**RTD 361 Fall 2015**

**Sound Mix in Popular Culture**

Class Times: Tuesdays, 12PM-12:50 PM, COM 1016 - Lecture
Wednesdays, 1PM-2:50PM, COM 1016 - Lab

Professor: Dr. Phylis Johnson, COM 10150F
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10AM-12PM; 1PM-2PM (COM1050F)
Thursdays 11AM-2PM (COM1050F)
Other days/times by appt.

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Lab/Co-Instructor: Michael Maxwell, COM 0012C
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1PM-3PM; Wednesday 11AM-1PM
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**FALL SEMESTER 2015**

- Semester Classes Begin: Monday, August 24
- Labor Day Holiday: Monday, September 7
- Fall Break: Saturday, October 10, 12:00 Noon through Tuesday, October 13
- Veterans Day Holiday: Wednesday, November 11
- Thanksgiving Vacation: Wednesday, November 25 through Sunday, November 29
- Final Examinations: Monday, December 14 through Friday, December 18
- Commencement: Saturday, December 19, 2015

**Course Description** (3 credits, undergraduate elective): Fundamental designs and applications of sound in a digital environment including mash-up, storytelling, performance, field recording, game/virtual word, and soundscapes.

**Objectives:** To introduce students to the basics of digital audio production, and then apply those principles into various projects; To learn and apply basic editing and mixing techniques in different audio applications; To explore digital aesthetics, archiving, and sound manipulation techniques in various settings; To effectively develop “aural” storytelling skills and work collaboratively in a digital environment; to experience applications to virtual worlds and games. Students will be tested on readings/listenings in a 'midterm sound essay'. Practical applications are primarily focused on three major MIX projects (one being the midterm project) with lab assignments in-between progressively developing skill levels in production quality, content development and exhibition. Ethics and copyright regulation discussed.

**Mandatory Recording Equipment:** Headphones (1/4” adapter), AA Batteries, Storage Drive.
All projects and related content must be recorded on professional digital recorders and ProTools, or equivalent.

**Reading Materials:**  One required book.  Other readings provided via LINKS and PDFs when relevant.

http://soundunbound.com/

Links to text and media sources are included in the weekly course outline; other links and sources, to be determined.  Reference links:  [http://remixtheory.net/](http://remixtheory.net/)  
Open Source Sites (i.e. Internet Archive, Jamendo, Pond7)

**Course Outline (Subject to Revision)**

**Section 1: Introduction**

**Week 1-2 (8/25, 8/26; 9/1, 9/2): What is Mix Culture?  [CORE LINKS]**

Steinski Gives a Sampling History Lesson  

Lecture – *Sonic Transdifference* (PDF available)

Christoph Cox - *From Music to Sound: Being as Time in the Sonic Arts*  

The Inventors - Tesla, Russolo, Varesse, Cowell, Schaefer, etc.  

Modern Culture Mash-Ups  
[http://remixtheory.net/?p=258](http://remixtheory.net/?p=258)

Beatbox:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0waYtV3riA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0waYtV3riA)


Byron Wallen:  History of Remix  

B. Wallen site:  [http://www.byronwallen.co.uk/](http://www.byronwallen.co.uk/)

Lab (Wednesdays) Bring Storage, Headsets, all your materials to work!

Introduction to MCMA Server, Open Source Sites, MCMA Server/Online Servers

**Week 3-4 (9/8, 9/9; 9/15, 9/16): Sound Culture is Material Culture**

Case of The Charleston & *Consider Daft Punk*

Research on Remix and Cultural Analytics - - The Charleston and Daft Punk,  
[http://remixtheory.net/?p=460#more-460](http://remixtheory.net/?p=460#more-460)

Remixes,  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9uTqeV7drk&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9uTqeV7drk&feature=related)

Daft Punk -  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QRqppvXTgU&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QRqppvXTgU&feature=related)

**Ted Talk (Kirby Ferguson)**

http://everythingisaremix.info/blog/everything-is-a-remix-the-ted-talk

Everything is a Remix (Pts 1-4)  http://remixtheory.net/?p=480 - https://vimeo.com/14912890

Video:  Artistic Expressions & Copyright,

Due:  1 page proposal/treatment for project. Typed, DS, Roman 12pt Font (include title, project summary, and how you plan to achieve it, be specific]

Lab!  Work on Project 1.

