

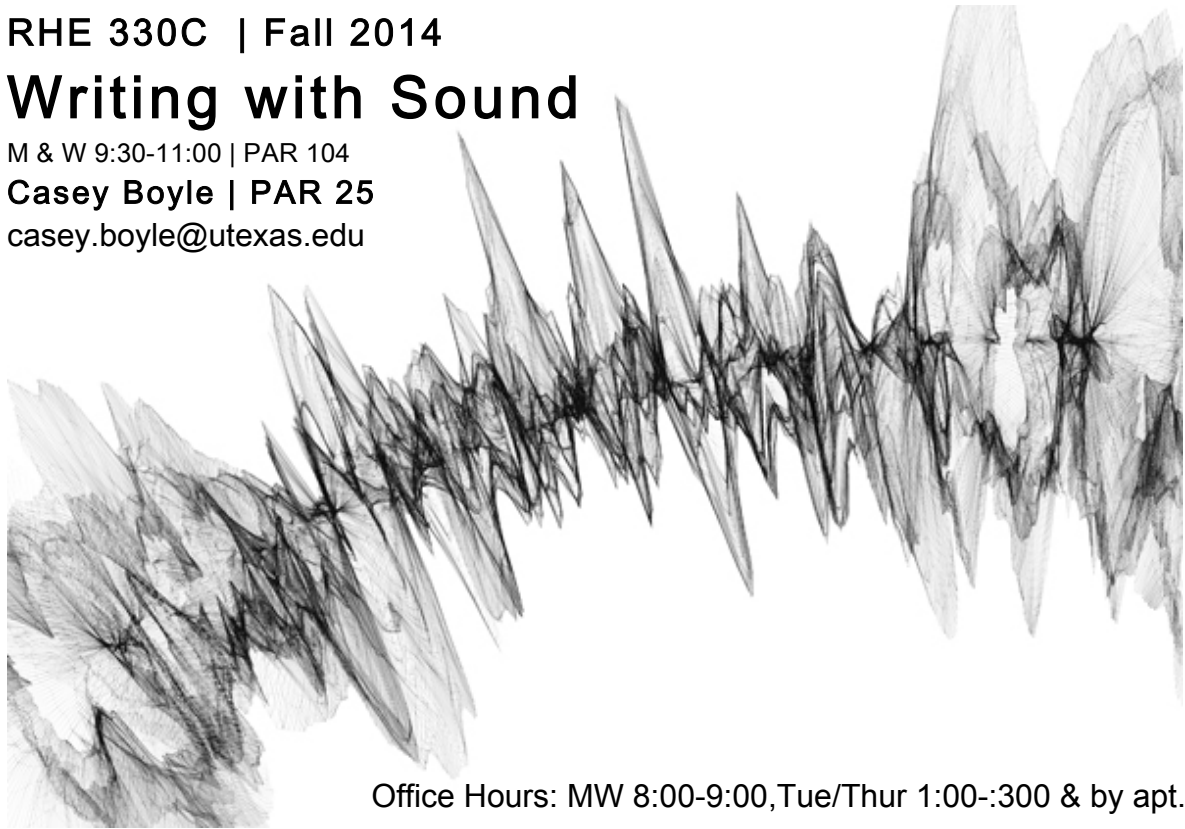
RHE 330C | Fall 2014

# Writing with Sound

M & W 9:30-11:00 | PAR 104

Casey Boyle | PAR 25

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Office Hours: MW 8:00-9:00, Tue/Thur 1:00-3:00 & by apt.

In our largely screen-based media culture, we often overlook the pervasive presence of sound. Talk radio, ambient music, mobile device alerts, animal sounds, human voices, and random noise all combine to form an ever present sonic backdrop with and through which we engage our media ecologies. Alone and together, these sounds help write our experience of an entertainment event, a political campaign, an educational venture. Towards understanding the rhetorical effects of sound compositions, this course will examine recording, editing, and distribution of sound as a form of writing. We will be especially keen to explore and examine those writings that are produced and circulated in digital environments. In addition to reading and discussing important works in the multidisciplinary field of sound studies, the course will offer an extended introduction to and continued practice in using readily available and open source digital audio editing tools for writing with sound.

## Course Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify various sound genres and their rhetorical effects
- Understand the technical and practical affordances for producing sound
- Compose effective digital podcasts and audio essays

Note: This course will be organized as a project-based workshop course (especially in the second half of the semester). In addition to readings and discussions, several of our class meetings will be opportunities for hands-on practice with digital audio tools that will involve your classmates and the instructor. Please be advised that such work demands regular attendance and requires active participation.

## **Texts and Materials**

*Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism & Production*, Jonathan Kern

*The Book of Audacity: Record, Edit, Mix, and Master with the Free Audio Editor*, Carla Schroder

*Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture*, edited by Paul D. Miller

*Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne

Additional essays and articles will be provided on the course site

Audacity – Open Source Audio Editing Software

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

## **Assignments**

Reading Responses (20%) Due: Throughout Semester

10 written responses to required readings posted to our course site (300-500 words posted in Canvas). Responses will be opportunities to critically and creatively engage course readings and case studies as well as provide the starting point for much of our class discussion. In the first week, I will provide a more detailed assignment sheet for how to organize the responses.

