

499: Motion Picture Sound Editing Syllabus

Professor:

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Office Hours Thurs 4:00 – 5:00 PM, **BY APPT. ONLY**

SA:

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User = public Password = Edison

2 units.

Class will meet in Dub B.

Class will have times assigned for one final mix over a weekend late in the semester.

Course Objectives:

To learn skills necessary to record, and edit dialog, music and sound effects for film, television and other media. It is the intention of this course to introduce you to fundamental principals necessary to become a sound editor on Pro Tools. We will also discuss the aesthetic considerations of the sound editor.

The course material will be organized as follows:

RECORDING

Sound Effects & Backgrounds
Foley
ADR

EDITING

Foley, Sound Effects & Backgrounds
ADR
Music

Course Workload:

You should assume that there will be a **quiz** each week covering material from the previous lecture. This is to encourage people to attend class, and to study the lecture notes. All quizzes will be cumulative, but will focus on the previous week's lecture material.

There will be assignments due each week in class. These assignments will necessitate outside lab work on a weekly basis. This will necessitate scheduling additional time for checkouts.

The major workload for the class will be the construction of a stereo (two-channel L/R) soundtrack for a short (3-4 minute) film, including dialog, music and sound effects. This may be a film of your choosing, a re-mix of an existing project (for which you must supply completely new tracks) or work on your own project from another class. You are expected to do all of the recording, and editing on this project alone and for this class only. Due to scheduling of facilities, this will be due BEFORE the end of the semester.

If you choose an already existing scene, you should NOT attempt to reproduce the sound design of the scene exactly as in the film. The point of the assignment is to be creative and create an entirely new sound design. Consider it a blank slate.

Please do not limit yourself by using only library sound sound effects and backgrounds. (I will recognize them!) Please take the time to record some specifically for your project.

Required Reading:

Sound for Film and Television, with accompanying audio CD by Tomlinson Holman
Paperback - 368 pages Book & Cd edition (April 1997)
Butterworth-Heinemann; ISBN: 0240802918

Recommended Readings:

The Science of Sound by Thomas D. Rossing
Hardcover - 686 pages 2nd edition (January 1990)
Addison-Wesley Pub Co; ISBN: 0201157276

Modern Recording Techniques by David Miles Huber, Robert E. Runstein, Miles Huber
Paperback - 512 pages 4th edition (June 1995)
Focal Press; ISBN: 0240803086

The Practical Art of Motion Picture Sound by David L. Yewdall
Paperback - 384 pages Book & Cd edition (September 1999)
Focal Press; ISBN: 0240802888

Audio-Vision by Michel Chion, Claudia Gorbman (Editor), Translator
Paperback - 239 pages 0 edition (May 15, 1994)
Columbia Univ Pr; ISBN: 0231078994

Cinematic Voice by Michel Chion, Claudia Gorbman (Editor)
Paperback - 208 pages (March 1999)
Columbia Univ Pr; ISBN: 0231108230

GRADING POLICY

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are very important to surviving a career in the film industry. "Late" means late. If you arrive after scheduled class start, you are late. This also applies to returning from class ("coffee" break, if we have one).

If you are late or absent, a valid excuse (such as illness, family emergency, or natural disaster) is expected. Traffic, broken alarm, and working on films are **NOT** considered valid excuses. You are expected to make up any work missed as a result of an absence. You are responsible for obtaining class notes from other class members that you may have missed. If you know in advance that you will be absent, please notify the instructor so that we may better plan the class. It is YOUR responsibility to see the instructor to schedule make-up quizzes. You must put your excuse into writing and sign it for me to consider it.

University policies regarding Academic Integrity will be strictly enforced in this class. Note that this means if you are caught cheating (or you allow someone to cheat) on a quiz, the recommended sanction is failure for the course, with possible expulsion from the university.

Grading

- 1. Class Participation 10%**
As class participation is very important to the learning process, you are also expected to take an active part in class discussions. Please remember to be respectful of your peers when they choose to take part in discussions. Do not interrupt, and if your opinion differs, remember to disagree with the other person's IDEAS, and never attack the person as an individual.

Every person has a right to air his/her opinion, as long as it is an honest opinion, no matter how stupid you may think it is.
- 2. Quizzes 25%**
You should assume that there will be a quiz each week that there is a normal class. They will be brief and simple. Quizzes will cover cumulative material, but will focus primarily on material from the previous class lecture. Quizzes will start promptly at class start and if you are late you will not be allotted additional time for the quiz. You will **NOT** be permitted to make up a quiz unless you have a valid excuse. All make-up quizzes will be different from the class quizzes and may be more difficult.
- 3. Weekly Assignments 25%**
Assignment grades, including in-class assignments.
- 4. Final Project - Editing 40%**
The quality of the editing tracks on your final project, both technically and creatively. Evaluation of Dialog (ADR and/or VO), Sound Effects (including Foley, Backgrounds, and Hard FX) and Music (source and/or score). Sound effects are judged on originality and effectiveness. Evaluation of use of realistic, surreal, and hyper-real sound design.

If you have questions on any aspect of this, see the instructor **BEFORE** you turn in your project.

If the class does not seem to be digesting the material properly, I reserve the right to alter the course workload to include a final exam in addition to the quizzes.

If you are concerned about your grade, or are having difficulty with some aspect of the course, if you have special needs, or if you'd just like to talk, feel free to contact me. We can speak to you on the phone or schedule an appointment. We're here to help you!

Study Suggestions:

The text book for the course is available from the USC book store. The text covers a great deal of information. The class lectures are intended to focus the material from the readings so that they can be better understood.

