

THST 5080: Sound: Experimental Practices, Critical Studies

Time:

Summer 2016

May 31-June 22, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 2:00-5:00pm

July (day tbd): final project proposals

August (day tbd):: final project showings

Location:

CFA 334 and tbd

Instructor:

Doug Van Nort

(office) GCFA 303H

(e) vannort@yorku.ca

Office Hours:

by appointment

Course Website:

<http://dispersionlab.org/sound-epcs>

Course Overview

This course blends experimental practice and critical studies through the medium of sound. Students partake in various forms of sonic practices, while critically examining concepts as they manifest uniquely within this performance medium. The course is open to both theorists and practitioners, and affords an opportunity to merge these two modes of inquiry within the pervasive and ephemeral domain of sound.

Course Objectives:

- 1) Enhance your appreciation for the boundaries of listening vs. hearing, and your awareness of the sonic environment.
- 2) Cultivate a new sound-based creative practice, or advance an existing one into new territories.
- 3) Use basic electronics, recording and editing tools for acquiring sound sources, improvising, composing and performing.
- 4) Generate new research questions through embodied engagement with your sonic environment.
- 5) Acquire new language and theoretical bases for engaging with sound from a variety of perspectives: physical/material, perceptual, representational, cultural, political, technological, historical, aesthetic, etc.
- 6) Discover a new line of discourse from the above threads that contributes to your ongoing research.
- 7) Compose performance ideas for a group and communicate these effectively.

Required materials:

Audio/Video documentation will be required for in and out of class projects. This may require access to cameras, sound recording devices, microphones, computers, headphones. Students may be required to rent equipment if they do not own this or cannot source from their department or AMPD. This will not exceed \$100 in total for the term, and the goal is to keep this cost as low as possible. Any sound software (e.g. for editing) that we use will be free.

Grading & Attendance:

15% Participation

This course will flourish as a product of our coming together to engage and share ideas/experiences. Thus your attendance and participation in discussion and exercises is essential. Particularly in light of the fact that we tailored our schedule to collective class availabilities, unexcused absences will lower your grade by 5%. More than 3 absences constitutes automatic failure of the course.

5% Reading Synopses

A 1/2-to-1page synthesis of a given week's readings, touching upon the key ideas. Also include three questions that were raised for you in response to the article. This will be due by **Monday at 10am** following the given week that a reading is assigned. If Tuesday-to-Wednesday readings are assigned, then responses are due by **10am Wednesday**. (and it is understood that the responses may be a bit 'lighter' in content.)

20% Small Projects

Throughout the course, students will create and present five small projects that will be experienced by the class. These will be regarded as speculative experiments intended both for guiding collective experiences of sound as well as introducing techniques of sound-based artists that may be leveraged in the final creative project. Each will include a small writing that frames the work and relates to class discussions.

30% Final Creative Work

You must complete, present and document a sound-based creative work that can be either studio-based or performance-oriented, though the performative element of the final presentation is part of the overall project. The project should directly engage with the theoretical concepts discussed in the research paper. The grading is based on the conceptual or artistic rigor of the final product, as well as its presentation and successful documentation.

30% Research Paper

a 15 page paper that presents a critical analysis of sound through one of the conceptual lenses put forth in the course. Chosen in consultation with instructor. Paper will synthesize from among the assigned readings as well as outside scholarly sources, and will address the final sound project as a case study.

Grading Scheme:

90-100% = A+, 85-89% = A, 80-84% = A-, 75-79% = B+, 70-74% = B, 60-69% = C,

0-59% = F

Selected Bibliography

Readings drawn from the following sources among others:

Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The political economy of music*. Manchester University Press, 1985.

Bailey, Derek. *Improvisation: its nature and practice in music*. Da Capo Press, 1993.

Bailey, Thomas Bey William. *Micro-bionic: radical electronic music and sound art in the 21st century*. Creation Books, 2009.

Borgo, D. 2005. *Sync or Swarm: Improvising Music In A Complex Age*. New York: Continuum.

Braun, Hans-Joachim, ed. *Music and technology in the Twentieth Century*. JHU Press, 2000.

Bregman, Albert S. *Auditory scene analysis: The perceptual organization of sound*. MIT press, 1994.

Cage, John. *Silence: lectures and writings*. Wesleyan University Press, 2011.

Chion, Michel. *Guide des objects sonores*. Buchet/Chastel, 1983.

