of-Bachelor-of-Arts/Scholarship-Ratings>  
Grading of papers and exams is numerical. Numerical totals will be converted to letter grades at the end of the term according to the following scheme:

95-100: A	83-86: B	73-76: C	0-59: E
90-94: A-	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	
87-89: B+	77-79: C+	60-69: D	

#### Laptop Computers in Class

Please refrain from using laptops or other digital devices during class meetings.

#### Students with Disabilities

Students who may require special arrangements for completing assignments on account of a documented disability are invited to discuss their needs with the course instructor.

#### Distributive and World Culture Requirement

This course satisfied the ART or INT Distributive Requirement and the NW (Non-Western Cultures) World Culture Requirement. CoCo 8/Music 17.1/Film & Media Studies 47.2 cannot be used to satisfy other distributive or world culture requirements.

#### Application of Dartmouth’s Academic Honor Principle to Coursework in CoCo 8

The general terms of the Academic Honor Principle apply to all coursework in CoCo 8. Unless otherwise specified, assignments submitted for evaluation are presumed to represent exclusively your own work. The single exception is that, subject to approval by the instructors, 2-3 students may undertake a final term project collaboratively. In this case, the project will be evaluated as the work of the group, and it will be assumed that students working collaboratively will contribute in equal measure.

# Syllabus

Jan 7 (Tues) Introduction: Concepts of landscape and soundscape

Indigenous representations of landscape and soundscape among the Aynu  
Visiting artists: Aynu musicians (Japan)

Jan 8: X-Hour: Listening Room: John Cage and 4'33"

Jan 9 (Thurs) Artistic Representations of Landscape and Soundscape: A Brief History

Viewing: (in class)

Slide show: A Brief History of Landscape in Art.

Reading:

R. Murray Schaefer, *The Tuning of the World*, Introduction (3-12)

John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular*, "The Word Itself" (3-8);  
"A Pair of Ideal Landscapes" (9-55)

Henry David Thoreau, *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau 1837-1861* (excerpts: see  
Sonic Landscapes blog)

Jan 13 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFVAC screening room:  
Robert Flaherty, "Nanook of the North"

Jan. 14 (Tues) The North: Boreal Landscapes and Soundscapes in Film

Reading:

R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 1: "The Natural Soundscape";  
Chapter 2: "The Sounds of Life"

William W. Fitzhugh and Igor Krupnik, "Introduction" (1-3) and Douglas Cole, "'The Greatest Thing Undertaken by Any Museum?': Franz Boas, Morris Jesup, and the North Pacific Expedition." (29-38 and Appendix A). In Igor Krupnik and William W. Fitzhugh, eds, *Gateways: Exploring the legacy of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897-1902* (Arctic Studies Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 2001) [Excerpts compiled in Course Reserve]

Viewing: (in class):

Zacharias Kunuk, "Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)" (2001)

Carlos Casas, "Hunters Since the Beginning of Time" (2009); "Borealis" (2011)

Markku Lehmuskallio and Anastasi Lapsui, "7 Chants for the Tundra" (2007)

Ariane Michel, "Les hommes" (2006)

Jan 15 (Wed) X-Hour + additional 1 hour for those who can stay:  
Introduction to audio field recording: Joel Gordon (tentative)

Jan 16 (Thurs) The North: Representing Boreal Landscape and Soundscape in Music and Narrative Sound Art

Viewing: (view on your own)

John Luther Adams, "A Sonic Geography of Alaska" (<http://vimeo.com/3019076>)

Reading:

Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 3: "The Rural Soundscape"

John Luther Adams, *The Place Where You Go to Listen: In Search of an Ecology of Music*: Forward by Alex Ross (ix-xii); "In Search of an Ecology of Music" (1-10)

Steven Schick, "Strange Noise, Sacred Places." In *The Farthest Place: The Music of John Luther Adams*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath (2012) (77-106)

Listening:

John Luther Adams, "Inuksuit"

In-class listening and discussion: indigenous vocal genres: Inuit *katajak* and Sami *jojk*

**Audiovisual term project assignment sheet distributed and discussed in class (due: Jan 23)**

Jan 20 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFVAC screening room:  
Sergei Dvortsevov, "Tulpan"

Jan 21 (Tues) The Steppe: The Steppe and Steppe-Dwellers in Film

Reading:

Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 4: "From Town to City"; Chapter 5: "The Industrial Revolution"

Viewing: (in class)

Akira Kurosawa, "Derzu Uzala" (1975)

Ulrike Ottinger, "Taiga" (1992)

