Intro to Sound Production & Design

Course Overview

- Course Number: MART 245.50
- CRN: 32579
- Credits: 3
- Location: Online, Canva Link:: https://canvas.umt.edu/courses/9737
- Main Content Link*: **Will be provided January 20th, official class start date.**

Professor

- Kate Lloyd
- E-Mail: kate.lloyd@umconnect.umt.edu

Teaching Assistants(TA)

- Cole Grant: cole.grant@umconnect.umt.edu
- Matthew Knight: matthew.knight@umconnect.umt.edu

Description

Introduction to the Language and Practice of Sound Production & Design introduces students to the field of sonic art. This course is intended as a foundation to create shared terminology, skill sets, aesthetics, and from here develop methods for exploring Sound Design & Production techniques.

This course will involve a mix of:

- critical listening, deep listening, science of sound, hearing, and psychoacoustics
- creation of sound design works utilizing audio tools and techniques.
- written discussions of articles and readings relevant to weekly topics

Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes

Through this course, students are expected to demonstrate an ability to:

- Exhibit basic literacy in the aesthetics and techniques of Sound Production.
- Demonstrate an understanding and basic ability to utilize common ideas and vocabulary from the field of Sound Production & Design through writing and discussion.
- Create original sound design works using common tools for production and analysis.

Course Websites

This course will be delivered via an *online* modality. This means all content is available via the web and allows you to approach each week on your own schedule.

This course will be facilitated via multiple web technologies.

- *Canvas*– will serve as a secure location for you to submit homework, receive feedback, and engage in discussion forums with your colleagues.
  MART 245 Canvas Course Page

- **Content Website** – Content for this site will primarily exist on an exterior website. This is where you will complete most of your learning.
  https://https://montana-media-arts.github.io/sound-fundamentals/

- I will leave the course website up and live at the conclusion of this course. In this way, it can serve as a living resource for you in your sonic art practice and work. *Please note: Since I will leave this website live, this also serves as an opportunity for you to 'look ahead' at the content to come. However, content IS NOT considered live or required for this course until the week it is active. **In other words, I WILL change weekly content from semester to semester, therefore you cannot guarantee what you look at in the future will actually get taught.***

Pre-Requisites

This is an introductory course intended for students interested in the field of sound production & design. As such, there are no pre-requisite courses or skills necessary.

Books, Supplies, & Technology

No books are required. This course does require your purchase or acquisition of some software and technology. I recommend downloading a "pro audio" recording app for your phone since it will serve as your primary recording device. In the app description make sure it mentions recording/exporting file formats **.mp3 or .wav**

This is the best free recording app that I have found--iPhone/Android: *Shure Motiv*

Android -- https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.shure.motiv&pcampaignid=web_share

IPhone -- https://apps.apple.com/us/app/motiv-audio/id938264337

Campus Gear Room: no one is required to check out the audio gear, however if you would like to learn professional skills and industry standards, please take advantage of this opportunity. Email me so we can set up a time to meet and I can walk you through the checkout procedures.

Software

You will be required to have a working Digital Audio Workstation on your computer for assignments and successful completion of this course. For this semester, instruction of technology specific skills will be demonstrated and taught in Reaper. Reaper is a widely used Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) compatible with macOS, Windows, and experimentally on Linux.

With the growth of immersive sound (Games/Movies Etc.), Reaper is quickly becoming an industry standard. Reaper includes many benefits to other DAWs. Whereas, most DAWs cost hundreds of dollars, even for student discounted versions, Reaper takes a different approach. Initial downloads of the software include a 60-day trial. After 60 days, the software encourages you to purchase a license, but does not require it, and will remain fully functional.

If you already use a different digital audio workstation (e.g. Pro Tools, Logic Pro, Studio One etc.) please email me and we will discuss whether I will allow it to be used instead of Reaper—I am well versed in Reaper, Pro Tools and Logic Pro. While I can help you troubleshoot other programs, it may take additional time for me to have answers for you. I will need to ensure you understand how to use the other software.

Headphones

You will need to acquire a pair of headphones for work in this class. I would suggest you invest in a good pair, as part of your grade will be based on the technical quality of your work. If you cannot hear issues because you have poor quality headphones, then you are risking poor grades.

