

SOUND STUDIES: LISTENING & CREATING BETWEEN THE MATERIAL, MEDIUM AND METAPHOR

2 credits, Autumn Semester 2018, Friday 9 a.m.

Course Code: UWC 5325

This co-taught university wide course (UCW) is open to students of all departments. It is also cross-listed as an elective course by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the School of Public Policy. It is open to MA and PhD students for both grade and audit and is part of the Intellectual Themes Initiative project [Sound Relations: Transgressions, Disruptions, Transformations](#). This class's credits can be used towards the 'Visual Theory and Practice Certificate'.

Overview

Sound studies describes the various ways in we can know the world through sound, understand sonic phenomena or practices, and explore how sound extends the contours of academic knowledge production. Highly interdisciplinary and often undertaken in cooperation with those outside academia, from musicians to professionals, the field of sound studies is increasingly diverse, daring and exciting.

This co-taught course will explore the cultural, social, philosophical, political and material dimensions of sound and listening. We will explore questions such as: how do race and ethnicity intersect with listening? is our pristine natural sonic environment increasingly ruined by industrialisation and urbanisation? how do states seek to regulate sound and noise? how does podcasting change academic knowledge production? how can we know the world through sound? what's the importance of sound design in documentary film? what does the advancement of literacy do to cultures of orality? how does technology mediate sonic knowledge and musical production?

Taking sonic mediums seriously, the course also includes practical sessions in which students will learn how to create audio materials relating to the topics and theories explored in class.

Structure & Aim

The aim of this course is two-fold: firstly, to interrogate some of the key debates in sound studies, secondly to acquaint students with some of the different skills needed to undertake research through a sonic lens. Touching on some of the most important moments in the development of the field, as well as contemporary debates, 9 of the 12 sessions will be used to help students situate their thinking within a body of scholarship that is seemingly in a constant state of emergence. The remaining 3 sessions will involve practical learning and hands on engagement within and outside the university. It will push students to experiment with different ways of listening and researching.

Learning Goals

Students will:

- develop an understanding of the possibilities sound studies offers for research within and across disciplines
- become acquainted with some of the key debates in the field
- learn how to do field recordings
- learn how to make a podcast
- learn about transducing images into sounds
- experiment with applying sound-derived theoretical and analytical insights

Instructors

Internal

- Ian M. Cook (CookI@spp.ceu.edu)
Research Fellow at the Centre for Media Data and Society
Lead for 5 sessions along with course design & management
Please contact Ian for all questions or concerns regarding the course and the other instructors for questions regarding their sessions.
- Cameran Ashraf (ashrafc@spp.ceu.edu), Assistant Professor at the School of Public Policy, Teaching 'Orality, Literacy and Technology'
- Jeremy Braverman (bravermanj@ceu.edu), Media and Visual Education Specialist & Visiting Professor Department of History. Teaching 'Sound Design for Film'
- Dumitrita Holdis (HoldisD@spp.ceu.edu), Centre for Media, Data and Society. Co-teaching 'Podcasting for Academics'
- Sara Svensson (svenssons@ceu.edu), Research Fellow at the Center for Policy Studies & Visiting Professor at the School of Public Policy
Teaching 'The Policies of Regulating Sound'
- David Weberman (webermanD@ceu.edu), Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy

External

- Judit Emese Konopás (juditemesekonopas@gmail.com), Independent Sound Researcher, Co-teaching 'Soundwalks / Phenomenological Music Listening'
- Zoltán Kovács (zoltandotkovacs@gmail.com)
Interaction Designer, musician – Budapest Metropolitan University & [Elefant](#), Teaching 'Sonification'
- Lucia Udvardyová (ludvardyova@gmail.com), Journalist, Musician, Organizer/curator, DJ – Easterndaze/Baba Vanga/SHAPE, Co-teaching 'Soundwalks / Phenomenological Music Listening'

Outcomes and Assessment

1. Read, listen and come to class with critical questions or comments: The classes will include lectures, but there will also be lots of input from students. You will be required to discuss, debate and interrogate the readings and listenings during the class. Some weeks are a little heavier on readings, but on some weeks there is not much to read at all – it evens out over the semester. Some weeks there are also podcasts, radio shows or videos included – listening is as important as reading, so please treat them as you would a text.