Nikita Mikhalkov, "Urga" (1991) (released in the USA as "Close to Eden")

**Critical Response Paper #1 ("Nanook of the North" or "Inuksuit") due by 10:00 am**  
(email to TA Sarah Wang)

Jan 22 (Wed) X-Hour: Introduction to video documentation (Carlos Casas)

Jan 23 (Thurs.) Sound Mimesis in South Siberia

Reading: Theodore Levin with Valentina Süzükei, *Where Rivers and Mountains Sing: Sound, Music, and Nomadism in Tuva and Beyond*: Introduction and Chapters 1-5  
(with CD-DVD)

**Jan 24: Audiovisual term project proposal due: email to Sarah Wang by the end of the day**

Jan 27 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFVAC screening room:  
Robert Gardner, "Dead Birds"

Jan 28 (Tues) Rainforests: Visual Representations of the Rainforest

Reading:

Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 6: "The Electric Revolution"; Chapter 7:  
"Music, the Soundscape and Changing Perceptions"

Viewing: (in class)

John Boorman, "Emerald Forest" (1985)

Johan Söderberg and Erik Pauser, "Lucky People Center International" (1998)

Listening: (Course Reserves)

David Tudor, "Rainforest" (1968 and 1973 versions)

Francisco Lopez, "La selva"

Chris Watson, "Cima Verde"

Jan 29 (Wed) X-Hour: Listening Room: Francisco Lopez, "La Selva" (1998)

Jan 30 (Thurs) Rainforests: Rainforest Soundscape as Symbol and Metaphor; the rainforest as musical instrument and sonic environment; nature recording and bioacoustics.

Reading:

Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 8: "Notation"; Chapter 9: "Classification"

Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, Chapter 2

Bernie Kraus, *The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Music in the Earth's Wild Places* (chapters 1 and 4)

Viewing: (view on your own): Bernie Kraus, "The Great Animal Orchestra":  
([http://fora.tv/2009/09/22/Dr\\_Bernie\\_Krause\\_The\\_Great\\_Animal\\_Orchestra](http://fora.tv/2009/09/22/Dr_Bernie_Krause_The_Great_Animal_Orchestra))

Listening: (Course Reserves)

"Music of the Rainforest Pygmies: Historic recordings made by Colin M. Turnbull" (Lyrichord) [excerpts]

"Echoes of the Forest: Music of the Central African Pygmies," Recordings by Colin M. Turnbull, Jean-Pierre Hallet, and Louis Sarno [excerpts]

Bayaka vocal polyphony (selections from OCORA CDs)

**Critical Response Paper #2 (Sound Mimesis) due by 2400**

Feb 3 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFVAC screening room:  
Nicolas Roeg, "The Walkabout"

Feb 4 (Tues) Plains and Deserts: Representations of Aboriginal Culture in Film

Reading:

Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*

Viewing: (in class)

Nicolas Roeg, "The Walkabout" (1972)

Peter Weir, "The Last Wave" (1977)

Wim Wenders, "Until the End of the World" (1992)

Feb 5 (Wed) X-Hour: Listening Room: Chris Watson, "In St. Cuthbert's Time" (2013)

Feb 6 (Thurs) Mapping Land through Song: Aboriginal "Songlines"

Reading:

Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines* (continued)

Listening:

Journey compositions for solo didgeridoo. By William Barton.

FEB 10 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFVAC screening room:

Carlos Casas, "Avalanche" (2009-2013)

Feb. 11 (Tues) Mountains: Documenting landscape, soundscape, and expressive culture in the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan

Reading:

Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 10: "Perception"; Chapter 11: "Morphology"  
Theodore Levin, "Music and Culture in Badakhshan"; Chorshanbe Goibnazarov, "Qasā'id-khānī in the Wakhan Valley of Badakhshan"; Benjamin Koen, "The Maddoh Tradition of Badakhshan." In S. Daukeyeva, E. Köchümkulova, and T. Levin, eds, *The Music of Central Asia*.

Listening:

Music of Badakhshan (Tajikistan): "The Badakhshan Ensemble: Music and Dance from the Pamir Mountains." (2006), Vol. 5 of *Music of Central Asia*, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

### **Critical Response Paper #3 (*The Songlines*) due by 2400**

Feb 12 X-Hour: Listening Room: Douglas Quin, *Antarctica* (released by Wild Sanctuary) (1998)

Feb 13 (Thurs) Landscapes of Disaster: Artistic depiction of zones of exclusion or disaster zones.

