

Art 173: Sound Art

Professor Chris Kubick

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Fall 2016, Tues./Thurs. 9am-12pm, 285 Kroeber Hall

office hours: by appointment.

Video/Audio Lab Manager: Dillon Thomas email: dillont@berkeley.edu

Course Objectives

This is a studio class designed to introduce artists to the medium of sound. Students will learn the basic skills necessary to work with audio, including microphones, recorders, non-linear (digital) editing, basic signal processing and mixing, output formats, speaker and installation design, and basic electronic circuitry. More importantly, students will be encouraged to listen and think in new ways, and be introduced to a wide range of practices and perspectives on the practice of sound art, both historical and contemporary.

Course Methodology

Class meetings will be spent learning technical skills training and practice, listening to works by sound artists and others, discussing reading materials, and critiquing assignments. We may have one or more visiting artists and we may make a field trip. Audio equipment will be available to check out from the department. Digital Editing will be done on the Macintosh computers in room 295. Lectures, equipment demonstrations and technical practice will take place in room 285 and room 295 as well as outside the classroom.

LISTENING NOTEBOOK.

You should keep a listening notebook throughout the semester. In it you should make notes about sounds that you hear, and thoughts that you have about sound. These thoughts will inform your work and also be the basis of your written contributions to the class on the online forum.

Course Costs

1. There is a \$60 lab fee charged to students in the course. The lab fee covers the maintenance and replacement of the production and editing equipment you use. You must immediately pay this fee or you will not be able to reserve or check out equipment or gain access to the computer lab (room 295). Payment is via Cal card only.

2. You should purchase some form of external storage medium to back up your work, a USB flash drive will probably be enough, although larger drives might be handy and are of course fine. Please remember that you should always back up a copy (or two!) of your work and take it home with you; there isn't any acceptable excuse for losing your work to drive failure, ever.

Lab and Equipment Use Policies

In order to use any production equipment (cameras, mics, tripods, lights, etc.) you must sign a contract with the university. This will make you responsible for loss or intentional damage of equipment. Equipment will be available for use during a 24 hour period from an equipment cage located in Room 295. Advance reservations for the equipment can be made up to one week in advance on a sign-up board in the vestibule of Room 295. Equipment sign up procedure and

location is to be explained by Dillon Thomas, who is in charge of our facilities and equipment. Check-in and check-out hours will be set during the first week of classes.

If you have special needs for presenting your work in class please let me know ahead of time so we may reserve the necessary equipment.

Access to room 295 will be to students enrolled in media classes, and approved video lab technicians. Once you have paid your fee and signed a contract with us, you will receive a numeric code for a keypad on the door. Any use of computers or production equipment by people other than your classmates or lab techs is forbidden. If you see or know of individuals who are doing so, please report this to to Dillon Thomas, or to me. You are on your honor not to share your door code or production equipment with anyone, and if it is found that you have, you risk being dropped from the class, losing all equipment privileges, and/or paying for lost or broken equipment.

Grades

Your grade will be based on the following:

- 15% midterm
- 25% attendance, class participation
- 25% final project
- 35% smaller assignments

Assignments are expected to be completed on time. Your grade will drop if you're late with your assignments.

Dept. of Art Attendance Policy:

Attend every single scheduled class meeting. Tardiness beyond 10 mins. will be noted, and 3 tardies will be considered an absence. Three unexcused absences will automatically give you a C for the course. 5 absences will cause you to fail. An excused absence is one for which you can present a NOTE from a DOCTOR or FAMILY MEMBER explaining that illness or urgent family matters required you to miss class. This is a departmental policy and cannot be negotiated.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

8-25: LISTEN

Introductions all around. What is Sound Art? Deep Listening.

Max Neuhaus, Watts Prophets, Luigi Russolo, Bill Callahan, Ryoji Ikeda, Olivier Messier, Zimoun, John Cage, Christian Wolff, Earl Brown, Stephen Vitiello, Wadada Leo Smith, Yasunao Tone, Kaffe Matthews, Simon Forti, Doug Huebler, Paul Kos, Robert Morris, Celeste Boursier-Mougenot, Annea Lockwood, Nick Cave, Christian Marclay

Assignment due 8/30: Listen deeply in a quiet place and write about it (1 paragraph)
Reading: Pauline Oliveros, “Some Sound Observations” + Steve Roden, “Active Listening”

8/30: INSTRUMENTS FOR LISTENING

Intro to ears and other listening devices. SuperCollider1: Ode to Oliveros. Tones and Overtones. Otoacoustic Emission. Dancing about architecture. Oblique strategies.

Pauline Oliveros, Lamonte Young, Max Neuhaus, Maryanne Amacher, Russolo, Cage, Ben Burt, Brian Eno

Assignment: Using your ‘oblique sound’ as a starting point, imagine and describe ten different versions of a sound. Situate it in different places, vary its timber, feeling, etc.
Reading: Alvin Lucier, “Careful Listening is More Important Than Making Sounds Happen” + Nina Power, “Soft Coercion and the Recorded Female Voice”

PROJECT 1: THE SOUNDWALK

9/1: SOUNDWALKING

Intro to recording. Intro to Microphones. Sounds about places. Recording the human voice.

Luc Ferri, Situationism, Janet Cardiff, Andrea Fraser, Christina Kubisch, Ultra Red, Kianga Ford, Sophie Calle

Assignment due 9/6: four types of recording: a voice, an ambience, a thing, a sound.
Reading: Erik Davis, “Recording Angels” + Tara Rodgers, “Pamela Z”

9/6: CUTS

Musique concrete; sonorous objects; digital audio.