(10 % of final grade)

2. Presentations: You must present once on a **case/sonic phenomena** linked to (at least) one of the readings on the syllabus and the topic of the class. You should not present the text. You should introduce a relevant case/phenomena/idea into the class that enhances and complicates our discussions. **The presenting students should contact the instructor at least three days in advance (i.e. the Tuesday before class)** to discuss the content of the presentation. Please copy in lan to the correspondence even when he is not the instructor. Please note, there may be more than one of you presenting per week and, if so, you must coordinate amongst each other to ensure there is no repetition of cases. You **can** present on a similar topic to your final assignment. Some weeks there will be no presentations.

(25% of final grade – students will be graded on how well their case enhances to the topic(s) of the week, the clarity of their presentation and originality of application or argument)

3. Midterm research plan: By the end of Week 7 you need to have decided upon your final research topic and begun to think about what concepts or theories you want to think the topic through. You must submit a circa 500 word research plan that:
 - i. Introduces the topic (i.e. the sonic phenomena or case that can be explored and understood through sound)

- ii. Suggests the concept/theory/approach that you think can best shed light on the topic and tells us why you think it might work
- iii. What medium you think will best work for your final assignment and why (i.e. one of the options below)

(15% of final grade)

4. Final assignment: You have to take a case/topic and apply a concept/approach/theory that we have covered in the course to your case/topic. You have three choices as to how you realise the assignment:

- Option One: Field Recordings. Using the collaboratively produced pool of field recordings made in the field recording class along with any independently collected recordings, produce a circa 10 minute audio piece. High quality pieces will be eligible for airing on the London based radio station Resonance FM or Resonance Extra. The piece must be accompanied by a theoretically informed circa 1200 word essay using at least one concept covered in the course.
- Option Two: Podcast. This must include one or more sound clips relating to the topic (of varying lengths); context – circa 800-1000 words of scripted narration that introduces the case study and/or the theoretical or other debate you are addressing (7-10 min); an interview with a relevant person (10-15 minutes); analysis – circa 500-800 words of scripted argumentation (5 minutes). High quality podcasts will be published within CEU's podcast library.
- Option Three: Essay. Inspired by the theories, debates and concepts covered in the course produce a circa 2500 word essay on a sonic case or phenomena. You may integrate audio and visual material if you wish. Refer to at least two concepts or ideas covered in the course.

DEADLINE: December 16th MIDNIGHT

(50% of final grade - work will be assessed on understanding of key concepts and theories, the application of theories to a case study, originality of approach and clarity of presentation, including production quality)

Course Rules

You must come to all classes and do all the mandatory readings. If you miss more than one class, you must send a short paper that includes: i) a summary of the reading; ii) a critical question/comment and iii) a link to a previous week's topic.

Recommended Background Reading

These are good places to go if you want to get more deeply embedded in the field or if you want to find additional readings for your final assignment.

Back, Les, and Michael Bull (eds). 2003. *The Auditory Culture Reader*. London: Bloomsbury.

Novak, David, and Matt Sakakeeny (eds). 2015. *Keywords in Sound*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Sterne, Jonathan (ed). 2012 In *Sound Studies Reader*, Oxon: Taylor and Francis.

Pinch, Trevor, and Karin Bijsterveld (eds). 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Classes

1. What is Sound Studies and What can it be? Some Introductions

Instructor: Ian Cook

In this class, we'll get acquainted with ways in which sound studies as an interdisciplinary concern has been conceptualised. Then we'll discuss a cutting-edge text and the concepts it proposes so we can hear the potential of sound studies. Finally, we'll do a bit of housekeeping, with each student deciding which week s/he'll give a presentation.