Reading:

Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 12: "Symbolism"; Chapter 13: "Noise"

Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Excerpts)

Viewing: (in class)

Carlos Casas and Saodat Ismailova, "Aral: Fishing in an Invisible Sea"

Edward Burtynsky "Manufactured Landscapes"

Listening: (Course Reserves)  
Peter Cusack “Sounds from Dangerous Places”  
Jacob Kierkegaard “4 Rooms”

FEB 17 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFBAC screening room:  
Herbert Ponting “The Great White Silence”

Feb 18 (Tues) The South: Antarctica

Reading:  
Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 14: “Listening”; Chapter 15, “The Acoustic Community”

Sir Ernest Shackleton, *South: the Last Antarctic Expedition of Shackleton and the Endurance*. Foreword by Tim Cahill. First published in 1919 by William Heinemann. The Lyons Press, 1998. Excerpts: Foreword (vii-ix); Preface (xi-xix), Chapter 1, “Into the Weddell Sea” (1-18); Chapter 2, “New Land” (19-37); Chapter 3, “Winter Months” (38-62); Chapter 4, “Loss of the *Endurance*” (63-85)

Viewing: (in class)  
Werner Herzog, “Encounters at the End of the World” (2007) (excerpts)  
Pierre Huyghe “A Journey That Wasn’t” 2011 (excerpts)

Listening: (Course Reserves)  
Chris Watson, Field Recordings inside cabin of Captain Scott

Feb 19 (Wed) X-Hour: Listening Room.

Feb 20 (Thurs) The South: Patagonia

Reading:  
Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 16: “Rhythm and Tempo in the Soundscape”  
Bruce Chatwin, *In Patagonia* (excerpts)

Viewing: (in class)  
Carlos Casas, “Solitude at the End of the World” (2005) (excerpts)  
Anne Chapman, “Homage to the Yaghans: The Last Indians of Tierra del Fuego and Cape Horn” (1990) (excerpts)  
Anne Chapman, “The Ona People: Life and Death in Tierra del Fuego” (1977)  
Alberto Agostini, “Patagonia” (1928) (excerpts)

**\*Audiovisual term project first presentation due**

Feb 24 (Mon) 7:00 pm: Film Screening in BFBAC screening room:  
Werner Herzog, “Fata Morgana”

Feb 25 (Tues) Nature as Subject: Early Examples of Nature in Documentary

Reading:  
Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapter 17: “The Acoustic Designer”; Chapter 18: “The Soniferous Garden”



Viewing: (in class)  
Ralph Steiner, "H2O"  
Pare Lorentz, "The Plow That Broke the Plains" (1936)  
Alexander Dovzhenko, "Earth" 1935

Feb 26 X-Hour: Listening room: Annea Lockwood, "Thousand Year Dreaming" (1990)

Feb. 27 (Thurs) The Music of Phill Niblock and its Artistic Genesis  
Phill Niblock's Environments and THIR series (1975)  
Phill Niblock's "The Movement of People Working" Series (1972-1988)

Reading: Schafer, *The Soundscape*, Chapt. 19: "Silence"; Epilogue "The Music Beyond"

Viewing: (in class)  
Phill Niblock "THIR"

**Feb. 27, 7:00 pm: Concert in Rollins: Phill Niblock "The Movement of People Working"**

**Critical Response Paper #4 (Phill Niblock) due March 2 by 2400**

March 3 (Mon) Film Screening: James Benning, "Landscape Suicide" (1995)

March 4 (Tues) Cityscapes: Sounds of the City

Reading:  
Pierre Schaefer "In Search of a Concrete Music" (1952) [excerpts]  
Luigi Russolo "Art of Noises" [excerpts]

Listening:  
Pierre Schaeffer, "Cinq études de bruits"

Viewing: (in class)  
Dziga Vertov, "Enthusiasm" (1931)  
Walter Ruttmann, "La melodie du monde," "Weekend" (1924)  
Ralph Steiner, "Mechanical Principles" (1930)  
Godfrey Reggio, "Powaqqatsi: Life in Transformation" (1988)  
Michael Glawogger, "Megacities" (1998)

Feb 26 (Wed) X-Hour: preparing the exhibition.

March 6 (Thurs) Etherscape, Land Art, and Beyond

Reading:  
Douglas Kahn, *Earth Sound Earth Signal*, Introduction (pp. 1-24)

Viewing: (in class)  
James Benning, "casting a glance" (2007)  
Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt "Spiral Jetty" (1970)  
Cyprien Gaillard, "The New Picturesque" (2007- )

**Final version of term projects due on March 7 (presentation to class members to be arranged during the weekend of March 8-9)**