Podcast Analysis (15%) Due: Oct 1

After identifying/subscribing to a podcast, students will script and compose a 4-5 minute analysis of the podcast series that examines the themes, genres, online distribution, technical

Sonic Remediation (25%) Due: Oct 27

This assignment asks students to select a print-based writing--a short essay or article from/related to our course readings--to remediate into a sound essay.

Podcast Series (40%) Due: Dec 3

This final assignment will include a short proposal, three podcast episodes, and a brief prospectus that outlines a digital distribution plan. Of your three podcasts, one will include a site recording, one an interview, and another.

## University Policies

### Documented Disability Statement

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (video phone) or e-mail [ssd@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssd@austin.utexas.edu) or <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>

### Academic Dishonesty

**University of Texas Honor Code:** *As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.*

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Definition of Plagiarism:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism>

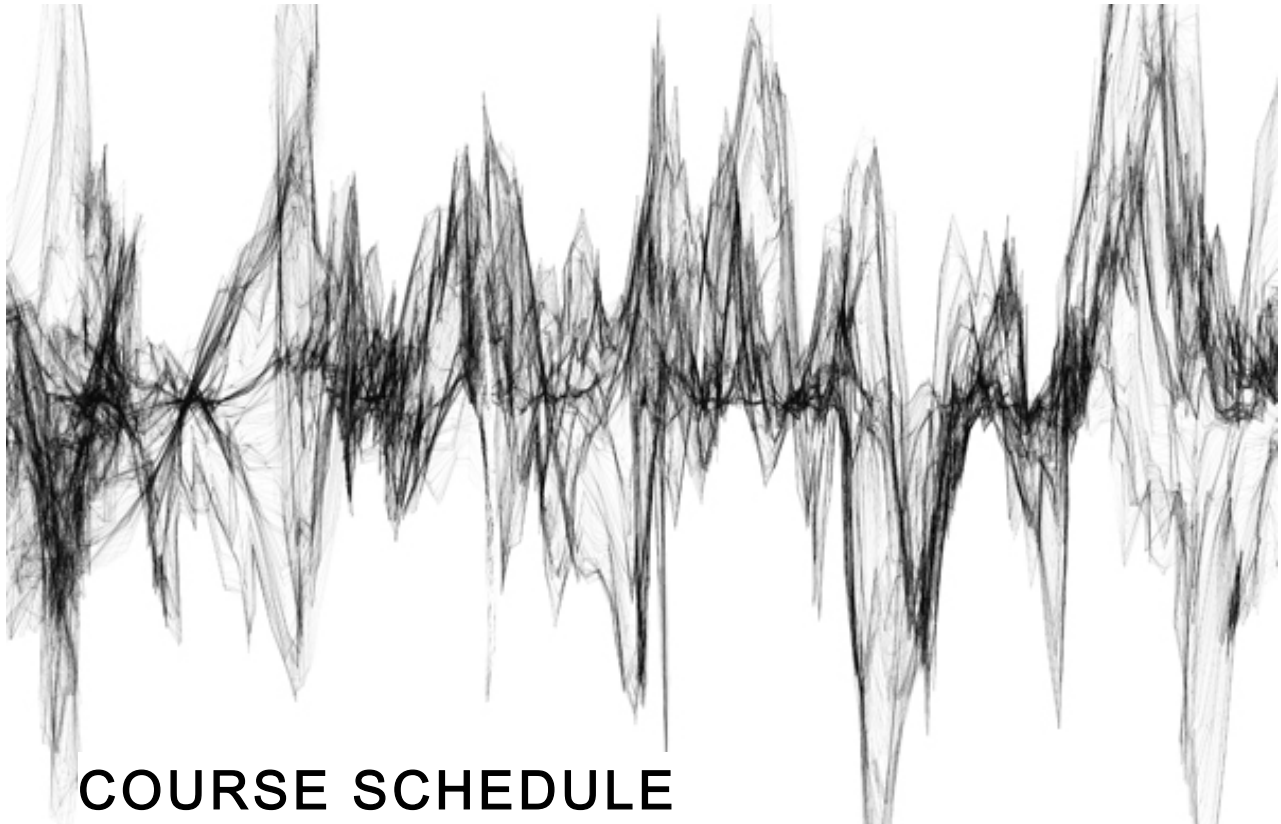
### Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

### Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health

Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>



## COURSE SCHEDULE

Materials: *Sound Studies Reader* [SSR]; *Sound Unbound* [SU]; *Sound Reporting* [SR]; *Book of Audacity* [BoA]; PDFs on Course Site [Canvas]

Note: All readings should be read BEFORE the date listed

### section one: sound studies

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#### Week One: Course Overview

Wed Aug 27: Introductions and Expectations

In-Class: 99% Episode One: Noise

<http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/99-invisible-01-99-noise-by-roman-mars-this/>