Readings & Listenings:

Stoever, Jennifer Lynn. 2016. "Introduction (selection)" and "The Word, the Sound, and the Listening Ear: Listening to the Sonic Color Line in Frederick Douglass's 1845 Narrative and Harriet Jacobs's 1861 Incidents" in *The Sonic Color Line Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening*. New York: New York University Press. p. 1-16 (first 3 lines of 16 only) and 29-77

2. Soundscapes – An Enduring Concept?

Instructor: Ian Cook

When most people think of sound studies they think of soundscapes. In this class we'll critically interrogate the concept, looking at its inception, how it's been used effectively and the problems and limitations of 'scapes'.

Readings & Listenings:

Mandatory:

Schafer, Raymond Murray. 1994 (1977). "Introduction," "Listening" and "The Acoustic Community," in *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape: The Tuning of the World*. Rochester, Verm.: Destiny Books. p. 2-12, 205-236

Ingold, Tim. 2011. 'Four objections to the concept of soundscape' in *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. p. 136 – 139

Recommended:

Thompson, Emily Ann. 2002. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. p. 169-228.

Leonardson, Eric, Monica Ryan, and Tom Haigh. 2014. "Sounding Out! Podcast #32: The World Listening Update – 2014 Edition." *Sounding Out!* July 17. <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2014/07/17/sounding-out-podcast-32>

3. Recording and Editing

Instructors: Ian Cook & Jeremy Braverman

In this class we'll learn some of the essentials needed for capturing and editing sound. It'll be simple so that even those with no editing or recording experience can manage. Before the class you must complete the editing assignment and upload it to the relevant folder within this week's section on the e-learning site.

Mandatory Readings and Pre-Assignments:

Complete the Editing Exercise on Moodle

Byers, Rob. 2017. "Which Mic Should I Use? (Mics Part 1)." *NPR Training*. <http://training.npr.org/audio/which-mic-should-i-use/>

Elsa, Peter. n.d. "How Microphones Work: A Technical Overview and Explanation." *Slug Film*. http://slugfilm.ucsc.edu/production_support/?page_id=1440

Please download and install Audacity before the class, follow the video tutorial we send & bring your computers, a mouse and some headphones to the session. If you don't have access to a laptop, then please let me know a.s.a.p.

4. Soundwalks / Phenomenological Music Listening

Instructors: Lucia Udvardyova & Judit Emese Konopás

How do you usually listen? What captures your interest? How does your ear guide you through the environment? In this class we'll learn how to better understand and relate to listening. Taking cues from psychogeography, situationism and sound studies we will use soundwalking as a means to find new ways of listening to our environments.

Readings & Listeners:

Mandatory:

Schaeffer, Pierre. 1948. *Étude Aux Chemins de Fer*. Concert de Bruits. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9pOq8u6-bA>

Watson, Chris. 2013. *Winter*. In St Cuthbert's Time. Touch. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJBAd4pmuFk>

English, Lawrence. 2014. "A Beginner's Guide To... Field Recording." *FACT Magazine: Music News, New Music.*, November 18. <http://www.factmag.com/2014/11/18/a-beginners-guide-to-field-recording/>.

López, Francisco. 1998. "Environmental Sound Matter." <http://www.franciscolopez.net/env.html>.

Recommended:

Lane, Cathy, and Angus Carlyle. 2013. *In the Field: The Art of Field Recording*. Uniformbooks.

IN-CLASS WORK: With the help of Lucia and Judit we'll make some field recordings during a soundwalk close to CEU. You must select a 2-3 minute clip from the recordings made during the class that relates to the theme of the soundwalk (to be communicated in session). The recordings should be both uploaded to shared folder *and* uploaded to the specially created section of the sound archive [Favourite Sounds](#)

5. The Policies of Regulating Sound

Instructor: Sara Svensson

The aim of the class is to discuss various ways in which sound is the subject of policy, and how sounds are regulated in different contexts with different aims. Special focus will be on how different conceptualizations of 'noise' affect the way regulation develops

Readings & Listenings:

Shavit, Uriya, and Fabian Spengler. 2016. "For Whom the Bell Tolls? Contesting the Adhan s in Majority Non-Muslim Societies." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 36 (4): 447–464.

