MUSI E-190r: Technomusicology

Spring 2015
Thursdays 5:30-7:30pm
Room: 53 Church Street L01
Course reference number: 24318

Instructor: Wayne Marshall
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INTRODUCTION

This course uses hands-on media production to examine the interplay between music and technology. Using audio and video production software, we will explore new techniques for telling stories about music and media by composing a series of etudes, or studies in particular media forms.

Readings, discussions, and projects focus on significant forms and their histories, including soundscapes, mashups, montages, DJ mixes, radio sound design, and documentary video. Students will develop a fluency in the history of sound studies while cultivating competencies in audio and video editing, sampling and arranging, mixing and remixing, and, in framing their projects, descriptive and poetic forms of writing.

Class sessions comprise a mix between discussions of relevant readings and audio/video works, software demonstrations, and in-lab, project-centered work. All readings and listening/viewing selections will be available via the course website.

ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING

1) Class participation   25%
2)   tudes (6 in all)   60%
3) Final Project   15%

Attendance and realtime, in-class feedback are crucial to this class being a success for all. As a project-oriented class, we will spend almost half of our class time presenting and workshopping our projects together. Offering online and realtime comments to classmates is thus an essential duty of the course. Class participation will take the form of in-class and online interactions with fellow students, especially the collective workshopping of project ideas, in-process and finished █des, and occasionally other asynchronous discussions.

Doing the readings in advance of class will enhance our discussions. Students will be required to post a response to the internal class-blog prior to the first meeting of each of the 7 units of the course. (That is, during the introductory/theoretical week of each unit; not the practical, hands-on, "Making" week.) Students will post their draft █des for each unit during the following week, and classmates will offer constructive criticism before class.

  tudes should be between 2-5 minutes and drafts are due, along with a brief prose description, by midnight on Sunday of the week we are discussing them. Final submissions are due the following Sunday by midnight.   tudes will be graded according to a rubric that places emphasis on both the concept and the execution of the projects. Each █de will be assessed according to a rubric outlining a set of criteria, for example:
        1) Thoughtfulness in selection of subject, site, and/or materials
        2) Demonstrated research / attention to history and context
        3) Pertinence to class concepts / situatedness in relation to other works
        4) Formal execution
        5) Demonstrated effort

SCHEDULE

Week 1 /
January 29

Introduction to Technomusicology & Sound Studies

Sterne, Jonathan. "Hello!" In *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, 1-31. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Suisman, David. "The Musical Soundscape of Modernity." In *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music*, 240-72. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the class-blog before Wednesday at midnight; also, get familiar with Ableton Live: work through built-in tutorials, browse how-to's via YouTube, play around, etc.

Week 2 /
February 5

UNIT 1: Soundscapes: Theories & Approaches

Schafer, R. Murray. "The Music of the Environment." In *Audio Culture*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, 29-39. New York and London: Continuum, 2004.

Gould, Glenn. "The Prospects of Recording." In *Audio Culture*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, 115-26. New York and London: Continuum, 2004.

Feld, Steven. "A Rainforest Acoustemology." In *The Audio Culture Reader*, ed. Michael Bull and Les Back, 223-240. Oxford and New York: Berg 2003.

_____. *Rainforest Soundwalks* (liner notes). EarthEar 1062. 2001.

Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the class-blog before Wednesday, Feb 4, at midnight.

Week 3 /
February 12

UNIT 1: Making Soundscapes

tude #1: Compose a soundscape collage from your own local recordings. Include brief description of subject, methods, and poetics. (draft due: Sunday, Feb 8 by midnight; final submission due: Sunday, Feb 15 by midnight)

Week 4 /
February 19

UNIT 2: Histories & Aesthetics of Radio

Wu, Tim. "Radio Dreams." In *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires*, 33-44. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. [other chapter?]

Marshall, Wayne. "Love That Muddy Ether: Pirate Multiculturalism and Boston's Secret Soundscape." *Cluster*

Mag. December 2011.
<http://theclustermag.com/blog/2011/12/love-that-muddy-ether-pirate-multi-culturalism-and-bostons-secret-soundscape/>

Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the class-blog before Wednesday, Feb 18, at midnight.

**Week 5 /
February 26**

UNIT 2: Making Radio Montages

tude #2: Compose a radio collage, focusing on a particular dimension/station/time of the Boston/Cambridge airwaves. Include brief description of subject and methods. (draft due: Sunday, Feb 22 by midnight; final submission due: Sunday, March 1 by midnight)

**Week 6 /
March 5**

UNIT 3: Mashup Poetics & the Ethics/Aesthetics of Sampling

Katz, Mark. "Listening in Cyberspace." In *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, 158-87. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Schloss, Joseph G. "Elements of Style: Aesthetics of Hip-hop Composition." In *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-Based Hip-hop*, 135-168. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.

Marshall, Wayne. "Mashup Poetics as Pedagogical Practice." In *Pop-Culture Pedagogy in the Music Classroom Teaching Tools from American Idol to YouTube*, ed. Nicole Biamonte, 307-15. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010.

