



**THTR 236 Stage Sound**  
**Fall 2024—T, Th—2:00 to 3:20**  
**Location:** MCC 110

**Instructor:** Noel Nichols  
**Office:** MCC 110 or JEF 206A  
**Office Hours:** Friday 2p-4:00p  
**Final Exam:** Dec. 12 2-4pm MCC 110  
**Contact Info:** Noel Nichols: noel.nichols@usc.edu;

### **Course Description**

Students will learn basic audio engineering science, how sound is measured, basic transducers and signal flow. Course will cover the operation of recording and playback equipment used in theatrical sound design and mixing.

### **Overview**

The course will cover sound as acoustic energy and electrical waveform, students will gain a basic comprehension of the techniques used by theatre sound designers and engineers. Assignments will offer hands on work with technology used to reproduce recorded material and amplify live sound in theatrical productions.

### **Learning Objectives**

After this course, the student should be able to do the following:

1. ***Understand how acoustical and electrical audio signal are measured.***
2. ***Follow a signal path through a sound playback or reinforcement system.***
3. ***Operate a digital playback system for a theatrical production.***
4. ***Record and edit sound effects and voice over.***

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 130/131

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

**TEXT:** The Yamaha Sound Reinforcement Handbook  
Gary Davis and Ralph Jones

**MATERIALS:** students are required to bring a USB memory stick with at least 8GB of memory space to all class meetings!! Students will also need a pencil or pen and paper at each class meeting for note taking.

### **Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments**

**FOR SDA Assignments:** Grades will be assigned according to the above criteria. Students can check their progress at any time by scheduling an appointment with the instructors during office hours.

**Grading Scale for SDA:** **A** indicates work of excellent quality; **B** of good quality; **C** of average quality; **D** of below average quality; and **F** indicates inadequate work.

### **Grading Breakdown:**

Grading will be based on projects assigned in class. All projects will be completed on SDA design lab sound workstations unless otherwise noted at the time of the assignment. Grading is based on a 100 point scale. You will be given a set of assignments that offer MORE than 100 total points. All assignments must be turned in to receive an A or A- in the class. Assignment due dates will be given in class. If you miss the class in which an assignment is given, it is YOUR responsibility to get the assignment details from another student in the class. Absences from class will not alter the due date of material.

Projects will be assigned from the list below, **or alternate projects may be assigned in class at the instructor's discretion.**

### **Assignment List with Point Values (50 Points Total) :**

1. Cue Sheet - 5
2. Pro Tools Ambient Soundscape - 10
3. Paperwork Project -10
4. Protools Training - 10
5. Qlab Final Project - 15

### **Lab Work Requirement (15 Points):**

In addition to the assignments above, students are required to complete **6 hours of audio lab work under the direction of the SDA Sound Supervisor or your instructor. 4 hours must be complete before Week 7; the final 2 hours must be complete before week 13. Lab work will constitute an additional 15 points of your final grade. You will need to create a log of your lab times, and get a signature from the Sound Supervisor when you work lab hours. Your signed lab cards should be scanned and uploaded to your Google Folder by the end of the week they are due.**

### **Class Participation (15 Points):**

Awarded for class attendance. See section regarding Attendance for more information about this policy.

### **Lecture Journal Requirement (30 Points):**

In addition to the assignments above, students are required to complete a journal of lecture notes from all in class lectures and presentations. This should be a typed and edited version of your handwritten notes; it must be legible and easy to follow, and it must be submitted electronically as a PDF File. In addition, you should write a summary and analysis of each reading assignment, which should be included with your journal. (Note - Your class notes should NOT be a copy of the lecture slides from class. Lecture slides are discussion topics only – your notes should include the pertinent information you acquired from each discussion topic.) There will be three submission dates:

**Submission 1 – No later than 5pm Friday at the end of Week 5**

**Submission 2 – No later than 5pm Friday at the end of Week 10**

**Submission 3 – No later than 5pm Friday at the end of Week 15**

### **Assignment Submission Policy**

**The due dates for all assignments will be given in class. Failure to complete an assignment by the due date will result in lowered grading for that work.**