**PROJECT ONE – Meaningful Sonic Mash Up**** [NOT GRADED, REQUIRED]

A 1 minute, individual edited project.  Collaborative Recording is permitted (file sharing with classmates).  Creative “mixed audio” finds from Web or elsewhere.  Sound solo, or Sound/Video.  The sound is the critical element in this project.  Post on Server.  List all EVENTS [i.e., (1) Song.  J. Buffet, Margaritaville, 1985.  'Wasting away again in', 3 seconds, CD audio.] [(2) Speech.  H. Clinton, CNN interview, 'Student loans', Sept. 2015, 6 seconds, YouTube video.]  Include 50 word abstract (summary).  Graded on production quality, continuity (transitions, editing), and content (creativity/originality and coherence/significance of message).  Due/Listen: 9/16

**Section Two:  Capturing and Remixing in the Field**

**Week 5-6 (9/22, 9/23; 9/29, 9/30):  Field Recording/Remixing in the Sound Environment**

Anthropology of Sound - http://www.anthropologyofsound.info/

(lecture note, Hildegard Westerkamp, 'Into India')

John Cage, Francisco Lopez & Steve Reich in Remix artists

Cage's Child of Tree:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOtfyYDeFRk

Reich's City Life:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYca8EJlz0g

Lopez's Le Selva:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwrrTAX07Ti

Lopez's site:  http://www.franciscolopez.net/

World Soundscape Project (R. Murray Schafer) - http://www.sfu.ca/~truax/wsp.html

Marshall McLuhan – Visual and Acoustic Space


Video - YouTube:  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1ZLn-GijH0

Lab!  Work on Project 2.

**PROJECT TWO – Field Mix - Urban or Nature ****GRADED

Field Mix/Remix:  Sound & Environment  (3 minutes).  Record environment sounds, and create a mix.  Layering of sound and remix is important to this project.  Originality is the focus, although sampling of other materials can supplement your piece.  Credit all sources as in the last project, listing all events; abstract (50 words).  Graded on production quality, continuity (transitions, editing), content (originality and coherence/significance of message).  Post to Server.  Visual Option.  Due/Listen:  9/30
Section Three: Midterm Sound Essay: Script/Production/Presentation
Research any topic, and present it in sound. 'Take A Stand'.
Week 7-9 (10/6, 10/7; 10/13, 10/14; 10/20, 10/21): Paul Miller's Text, as remix.

****PROJECT THREE – Midterm Sound Essay
Take a Stand...Sound Out!
Audio Essay (2-3 minutes) – Using the broad theme of Take A Stand, conceptualize your audio as a script; provide a treatment; establish a main premise, note your research (text, sound); use sound to defend your case, and post it to sound cloud. Be fair and balanced. Credit all sources; abstracts (100 words). Graded on production quality, continuity (transitions, editing), and content (originality and coherence/significance of message/and research). Post to Server. Video Option.
Justification: A justification statement of 500 words, with mandatory references (APA/comparable style) additional to the word count. Do this by - incorporating 1-2 text readings (as well as any in-class listenings/videos that inspired your style/presentation). Note outside articles/videos as well that heavily influenced your work. List all sources used within the production. You don't have to use your voice, or a formal narrative, but position your case via sound (i.e., actualities, music, stories, etc.). You may present this as a live (audio enhanced) spoken work piece; yet all other rules apply. All ideas must be approved.
Justification Due: 10/14;
Production Due/Listen: 10/21 Production.