You are looking for reference quality headphones. That means headphones that present your audio to you as honest and neutral as possible. A bad mix should sound like a bad mix. Hyped headphones that accentuate bass or high frequencies in flattering ways can hide detail and mix issues.

Suggested Headphones
Here are a few of my suggestions.

- [Shure SRH440 Professional Studio Headphones](#) - $98 (I have owned several pairs of these through the years and they remain a favorite.

- [Sony MDR7506 Professional Large Diaphragm Headphone -](#) $98 - (These have been an industry standard for recording and working with headphones for many years, they were my first pair as well. However, the earpads started detaching quickly and it was a pain to get back on. In my opinion, the Shure's listed above fit over my ears better, sound better and have a more rugged design.

Other Recommendations

- Samson SR850 Semi-Open-Back Studio Reference Headphones - $34 - These are the cheapest that will still "get the job done".
- AKG K240STUDIO Semi-Open Studio Headphones - $67 - These are great headphones. However, they are "semi-open" which will both improve sound quality for mixing and make anyone sitting within 10 feet of you potentially stare in annoyance.
- Sennheiser HD 202 II Professional Headphones (Black) - $40
- Audio-Technica ATH-M50x Professional Studio Monitor Headphones - $145
  I owned a pair of these for years and loved them. There is also a Bluetooth version of these, that additionally includes an optional wired connection. If you want Bluetooth headphones, I recommend these...though I am opposed to mixing with Bluetooth because there is quality loss as opposed to a wired connection.
- beyerdynamic DT 770 PRO 32 Ohm Studio Headphone - $179

For more info, the following guide provides great advice on headphones-- SOS magazine is my go-to for gear reviews as well as educational articles for sound engineering.
Sound On Sound(SOS)

(Always listen to your tracks on other devices. For example, audio mixed to headphones may not sound good to you or loud enough in your car or if sound for film—from tv or theater speakers.)

Computer

You will need access to a computer capable of running modern audio synthesis and signal processing environments, as well as digital audio workstations (DAWs) and editing software. This computer should also be capable of real-time signal processing through analog inputs and outputs (i.e., using an audio interface or web cam). Please leverage departmental resources whenever necessary. There are labs on campus, and perhaps at libraries wherever you are located, which should have computers that fit your needs. If you are having difficulty locating one, please let me know as soon as possible.

Course Evaluation

Student work and progress will be assessed through:

- In-class participation: you are expected to engage in class discussions about outside reading and listening with a written ideas, issues, and techniques throughout the semester. These written responses are an opportunity for you to practice incorporating technical language, information, and ideas with your academic work.
- You will be assigned artistic projects to practice the techniques being discussed in class. These are critical to your development. These creative works will always be presented in class, followed by a response from your classmates so that all may learn collectively.
- Each project also requires a written report detailing the work you did, the artistic concepts you engaged in, your perceived success of the project, and influences on this work.

Grades

Final Grades

Grades will be determined according to the following breakdown:

- Forum-based participation, discussions, listening/reading responses, quizzes and critiques: 15%
- Creative and Technical Skill Development Projects: 50%
- Final Creative Project: 20%
- Artistic Work: 15%

Letters are assigned according to the following final course percentages:

Grade	% Range
A	[93-100]
A-	[90-93)
B+	[87-90)
B	[83-87)
B-	[80-83)
C+	[77-80)
C	[73-77)
C-	[70-73)
D	[60-70)
F	[0-60)

Late Work

IMPORTANT: Since projects are experienced and critiqued as a group through the discussion forum critique model, late projects are not generally permissible and may not be accepted. Documentation assignments or weekly sketches handed in after the due date and time will have points deducted for lateness. This will be in addition to any points deducted for content. Those that are uploaded late will lose 1% for each day that it is late. The professor reserves the right to no longer accept it. If a situation occurs that may prevent you from turning an assignment in on time, please send me an email indicating that your assignment will be late and your reason for the late submission. Please do not wait to reach out.

Course Workload

This course takes time. Some things might be easier than others. This course will be broken up into "weekly content modules". Each week, a new module will be released on the same day of the week, you will then have one week from that date to complete that week's module. Some weeks will be more intense than others. But generally, you should plan to spend 3-9 hours a week on course work (including: working through the content and lectures; completing readings, listening's, and videos; and completing weekly homework assignments).