Chion, Michel. *Audio-vision: sound on screen*. Columbia University Press, 1994.

Clarke, E.F. *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*.

Cox, Christoph, and Daniel Warner, eds. *Audio culture: readings in modern music*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004.

Demers, Joanna. *Listening through the noise: the aesthetics of experimental electronic music*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Dyson, Frances. *Sounding new media: Immersion and embodiment in the arts and culture*. Univ of California Press, 2009.

Evans, Aden. *Sound ideas: Music, machines, and experience*. Vol. 27. U of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Godøy, Rolf Inge, and Marc Leman, eds. *Musical gestures: Sound, movement, and meaning*. Routledge, 2010.

Goodman, Steve. *Sonic warfare: Sound, affect, and the ecology of fear*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010.

Hegarty, Paul. *Noise/music: a history*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2007.

Husserl, Edmund. *The phenomenology of internal time-consciousness*. Indiana University Press, 1966.

Ihde, Don. *Listening and voice: Phenomenologies of sound*. SUNY Press, 2007.

Jarman-Ivens, Freya. *Queer Voices: Technologies, Vocalities, and the Musical Flaw*. Palgrave

Macmillan, 2011.

Kahn, Douglas. *Noise, water, meat: a history of sound in the arts*. MIT press, 1999.

Kahn, Douglas. *Earth sound earth signal: energies and earth magnitude in the arts*. Univ of California Press, 2013.

Kelly, C., Attali, J., Celant, G., Chion, M., Coe, R. T., Cox, C., ... & Hegarty, P. (2011). *Sound*. Whitechapel Art Gallery.

Kelly, Caleb. *Cracked media: the sound of malfunction*. MIT Press, 2009.

Kim-Cohen, Seth. *In the blink of an ear: Toward a non-cochlear sonic art*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009.

LaBelle, Brandon. *Background noise: perspectives on sound art*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006.

Leman, Marc. *Embodied music cognition and mediation technology*. MIT Press, 2008.

Lewis, George E. *A power stronger than itself: The AACM and American experimental music*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Meadams, Stephen. "Perspectives on the contribution of timbre to musical structure." *Computer Music Journal* 23, no. 3 (1999): 85-102.

McCartney, Andra. "Soundwalking: creating moving environmental sound narratives." *Viitattu* 20 (2010): 2011.

Pascoe, Judith. *The Sarah Siddons audio files: romanticism and the lost voice*. University of Michigan Press, 2011.

Pinch, Trevor, and Karin Bijsterveld, eds. *The Oxford handbook of sound studies*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Rodgers, T. (2010). *Pink noises: Women on electronic music and sound*. Duke University Press..

Schafer, R. Murray. *The soundscape: Our sonic environment and the tuning of the world*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co, 1993.

Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening*. Wesleyan University Press, 2011.

Smalley, Denis. "Spectromorphology: explaining sound-shapes." *Organised Sound*, no. 02 (1997): 107-126.

Sterne, Jonathan. *The audible past: Cultural origins of sound reproduction*. Duke University Press, 2003.

Sterne, Jonathan. *MP3: The meaning of a format*. Duke University Press, 2012.

Sterne, Jonathan, ed. *The sound studies reader*. Routledge, 2012.

Thompson, Emily Ann. *The soundscape of modernity: architectural acoustics and the culture of listening in America, 1900-1933*. MIT Press, 2004.

Toop, David. *Haunted Weather Music, Silence and Memory*. Serpent's Tail, 4 Blackstock Mews, London N4 2BT, 2004.

Wishart, Trevor. *On sonic art*. Psychology Press, 1996.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

York students are required to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and they are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom and other academic settings, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. The instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. The policy and procedures governing disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=82>

Access/Disability

York University is committed to principles of respect, inclusion and equality of all persons with disabilities across campus. The University provides services for students with disabilities (including physical, medical, learning and psychiatric disabilities) needing accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials. These services are made available to students in all Faculties and programs. Students in need of these services are asked to register with disability services to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided with advance notice. Students are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with their course directors to discuss their accommodation needs. Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=68>

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and making accommodations for observances of special significance.

Students, who because of religious commitment cannot meet academic obligations, other than formally scheduled examinations (December and April examination period), on certain holy days are responsible for giving their instructor reasonable notice (not less than 14 days), of each conflict.

For the full description, see: <https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>