Section Four: Club Mix and The Politics of Sound
Week 10 (10/27, 10/28): Video Remixes
The Future of the Internet: http://www.daveyd.com/articlecomments.html
Video - Remix, Hip Hop: (2011) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hLehAePloQ
Video - Remix, Pop: (2014) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45GGU0s5zZA
Video - Tom Foolery - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJtpkMz8nL8&feature=related
Lab! Work on Final Project.

Week 11 (10/11-11/11): Final Project Discussion
Textbook critiques due 10/6; 11/10.

Week 12 (11/17, 11/18): Randomness and Mobility
Mobile Aesthetics of Remix - http://remixtheory.net/?p=607
Lab! Work on Final Project.

Vague Terrain (Dub History – Dub, B Sides): http://vagogueterrain.net/journal10/eduardo-navas/01
The Dub Revolution: [http://remixtheory.net/?p=51](http://remixtheory.net/?p=51)
Remix Defined: [http://remixtheory.net/?page_id=3](http://remixtheory.net/?page_id=3)
Birth of the Loop: [http://www.loopersdelight.com/loop.html](http://www.loopersdelight.com/loop.html)

Lab!  Closed 11/25, Thanksgiving.

**Week 14 (12/1, 12/2) Wrap up.**
Lab!  Work on Final Project both days.

****PROJECT FOUR – YOU PROPOSE THE MIX ****
Open proposal based on one of earlier projects or related idea, or something new, must be approved by instructor.  Must establish relevance to course objectives. Credit all sources. Graded on production quality, continuity (transitions, editing), and content (originality and coherence/significance of message and research).  All projects must be approved in advance, requiring students to turn in a 1-2 page typed proposal that describes the project in abstract form (50 words); treatment (1-2 pages). Include sources of content, significance and originality of the project.  Post to Server.  **Due 12/9 with PAPERWORK!**

**Week 15 (12/8, 12/9): Final Projects Due.**

**Week 16 (12/15) Critique/Presentation.**

Assignments: Each project is discussed within the syllabus. All production projects require original title (with your name and project type and number), 50 word abstract (summary), and source list.  All projects must be approved by instructor(s). Each project may have other requirements.

**CUMULATIVE POINTS (1000 TOTAL)**

**Mix Project 1:** (100 points) Explore open archives and mix news, music, and various sounds together; continuity and message important.  Post to Server.  Not Graded.

**Mix Project 2:** (200 points) Record field audio – interviews, field sounds, and misc. sound with music to create a mix/remix composition.  Post to Server.

**Mix Project 3:** Midterm Sound Essay: (200 points) **Take a Stand** - Create a sound narrative to defend your case.  Script & Production.  Post to Server.

**Mix Project 4:** Final Project: (300 points) Open proposal based on one of earlier projects or related idea, or something NEW. Requires approval by instructor.  Must establish relevance to course objectives.  Justification, Treatment and Production. Post to Server.

**Quizzes:** (50 points) Based on readings, listenings & production skills  Random.

**Chapter Critiques:** (150 points) Textbook assignments, see Reading List.

**DEDUCTIVE POINTS**

**Final: Showcase/Critique:** (-100 points) Critique of Remix Projects.  REQUIRED.

**Attendance:** (- 25 points lecture; -50 points lab: for unexcused absences) 2 free days.
Excused absences at the discretion of professor and in adherence to university policy.

**Other Policies:** 

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course with a D. 

Format and Style Counts! All projects must be clearly and professionally labeled. All scripts must be typed and appropriately formatted. Content matters: All projects must be free of obscene & indecent language/images and racial/ethnic/gender slurs. Ask instructor regarding questionable content BEFORE you turn in the assignment.

Late Grades: 30-50% percent off. Typically Late grades start at C-. No late projects accepted 7 days after the assignment unless approved by the instructor. Final Projects cannot be accepted after the due date. Exceptions require instructor approval. Please let me know early on if you anticipate conflicts, or as soon as possible in order to avoid major issues that will impact your completion of this course with a passing grade.

**Letter Grade – Point Range Equivalent**

A = 900-100; B = 800-899; C = 700-799; D = 600-699; F = Below 600