*The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING as published elsewhere in this handbook are:*

- *Each course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student's progress in the course.*
- *Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines. Studio Courses must delineate how participation will be graded (in class exercises, scene study, etc.)*
- *There shall be no unexcused absences.*
- *No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercised shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.*

## Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week 1	Introduction to course - Sound Design in Theatre What is sound? - Basics of Sound and Sound Measurement <b>READING: SECTION 1:WHAT IS A SOUND SYSTEM</b> <b>SECTION 2:FREQUENCY RESPONSE</b> <b>SECTION 3:THE DECIBEL, SOUND LEVEL &amp; RELATED ITEMS</b>
Week 2	Field Work Part 1, Bing Theatre Field Work Part 2, MCC Theatre
Week 3	Field Work Part 3, DAB Theatre Sound Effects Design - Process and Approach – SDA Design Criteria
<b>Week 4</b>	Basic Recording Signal Flow & Gain Structure Remote/TBD - Signal Processors Speakers & Amplifiers <b>READING: SECTION 14:SIGNAL PROCESSING EQUIPMENT</b> <b>READING: SECTION 13:LOUDSPEAKERS</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	Remote/TBD - Microphones & Input Transducers <b>READING: SECTION 10:MICROPHONES</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	Phil - The Mixing Console – Analog & Digital <b>READING:SECTION 11:PREAMPLIFIERS, SMALL MIXERS &amp; MIXING CONSOLES</b>
Week 7	<b>Recording and Editing Sound Effects and Music – ProTools</b>
Week 8	Multi-track Recording – History and Contemporary
Week 9	Design Preparation – Paperwork Paperwork Lab – Simple Line Drawing, Simple Speaker Plot
Week 10	Sound Effects Playback – SFX, Cue Lab and Others
Week 11	Sound Reinforcement Basics <b>READING: SECTION 6: SOUND INDOORS</b>
Week 12	Musical Sound Design - Process and Approach Sound System Configuration
Week 13	Musical Theatre Microphone Technique: Radio Mics Musical Theatre Microphone Technique: Orchestra Mics <b>READING:SECTION 17:THE ELECTRONICS</b>
Week 14	Musical Theatre Monitoring and Signal Processing Thanksgiving Break (No class Th)
Week 15	Final Project Review and Discussion

### **Important Dates:**

1. **9-8:** Last day to add or to drop this class without a grade of “W” or to select the “P/NP” option.
2. **11-10:** Last day to withdraw with a grade of “W”

### **Read the Fine Print**

1. The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.
2. It is the responsibility of each student to know and follow all the written guidance given by the instructor in this syllabus.

### **Additional Policies**

**ATTENDANCE and Participation:** As design is a primarily experiential process, attendance and participation in class and in person is mandatory.

Excused Absences - An excused absence is due to serious illness, grave emergency or significant acting work with appropriate SDA leave of absence.

Unexcused Absences - Any absence not falling under the above. If you need to miss class for any other reason, you must inform the instructor as soon as possible. Unexcused absences will impact your participation points, and may further impact your ability to turn in assignments on time.

Please inform the instructor directly of any absence. You are responsible for all work missed. An extended absence, even if excused, could seriously affect your work and grade in class. Please consult with instructor if such a situation arises.

**TARDIES:** Please respect the time of your peers and be prepared to begin working with us promptly and on time. If you have any issue joining class on time, notify your instructor as soon as possible. Repeated tardiness will be considered an unexcused absence.

### **Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment**

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

*SCampus Section 11.12(B) - Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

### **SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities\* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

\*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.



## Statement on 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” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

### Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 814-4618 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

### USC Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

### COVID-19 - Health and Participation in Class

We will refer to the evolving University policy regarding COVID-19 throughout the semester. Please refer to <https://coronavirus.usc.edu/> for the most up to date guidelines regarding testing, masking, and all other COVID safety policies. If your attendance will be impacted by COVID according to these requirements, please notify me so that we can make arrangements as needed.

### SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

\*\*\*

## Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*  
[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

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 Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

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*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

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.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776*  
<https://osas.usc.edu>

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 and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*  
[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

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*  
[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

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*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

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) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)