Steve Roden, Mark Rothko, Salome Vogel, Genesis P-Orridge, Pierre Schaeffer, Pierre Henri, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Marcel Duchamp, Doug Huebler, Joseph Kosuth

Assignment: edit at least ten clips less than ten seconds each. be ready to present sound walk idea/script on 9/8

Reading: Francisco Lopez, “Profound Listening and Environmental Matter”

9/8: IT’S HARD TO GET AROUND THE WIND

This is not La Selva; field recordings; multi-tracking; SuperCollider#2: Williams Mix.

Francisco Lopez, David Dunn, Chris Watson, Singing Sands, Skrillex, Larry Bell, John Cage, George Brecht, Brandon Labelle, Ernst Karel, Mego, Aube, Merzbow

Assignment: Finish gathering sound for your sound walk.
Reading: Steve Reich, “Music As A Gradual Process”

9/13: VARIATION AND VARIATION AND VARIATION

I Am Sitting In A Room; Intro to fx processing; pitched spaces

Steve Reich, Alvin Lucier, Francis Dhomont, Phil Niblock, Carsten Nicolai, Tony Smith, Robert Smithson, Eva Hesse, James Tenney, Michael Snow, Richard Serra, Bruce Nauman, Tristan Perch,

Assignment: finish a rough draft of your sound walk by 9/17

Reading: Epstein, “Slow Motion Sound”

9/15: IN THE MIX + workday

Mixing, Signal Flow, No Input Mixing, Toshimaru Nakimura

Assignment due 9/20: finish sound walk

9/20+9/22: SOUNDWALK CRIT

Reading: Randy Thom, “Designing A Film For Sound”

PROJECT 2: SOUND FOR A VIDEO

9/27 SOUND FOR VIDEO.

Intro to working with video. The elements of a sound mix for film.

Assignment due 10/1: show me the (finished image, no sound) video clip for your midterm project (10% of midterm grade!)

Reading: William Burroughs, “The Invisible Generation” + Anne Carson, “The Gender of Sound”

9/29 MIS/MATCH

Doing it “wrong”; appropriation and montage;

Assignment: record voices for your midterm project

Reading: Chris Kubick and Anne Walsh, “F is for Foley” +

10/4: FOLEY-O!

Wilhelm Scream, Foley artists, Wild Tracks

Assignment: hard fx and ambience for your midterm project

Reading: Jon Rose, “Swedish For Violin Players”

10/6 BUSSING

Sub-mixes, Noise Reduction,

10/11 MIDTERM ROUGH DRAFT DUE (40% of midterm grade)

10/13 + 10/18 MIDTERM CRITS!!

Reading: David Toop, “Humans, Are They Really Necessary?”

PROJECT 3: REALIZATION OF DAVID TUDOR’S RAINFOREST

10/20 INSTRUMENTS AND AUTOMATA

Acoustic construction; Improvisational Sculpture;

Assignment: build a home-made instrument!

Reading: George Lewis, “Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological perspectives; + Tara Rodgers, “Laetitia Sonami”

10/25 SPECIAL GUEST: Edward Shocker, experimental instrument builder

Reading: Bill Fontana, “Resoundings”;

Assignment: bring your speaker+amplifier+playback device to class.

10/27 OHM

Speakers, amplifiers, glitch, contact mics

Assignment: bring materials for our “Rainforest” (see project description for more info)

11/3 RAINFORESTING. IN CLASS PERFORMANCE.

PROJECT 4: SCORE v DOCUMENT

Assignment due 11/12: Produce a score and a document that both refer to the same thing or experience.

Reading (for 11/5): Seth Kim-Cohen, “Be More Specific”

11/5 PROCESS

Conceptual sound; sculpture as sound: installation practice; scores v documents

Robert Morris, Larry Bell, Donald Judd, Olafur Eliasson, James Turrell, DelaCroix, Monet, Sol Lewitt, Alan Kaprow, Vito Acconci, Zimoun, Celest Boursier Mougenot, Florian Hecker

Assignment due 11/12: Produce a score and a document that both refer to the same thing or experience.

Reading: Christoph Cox, “Being As Time In The Sonic Arts” + Tara Rodgers, “Christina Kubisch”

11/8 DURATION

Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Eva Hesse, Lamonte Young, R. Luke Dubois, On Kawara, Doug Huebler, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Phil Niblock, Bridget Reilly, Yayoi Kusama, Jem Finer

11/12 Quick Crit: Score/Document project

PROJECT 5: FINAL PROJECT

Assignment: prepare detailed diagrams and description of your final project

Reading: Paul D. Miller: “Erasures and the Art of Memory” + John Oswald, “Bettered By The Borrower”

11/15 COPYLEFT + FINAL PROJECT WORK DAY

Assignment: Work on Final Project

Reading: Gascia Ouzounian, “Acoustic Mapping, Notes From the Interface”

11/17 SONIC INTERFACE + FINAL PROJECT WORK DAY

Assignment: Work on Final Project

Reading: Mark Slouka, “Listening For Silence”; Joeri Bruyninckx, “ Silent City: Listening for Birds in Urban Nature”

Assignment: ROUGH DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE 11/22

11/22 SILENCE + FINAL PROJECT WORK DAY

11/29 FINAL CRITS

12/1 FINAL CRITS