#### Week Two: Introduction to Sound Studies

Mon Sep 1: Labor Day | No Class

Wed Sep 3: Sterne, "Sonic Imaginations" [SSR]; Sterne et al, "The Politics of Podcasting" <http://thirteen.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-087-the-politics-of-podcasting/> In-Class: This American Life, "Maps"

Recommended: Mitchell, "There Are No Visual Media" [Canvas]

### **Week Three: Learning to Listen**

Mon Sep 8: Idhe, "The Auditory Dimension" [SSR]; Barthes, "Listening" [Canvas]

Listen: RE : SOUND "The Hearing Show"

<http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/library/1563-re-sound-189-the-hearing-show>

Wed Sep 10 : Chion, "The Three Listening Modes" [SSR]; Berland, "Contradicting Media" [SSR]

### **Week Four: Soundscapes**

Mon Sep 15: Schaffer, "The Soundscape" [SSR]; Leppert "Reading the Sonoric Landscape" [SSR]

In-Class: Thompson, "The Roaring Twenties"

<http://vectors.usc.edu/projects/index.php?project=98>

Wed Sep 17: LaBelle, "Auditory Relations" [SSR]; Cox, From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts [Canvas]

In-Class: Cities and Memory Podcast

<http://citiesandmemory.com/>

## **section two: (re)shaping sound**

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### **Week Five: Learning Audacity**

Mon Sep 22: CH1 "Audacity from Start to Finish" [BoA]

In-Class: "Pulling Back the Curtain"

<http://www.onthedia.org/story/129437-pulling-back-the-curtain/>

Wed Sep 24 : CH2 "Building a Good Digital Sound Studio on Cheap" [BoA]

In-Class: Roman Mars, "Radio Net"

<http://www.max-neuhaus.info/audiointerview.htm>

### **Week Six: Recording Techniques**

Mon Sep 29 Kern, CH4 [SR]; Updike, "Better Writing through Radio, Part I";

CH11 "Audacity Plug-ins for Special Effects" [BoA]

<http://transom.org/2006/nancy-updike-part-1/>

Kern, CH16: "Commentaries" [SR]

Wed Oct 1 – CH12 "Fix-Its ad Cleanups"; CHA Audio Hardware [BoA]

In-Class: Stereo Public

<http://www.stereopublic.net/>

In-Class: "The World's Quietest Room"

<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2012/04/03/daily-circuit-quiet-room>

DUE: Podcast Analysis

## **Week Seven: Layering**

Mon Oct 6: Miller, et al. "Freeze Frame" [SU];

Listen: 99% Invisible, "The Sound of Sports"

<http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-sound-of-sports/>

Wed Oct 8: Workshop

In-Class: On The Media, "Orchestrating Reality"

<http://www.onthemedias.org/story/orchestrating-reality/>

## **Week Eight: Remix**

Mon Oct 13: Miller, "In Through the Out Door" [SU] 7 Workshop

In Class: Various, "William S. Burroughs Teaches Writing"

[Site TBD]

Wed Oct 15: Lethem, "The Ecstasy of Influence" [SU]; Davis, "'Roots and Wires'" [SU]

## **Week Nine: Interviewing**

Mon Oct 20: from "Radio: An illustrated Guide" [Canvas]; In-Class Interviewing Exercise

Wed Oct 22 Editing Workshop

DUE: Sonic Remediation

## section three: writing with sound

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### Week Ten – Crafting Stories

Mon Oct 27: Kern, CH1 “Sound and Stories” [SR]; CH 7 “Creating Podcasts” [BoA]

Wed Oct 29: Kern, CH 3 “Writing For Broadcast” [SR]; from “Radio: An Illustrated Guide (Canvas)

In-Class: NPR’s *Serial*

<http://serialpodcast.org/>

### Week Eleven – Editing Stories

Mon Nov 3: Kern CH 6 “Story Editing” [SR]

Wed Nov 5: from “Radio: An Illustrated Guide” (Canvas)

In-Class Workshop

DUE: Podcast One

### Week Twelve – Looking at and Sharing Sound

Mon Nov 10 – CH8 “Becoming an Online Star” [BoA]

In class: Analyses of Podcast Distribution

Wed Nov 12 – “Photo Focused”

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thisisnpr/2013/04/23/178588679/never-lost-but-recently-found-the-development-of-radio-s-visuals> ;

“Interactive Radio”

<http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/228935/npr-combines-interactive-multimedia-desks-into-one/> ;

“How We Work”

<http://blog.apps.npr.org/2014/06/04/how-we-work.html>

### Week Thirteen Podcast Workshop

Mon Nov 24 – Project Workshop

Wed Nov 26 –Project Workshop

Due: Podcast Two



## Week Fourteen – Podcast Workshop

Mon Dec 1 – Project Workshop

Wed Dec 3 CLASS SHOWCASE

Due: Podcast Three & Final Docs

### Resources

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Audacity Manual

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/manual-1.2/tutorials.html>

Audio Tutorials

<http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/cat/audio>

Creative Commons Audio

<http://creativecommons.org/audio/>

Free Sound Project:

<http://www.freesound.org/>

Making Field Recordings

<http://citiesandmemory.com/2014/08/top-5-things-need-make-great-field-recording/>

