CTPR 407 SOUND DESIGN FOR PODCASTING

2 UNITS SPRING 2023

TIME: **Mondays 9:00AM-11:50AM**

ROOM: **SCA B105**

INSTRUCTOR: **Katie Gately** cgately@usc.edu

STUDENT ASSISTANT: **Vincent Essid** essid@usc.edu

SCA SOUND DEPARTMENT: (213)-740-1616

CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES: creativetech@cinema.usc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Podcasts have slowly and quietly over the last few decades grown into a thriving venue for distribution of ideas and stories. Harking back to the early days of Radio; informational, fiction, documentary, journalistic and expressive experimental 'stories' are all being reborn and embraced by the modern audience through podcasting.

The objective of this course is to not only explore the nature of storytelling through sound, but through practical hands-on experience acquiring the technical skill sets necessary to professionally create vibrant and intriguing soundscapes for these stories to live in. Recording techniques, post-editing skills and mixing/re-recording practices will be discussed and applied through hands-on exercises

The course will examine historical uses of sound in radio, the predecessor of the podcast world, updating those techniques to our modern technological tools and venues. Binaural and spatial manipulation of sound and perception when headphones are the venue of delivery will be explored and put to use. The introduction of 'visual' podcasts will be discussed and explored as well.

The goal is to move the author, storyteller, away from the 'word' centric world of the page, to the subtleties and importance of how and where those words are delivered to the audience. Associative and abstract thinking skills necessary for creative sound design will be examined and explored through exercises.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

The ability to understand the fundamental uses of sound in storytelling and the basic use of the technologies used in executing the sound design. Students will have experienced and understood the processes involved in sound design for the modern experience.

PREREQUISITES: None

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE PROFICIENCY: Basic knowledge of Pro Tools.

COURSE NOTES:

Students should expect occasional one-on-one work review outside of designated class times. Students are expected to adhere to and maintain an awareness of assignment due dates and complete and upload those in a timely manner to facilitate class review of work. (Uploading or delivering to SA 8 hours before the start of class).

GOOGLE DRIVE:

Course Materials will be available on a class Google Drive and Assignments will be uploaded to the same drive in designated folders created and managed by your SA. Handouts and other course reading materials will be made available on Google Drive. Any student having difficulties with uploading/downloading materials or assignments should contact the SA so the issue can be resolved in a timely manner.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Our course will be organized around these fundamental categories of Sound.

- RECORDING: Production Sound, Field Recordings, Backgrounds/Ambiences, Sound Effects, Foley, Voiceover / Automated Dialogue Replacement (ADR)

- EDITING: Production Dialogue, Sound Effects (incl. foley, ambience, sound effects) Voiceover / Automated Dialogue Replacement (ADR), Music

- MIXING / RE-RECORDING: Mixing with control surfaces and mixing with a mouse, Headphones vs. Speakers

- AESTHETICS: Associative thought, Abstraction, Creativity, Experimentation, Style/Tone

SUGGESTED/SUPPLEMENTARY READING MATERIALS:

SOUND DESIGN: THE EXPRESSIVE POWER OF MUSIC, VOICE, AND SOUND EFFECTS IN CINEMA, by David Sonnenschien (2001) Michael Wiese Productions

DESIGNING SOUND, by Andy Farnell (2010) MIT Press

FILM SOUND: THEORY AND PRACTICE, (1985) Weis & Bolton

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON MUSIC, by Daniel Levitin (2007) Plume

THE LOCATION SOUND BIBLE, by Ric Viers (2012) Michael Wiese Productions

PRACTICAL RECORDING TECHNIQUES, by Bartlett & Bartlett, Focal Press

ON LOCATION RECORDING TECHNIQUES, by Bartlett & Bartlett, Focal Press

COMPLETE GUIDE TO FILM SCORING, by Richard Davis (1999) Berklee Press

MODERN RECORDING TECHNIQUES, by David Huber & Robert Runstein (1995) Focal Press THE AUDIO DICTIONARY, by Glenn White, University of Washington Press

THE VOICE IN CINEMA, by Michel Chion (1999) Columbia University Press

DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments will be published and are to be uploaded to the Class Google Drive.

Students are expected to email both the Instructor and SA with preferred email addresses so as to gain access to the Drive. Assignments are designed to build upon each other and are expected to be completed by the due dates. Any questions or concerns around the assignments need to be addressed immediately by students when encountered so as to mitigate any delays in ability to complete the work in a timely manner. Creative assignments will be graded individually against the individual student's progress and evolution itself. Non-creative assignments will be graded against the work of the class.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and punctuality are very important and are incorporated into your grade.

In this class, 3 late arrivals will constitute an Absence. "Late" means late. If you arrive after scheduled class start time, 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.

GRADING POLICY

The following is USC's official policy on Attendance and Grading:

Two absences will result in a drop of your Grade by a FULL letter grade (from A- to B-, for example). A third absence will result in a drop of your Grade by one FULL letter grade (B- to C-). Each subsequent absence will result in a drop of your Grade by a FULL letter grade (C- to D-).