McGranahan, Liam. "'It Goes Beyond Having a Good Beat and I Can Dance to It': Mashup Aesthetics and Creative Process." In *Mashnography: Creativity, Consumption, and Copyright in the Mashup Community*, 35-70. Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 2010.

Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the class-blog before Wednesday, March 4, at midnight.

**Week 7 /
March 12**

UNIT 3: Making Mashups

tude #3: Make a mashup using 2 (or more) related recordings. Include notes discussing thematic and/or musical linkages (i.e., poetics). (draft due: Sunday, March 8 by midnight; final submission due: Sunday, March 15 by midnight)

**Week 8 /
March 19**

Spring Break

**Week 9 /
March 26**

UNIT 4: Video Montage in the Age of YouTube

Gillespie, Tarleton. "The Politics of 'Platforms.'" *New Media &*

Society 12:3 (May 2010): 347-364.

Tagg, Philip. "The Milksap Montage"
        <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzYqBcUipok>,
        "Harvest Song from Bulgaria"
        <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34ZHJj0lW0I>,

Marshall, Wayne. "The Montage Is the Method"
        <http://wayneandwax.com/?p=6952>
        "Megamontage Is the Method"
        <http://wayneandwax.com/?p=7884>
        "Gasodoble"
        <http://wayneandwax.com/?p=5019>,
        "Bump Con Choque"
        <http://theclustermag.com/blog/2011/06/wayne-marshall-
        bump-con-choque/>.

Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the
        class-blog before Wednesday, March 25, at midnight.

**Week 10 /
April 2**

UNIT 4: **Making Montages**

   tude #4: Create a video montage that illustrates a particular story
        of musical circulation and/or relationship. (draft due: Sunday,
        March 29 by midnight; final submission due: Sunday, April
        5 by midnight)

**Week 11 /
April 9**

UNIT 5: **DJ-style Mixing & Mix as Form**

Katz, Mark. "Mix and Scratch—The Turntable Becomes a
        Musical Instrument: 1975-1978." In *Groove Music: The
        Art and Culture of the Hip-hop DJ*, 43-69. Oxford and New
        York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Fikentscher, Kai. " 'There' s Not a Problem I Can' t Fix,
        'Cause I Can Do It in the Mix' : On the Performative
        Technology of 12-Inch Vinyl." In *Music and
        Technoculture*, ed. Ren█Lysloff and Leslie C. Gay, 290-315.
        Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the
        class-blog before Wednesday, April 8, at midnight.

**Week 12 /
April 16**

UNIT 5: **Making Mini-Mega-Mixes**

   tude #5: Produce a brief DJ-style mix guided by some logic of
        musical, cultural, and/or historical connection between the
        recordings involved. Make efforts to use blends, cuts, and
        other edits strategically. Include notes explaining aesthetic
        choices and narrative (i.e., poetics). (draft due: Sunday, April
        12 by midnight; final submission due: Sunday, April 19 by
        midnight)

Week 13 /
April 23
	UNIT 6: Radio/Podcast-style Sound Design
	
	Mitchell, Jonathan. "Using Music." *Transom.*
	     \<http://transom.org/?p=40865\>
	
	Mitchell, Jonathan. "Sound Design from Hell." *Third Coast*
	     Library. \<http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org/library/37-sound-
	     design-from-hell\>
	
	Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the readings to the
	     class-blog before Wednesday, April 22, at midnight.

Week 14 /
April 30
	UNIT 6: Making Podcasts
	
	Etude #6: Using the contemporary techniques of radio/podcast
	     sound design, create a brief, sound-designed audio piece. If no
	     other subject beckons, you may put together a brief tour of
	     one of your ▮des from the semester, highlighting whichever
	     aspects you choose and, when possible, making linkages to
	     the readings and themes we've discussed. (draft due: Sunday,
	     April 26 by midnight; final submission due: Sunday, May 3
	     by midnight)

Week 15 /
May 7
	UNIT 7: Sound-designed Video Documentary
	
	Williams, Brynmore. "Bees In The Key Of A."
	     \<https://vimeo.com/4132599\>
	
	Taub, Adam. "Rafael Montilla, Bachata T▮nico de Sonido."
	     \<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssMBRODq9ok\>
	
	Lowe, Tony, et al. "Below the Brain Teasah."
	     \<https://vimeo.com/20348629\>
	
	Assignment: Post a response to one or more of the videos to the
	     class-blog before Wednesday, May 6, at midnight.

Week 16 /
May 14
	UNIT 7: Making a Sound-Designed Video Documentary
	
	Final Project: Drawing on the contemporary techniques of
	     radio/podcast sound design while extending them into the
	     video realm, create a brief, sound-designed video piece that
	     focuses on some particular story in sonic/music culture. (draft
	     due: Sunday, May 10 by midnight; final submission due:
	     Sunday, May 17 by midnight)

Final Projects Due:	**Sunday, May 17, midnight**