USC School
of Cinematic Arts
Media Arts + Practice Division

IML 328: Sonic Media Art

Fall 2019   **Instructor: Albert Ortega (agortega@usc.edu)**
2 units   **Office: SCI 101Q**
Mondays, 2:00 p.m. – 4:50 p.m.   **Office Hours: TBD**
SCI 104L   **T.A. : Ben Nicolson (benjamin.nicholson@usc.edu)**
                                                                Office Hours: TBD

Sound plays a vital role in communicating information to audiences and immersing them into the world of the media project, yet visual literacy is often privileged over sonic literacy. IML328: Sonic Media Art engages with sound as a primary modality and explores the technical and theoretical issues surrounding the production of sound-based media projects. Like all MAP classes, **IML328: Sonic Media Art** marries theory and practice, asking students to produce sound projects informed by an awareness of the historical and conceptual issues that structure sound-based media and Technologies.

This class provides a broad overview of the fields of sound design and sound art, while also providing an introduction to sound recording and editing. Students leave this course with the ability to actively listen, perform, critique, and build a strong foundation for creating sound-based media projects.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

•   Weekly reading responses + production exercises (20%)
•   Dreamscape (20%)
•   Podcast Project (25%)
•   Site Specific Sound Experience (25%)
•   Participation (10%)

TECHNOLOGY/HARDWARE/SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

All classes in the MAP curriculum integrate multimedia authoring and theory. This class will primarily use Adobe Audition CC along with Zoom H4 recording devices and boom microphones. Students might consider purchasing Adobe Audition for the semester; however, students will have access to SCI labs with all course software installed. Students are also invited to work with IML support staff for tutorials and technical support. Students are required to purchase a 16GB: SD card for the Zoom H4 device and a set of quality headphones (see wiki for details).

TEXTS
- All readings available on the course wiki.
- Sound and audio resource links available on the course wiki.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

I: Dreamscape (due week 6, Sept 30):

Dreams can be vivid and formative, but they don't necessarily represent reality. Write a detailed description of a dream that was formative to you and then build a soundscape inspired by it. The goal of this project is to consider how to convey feeling, mood, and tone through sonic immersion. You may use up to ten words in the entire 60–90 second piece and all other material must be recorded by you. Include a 200-300-word write up that explains the meaning of the soundscape.

II: Podcast Miniseries (due week 9, Oct 21):

Create a short podcast series comprised of three episodes that are three minutes each. The podcast should focus on a topic that is socially engaged and be properly researched. Podcasts are generally minimally edited, but it will be necessary to clean up the recording as well as include an intro/outro that captures the spirit of the series. Members of the class will listen and comment on the series you created.

III: Site Specific Sound Experience (due week 15, Dec 2):

Students will work in pairs to produce two curated sonic experiences for the listener that capture history and feeling of a specific location as they walk through it while wearing headphones (sound walk). One of the pieces will focus on the historical dimension of the location and explain its significance to Los Angeles. The other piece will explore the ways in which the location evokes a particular sensation or feeling. One of the pieces should provide context, be more explanatory and work in the tradition of realism, while the other piece should serve as a contrast, be experimental, and work in the tradition of the Avant-Garde.

Each pair may choose which piece will be created in each style, but they should work together as companion pieces to represent the location in compelling and thoughtful ways. Each piece should be approximately two-minutes and create an immersive experience using a mixture of voiceover, ambient sounds and sound effects. More than half of the project's sound assets are to be recorded by you and your partner, and music may only be used if it is part of the dieresis (60/40) split. Any elements used from a sound library must be properly cited on your wiki page. The class will go to the location to listen to the pieces on Dec 2. Please also include a 500-word critical refection that explains both works to provide context for the listener, along with a feedback survey.

Homework & Production Exercises:

Over the course of the semester students will be asked to complete various readings and workshops to enhance critical thinking and listening, while building a repertoire of sound production skill-sets. All homework must be posted to your wiki page before the class on the date due to receive full credit. Make sure to look at the homework description on the Wiki for details about the submission process.

Participation:
IML 328 is a project-based course that requires attendance and participation to maximize the potential of the class. Additionally, some work will be done in groups, which requires collaboration, organization and consideration of your partner(s); therefore, attendance is mandatory and factored into your participation grade. Active engagement during critical listening exercises, discussion of readings, constructive peer feedback during presentations and adherence to group deadlines will be taken into consideration as well. For more information on attendance, refer to the attendance policy outlined on this syllabus.

POLICIES

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct.

Citation Practices

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. Media Arts + Practice seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for noncommercial, educational uses. Four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.All projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staf to fnd out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute, which sponsors courses and workshops specifcally for international graduate students. Other support systems are listed below:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confdential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress ftness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Provides free and confdential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confdential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender based harm. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: http://sarc.usc.edu/

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staf, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. https://equity.usc.edu/

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentafairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certifcation for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. http://dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely afecting their success as a student EX: personal, fnancial, and academic. https://studentafairs.usc.edu/ssa/

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. https://diversity.usc.edu/

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an ofcially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, http://emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. http://dps.usc.edu

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Disruptive Student Behavior
Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

PLEASE NOTE: FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX

Week 1 (Aug 26): Introduction to Course

Week 2 (Sept 2): Labor Day No Class

Week 3 (Sept 9): Learning to Listen: Developing Sonic Literacy

Week 4 (Sept 16): Introduction to Adobe Audition, Sound Room & Audio Audio Recording

Week 5 (Sept 23): Mood, Tone, Atmosphere: Sonic Mood Board Workshop

Week 6 (Sept 30): Dreamscape Presentations - Discussion & Feedback.

Week 7 (Oct 7): Podcast: Overview and Analysis

Week 8 (Oct 14): Microphone Workshop & Creating Foley

Week 9 (Oct 21): Podcast Working Session

Week 10 (Oct 28): Project Development Workshop

Week 11 (Nov 4): Conceptual Art and Experimentation with Sonic Media

Week 12 (Nov 11): Sonic Storyboard Presentations

Week 13 (Nov 18): Soundscape Development Workshop

Week 14 (Nov 25): Winter Break NO CLASS

Week 15 (Dec 2): Sound Walk