University policies regarding Academic Integrity will be strictly enforced in this class. 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. The same applies to presenting work as your own when it is that of others.

Class Participation (20%) 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 their opinion, as long as it is an honest opinion, no matter how stupid you may think it is.

Weekly Homework (20%) *TBD on a week-to week basis*

In-Class Lab Exercises (20%) *TBD on a week-to week basis*

Final Projects (35%) Create an Episode of a Podcast (minimum of 15 minutes). This can be a recreation of an existing podcast or an entirely original podcast creation. You will need to use ambience, sound effects, foley, dialogue and music as part of your final submission. *More info on this as the course progresses.*

Bonus Credit: Outside sound work maximum of 10% (subject to pre-approval).

COURSE WORKLOAD:

Assume lab exercises each week covering materials from lectures and assignments. All exercises will be cumulative in nature. Class assignments will necessitate outside lab time on a weekly basis, additional time will be required for check out prior to equipment use. Outside sound work is encouraged and will be facilitated wherever possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTORY CONCEPTS   *Monday, January 9th*

Exploring our Sound backgrounds. Course/syllabus overview. Discussion of the four fundamental categories of sound in storytelling and why they are used as an organizational tool and how they interact with one another.

Homework #1: Listen for Story, Listen for Sound

WEEK 2: NO CLASS (MARTIN LUTHER KING JR HOLIDAY)   *Monday, January 16th*

WEEK 3: PODCAST OVERVIEW   *Monday, January 23rd*

Specifics to the medium, Passive vs. Active listening, Story/Character/Voice, Structure, Consistency, Who is your audience? What is your end goal? Ten Word Description exercise.

WEEK 4: RECORDING IN THE FIELD   *Monday, January 30th*

Exploration of the physics of sound, its structure and interaction with the environment. Overview and setup of microphones and recording gear. Recording voice vs. sound effects in uncontrolled indoor and outdoor scenarios.

WEEK 5: RECORDING IN THE STUDIO *Monday, February 6th*

Exploration of recording in the studio. Foley techniques explored. Voiceover recording. Working with a script.

WEEK 5: SOUND EDITING IN PRO TOOLS *Monday, February 6th*

Fundamentals of editing sound. How to use a basic Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), the fundamentals of Pro Tools. Editing Production Sound vs re-enforcing it. Exerting control over the material to enhance the experience.

WEEK 6: SOUND PROCESSING & MANIPULATION *Monday, February 13th*

When, how and why to process sound. Introduction to placing sound into a world, whether pre-existing or created. Equalization of sound. Reverberation and how to use it effectively. The roots of processing, slowing, speeding and reversing existing sounds to create new sounds.

WEEK 7: NO CLASS (PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY) *Monday, February 20th*

WEEK 8: WORKING WITH MUSIC *Monday, February 27th*

Discussion around use of music. Original score vs. pre-existing songs. Licensing issues. Theme songs. Editing and Mixing considerations.

WEEK 9: PRE-MIXING SOUNDS *Monday, March 6th*

Discussion and demonstration of the interweaving of stories, both major and minor, both character and scene driven as well as the overarching main story. How through the manipulation of the energy of sound, the story is told.

WEEK 10: NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK) *Monday, March 13th*

WEEK 11: MIXING AKA RE-RECORDING *Monday, March 20th*

The difference between recording and re-recording. The importance of pre-mixes to the mixing process. The fundamentals of routing and automation, the two basic realms of mixing sounds. The importance of reverse engineering in the mix process.

WEEK 12: COLLABORATION   *Monday, March 27th*

The nature and importance of collaboratively working towards a common goal. How to maneuver successfully through the politics of communication. The importance of understanding and interacting with varying perspectives on the same 'reality.'

WEEK 13: WORKING WITH VISUALS   *Monday, April 3rd*

How does sound interact with the visual image? Motion as sounds best friend, sound is motion by definition, visualized motion opens the path to unconscious hearing.

WEEK 14: ROUGH DRAFT PRESENTATIONS   *Monday, April 10th*

WEEK 15: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS   *Monday, April 17th*

WEEK 16: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS   *Monday, April 24th*

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" https://policy.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SCampus-Part-B.pdf.

Safety: All students are expected to abide by USC School of Cinematic Arts Safety Guidelines. Violations of any of the safety guidelines may result in disciplinary action ranging from confiscation of footage to expulsion from the University.

Stressful Times: These are stressful times in our country, and Graduate School in and of itself is stressful. I encourage you to take care of yourself and your fellow students. USC provides opportunities for Mindful Meditation and Mental health counseling is available at the Engemann Student Health Center, 1031 W. 34th Street, 213-740-9355.

Support Systems: Counseling and Mental Health (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call. Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator: (213) 821-4710. Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255 - 24/7 on call. Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP): (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call. Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

[Office of Equity and Diversity (OED):](#) (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298. Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Disability Services and Programs](#) - (213) 740-0776. Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

[USC Campus Support & Intervention](#) - (213) 821-4710 - Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity at USC](#) - (213) 740-2101 - Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call. Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC). A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.