Material that is in the book but is not covered in lectures should be considered "secondary" and will not be covered on class quizzes. All material from the text in smaller type or table form is secondary and will not be covered on class quizzes. Quizzes will never cover material that has not been covered in lecture.

Film students vary greatly in their background and facility for doing work of this kind. Those who do not understand parts of the material are encouraged to ask questions of the instructors during class. Since class time is limited, the instructor may pass on to other topics in order to get through all the material. Please feel free to ask the teaching assistant for additional help. The instructor is available via e-mail for help anytime requested.

When doing the assigned reading each week, read slowly and use a highlighter to draw attention to things you think are important or that you may have questions regarding. You may find it helpful to read only a few pages at a time because of the technical nature of the material.

In class, the lecture material will cover the readings. Follow along with the lecture and take notes.

After the lecture, re-read the assigned reading some time before the quiz to review. Again, use a highlighter (maybe a different color) for anything you may have questions regarding.

If you are having difficulty with the material, make an appointment with the SA for a review session.

Immediately before the quiz I will always ask if there are any questions. This is the best time to ask review information.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP.

Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or the TA) as early in the semester as possible.

DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am-5:00pm Monday through Friday.

The phone number for DSP is (213)

740-0776.

Syllabus

(Subject to change as class progresses)

Week 1 (8/30) Lecture 1: Introduction
Basic Principles of Sound
Lab: Sound Libraries and Backing Up
Assignment 1: PROJECT PROPOSALS

Reading Due Week 2: Introduction: pp. xvii – xx **AND**
Chapter 4: Microphones and Techniques for their Use, pp. 69 – 84.
STOP AT “MICROPHONE ASSESSORIES.”
ALSO READ “The Eleven Commandments of Film Sound,” p. 229.

Week 2 (9/06) **PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE**
Quiz 1
Lecture 2: Basic Principles Continued, FX Recording
Assignment 2: Video Master
Lab: PMD

Reading Due Week 3: Chapter 4: Microphones and Techniques for their Use, pp. 84-99.

Week 3 (9/13) **PROJECT PROPOSALS RETURNED**
Quiz 2
Assignment 2: Video Master Due
Lecture 3: Intro to Pro Tools Editing
Assignment 3: FX Recording
Lab: Digital Editing Rooms

Reading Due Week 4: Chapter 1: Objective Sound, pp. 1 – 12.
STOP AT “INFLUENCES ON SOUND PROPOGATION”

Week 4 (9/20) Quiz 3
Assignment 3: FX Recording Due
Lecture 4: Pro Tools Editing Continued
Assignment 4: Foley
Lab: Foley Room

Reading Due Week 5: Chapter 1: Objective Sound, pp. 12-28.

Week 5 (9/27) Quiz 4
Assignment 4: Foley Due
Lecture 5: Recording Techniques, Common Audio and Video Formats
Assignment 5: ADR
Lab: ADR Room

Reading Due Week 6: Chapter 9: Editing, pp. 173 – 185 (stop at “Music Editing Specialization”).

Week 6 (10/04) Quiz 5
Assignment 5: ADR Due
Lecture 6: Analog Mixing & Signal Processing
EQ, Reverb, Compression
Assignment 6: BG Editing

Reading Due Week 7: Chapter 9: Editing, pp. 185 – 198.

Week 7 (10/11) Quiz 6
Assignment 6: BG Editing Due
Lecture 7: Mixing in a Digital World
Assignment 7: Cut Sound Effects Tracks

Reading Due Week 8: Chapter 2: Psychoacoustics, pp. 29 – 48.

Week 8 (10/18) Quiz 7
Assignment 7: Cut Sound Effects Due
Lecture 8: Pro Tools Mixing
Assignment 8: Cut Sound Effects II

Reading Due Week 9 (10/25): Chapter 6: Recording, pp.115 –137.

Week 9 (10/25) CLASS WILL MEET IN SPIELBERG
Quiz 8
Assignment 8: Cut Sound Effects II Due
Lecture 9: Controller Surfaces

Reading Due Week 10 (11/01): Chapter 10: Mixing, pp. 199 –216.

Week 10 (11/1) Quiz 9
Lecture 10: Dialog Editing

Reading Due Week 11 (11/08): Chapter 11: Print Master to Exhibition, pp. 217 – 228.

Week 11 (11/8) Quiz 10
Lecture 11: Digital Formats, Multi-channel Sound and 35mm

Week 11 (11/10 &11)
WEEKEND OF SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
FINAL MIXES
TWO-HOUR BLOCKS TO BE ASSIGNED

Reading Due Week 12 (11/15): Chapter 5: Production Sound Mixing, pp. 101 – 113.

Week 12 (11/15) Quiz 11
Lecture 12: Production Recording Techniques

Reading Due Week 13 (11/22): Chapter 3: Audio Fundamentals, pp. 49 – 65 (stop at “Jitter”).

Week 13 (11/22) THANKSGIVING NO CLASS

Reading Due Week 14 (11/29): Chapter 7: Synchronization, pp.139 – 153.

Week 14 (11/29) Quiz 12
Lecture 13: Time Code and Telecines

Reading Due Week 15 (12/06): Chapters 8: Transfers, pp. 155 – 172.
ALSO READ “The Eleven Commandments of Film Sound,” p. 229.

Week 15 (12/06) FINAL CLASS MEETING – DUB C

Quiz 13

Final Presentations in Class

Week 16 (12/13) FINAL EXAM WEEK (NO CLASS)