In addition, there will be a final presentation of materials, which will be broadcast on the University radio station, KBGA. Since this is an online course, your attendance will be optional, but the presentation of your work will be mandatory. The final project is the only assignment that CANNOT be late.

Lastly, you will need to get in the habit of labeling your assignments/files correctly

Example for an audio track: *Kate Lloyd_My Song*

For other assignments: Your Name_assignment Description_date submitted

Kate Lloyd_Final Project Proposal_08/21

SVMA, CAM, and University Policies and Information

Information about the School of Visual and Media Arts (SVMA) is available at:

- https://svma.umt.edu

Academic Honesty, Plagiarism, and Cheating Policy

Students are expected to adhere to academic conduct policies of the University of Montana as explained in Section V of your University of Montana Student Conduct Code: "Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Academic misconduct is defined as all forms of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to: (1) plagiarism, (2) misconduct during an examination or academic exercise, (3) unauthorized possession of examination or other course materials, (4) tampering with course materials, (5) submitting false information, (6) submitting work previously presented in another course, (7) improperly influencing conduct, (8) substituting, or arranging substitution, for another student during an examination or other academic exercise, (9) facilitating academic dishonesty, and (10) Altering transcripts, grades, examinations, or other academically related documents."

Dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating on assignments, fabricating information or citations, submitting work of another person or work previously used, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Academic misconduct is defined within the Student Conduct Code handbook. Students who cheat or plagiarize will receive academic sanctions, which may include an "F" grade on the assignment, examination, and/or in the course. Students will also be reported to the Dean of Students for possible further disciplinary action.

Using Media Found Elsewhere

For found media (i.e. videos, sounds, images, etc.), you are expected to cite the media in your documentation for the project. You ***WILL*** be asked to take ***screenshots*** of your audio sessions. I will not accept your audio tracks without this proof—yes you can use royalty free music and sound effects but if I only see that you uploaded the tracks and have not manipulated them to create something new, you will not receive credit.

You can read more about various licenses at;

- opensource.guide
- choosealicense
- GNU Licenses
- Creative Commons Licenses
- opensource.org

Sensitive Subject Matter & Censorship

This course operates under a no censorship policy, and you should feel free to experiment with challenging topics in your projects. That said - if you submit work with violent or sexually explicit themes, containing hate speech, racial slurs or other sensitive subject matter, I might contact you to request more background information on your choices.

Art scholarship and art practice along with teaching and learning involve a critical exploration of ideas, theories, art-making practices, and art movements that encompass such things as the human body, sexuality, race, gender, religions, and cultures. This course can touch upon any of the above categories with an expectation that students will actively participate in all course assignments, discussions, and tests. Given this information, it is the student's obligation to determine that the requirements conflict with his or her core beliefs. If the student determines that there is a conflict with his or her beliefs, one of the following actions needs to be taken: 1) drop the class before the last day to drop a course without penalty; 2) meet with the instructor within the first week of classes to determine if an accommodation can be made. (Note, faculty, are not required to grant content accommodations.)

Be Kind

Be respectful to each other, help each other, and be considerate in your communications with the instructional team. No trolling shared work and ideas. Be constructive with any critical feedback you give. Your classmates are your most important allies. If you can't figure something out technically or have questions about an assignment—reach out on the Canvas discussion board first. We are not here to make assumptions or judgment's when critiquing others. A lot of these assignments deal with "sonic exploration/experimentation."

Diversity Statement

Your experience in this class is important to me. I welcome individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, races, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ages, abilities, and other visible and nonvisible differences. Please know that I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for every other member of this class.

Student Support Resources

Disability and Equity Accommodations

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. Retroactive accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay. As your instructor, I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately if you wish.

The Writing and Public Speaking Center

The Writing and Public Speaking Center provides one-on-one tutoring to students at all levels and at any time in the writing process. Visit now. Visit often. They're ready when you are. www.umt.edu/writingcenter.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

The University of Montana is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, visit https://www.umt.edu/diversity/resources/mental-health.php

Land Acknowledgement

he Séliš-Qĺispé Cultural Committee created the language, *"The University of Montana acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people Today, we honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come."*