Recommended:

Bijsterveld, Karin. 2008. 'Instruments of Torture: Traffic Noise as Uncivilized Behavior' in *Mechanical Sound: Technology, Culture, and Public Problems of Noise in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass & London: MIT press. p. 91 -136

Mars, Roman. 2017. *99% Noise. 99% Invisible*.

<http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/99-invisible-01-99-noise-by-roman-mars-this/>

(pay special attention to the 2nd half)

6. Podcasting for Academics

Instructors: Ian Cook and Dumi Holdis

In this class, we'll explore what makes a podcast 'academic' and what the implications are for open access to knowledge. We'll then learn how to interview for radio, how to write for the ear and the possibilities for structuring a podcast.

Readings, Listenings & Assignment:

Pick an academic podcast and listen to it whilst filling in the 'structured listening' assignment. Choose from the list posted in the e-learning site.

Rosenthal, Rob. 2013. *My Kingdom For Some Structure*. How Sound. <https://transom.org/2013/my-kingdom-for-some-structure/>

Recommended:

Thorn, Jesse. 2017. *Ira Glass*. The Turnaround! <http://maximumfun.org/turnaround/ira-glass>

Alegi, Peter. 2012. "Podcasting the Past: Africa Past and Present and (South) African History in the Digital Age." *South African Historical Journal* 64 (2): 206–20. doi:10.1080/02582473.2011.640344.

7. Phenomenology of Sound

Instructor: David Weberman

Mandatory:

Ihde, Don. 2007 (1976). 'The Auditory Dimension' 'The Shapes of Sound,' and 'Timeful Sound' in *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. 49-71 and 85-102

8. Sound Shaping Cultures

Instructor: Ian Cook

How does knowing through sound help us understand culture? In this class we'll discuss the concept of 'acoustemology' and how we might apply it in difference contexts and also

Readings & Listeners:

Mandatory:

Feld, Steven. 1996. "Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 91–136. School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Recommended:

Hirschkind, Charles. 2006. 'The Ethics of Listening' in *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*. Cultures of History. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 67 – 104

Rice, Tom. 2015. 'Govindpuri Sound'. *The Documentary*. BBC World Service.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02hm1rx>

9. Sound Design in Documentary Film

Instructor: Jeremy Braverman

What are the guiding principles behind sound design and mixing techniques? How are sound tracks organized? How can sound establish/enhance the reality of the world of the film? Where does the sound design fit into the overall post production workflow? In this class we'll get a basic understanding of the process of sound design for film, and the principles behind it. For the class discussion think about how much manipulation is acceptable when dealing with sound in documentary film.

Readings & Listeners:

Mandatory:

Anderson, Kelly, and Martin Lucas. 2016. *Documentary Voice & Vision: A Creative Approach to Non-Fiction Media Production*. Taylor & Francis. pp. 205-213, 269-272, 340-360
(This can only be read online –

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/centraleurope-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4470164>)

DocHouse. 2013. *DocHouse Sound Design Masterclass with Peter Albrechtsen*. <https://vimeo.com/60171257>
(25:15-39:40)

[Manhattan Edit Workshop. 2017. Documentary Film Editor Tom Haneke, ACE on Editing Audio in "Mother Teresa."](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUie5AIGUHQ)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUie5AIGUHQ.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUie5AIGUHQ)

Recommended:

McComb, Dan. "10 Most Common Audio Mistakes in Documentary Filmmaking." *Dan McComb*, November 23, 2013.
<http://www.danmccomb.com/10-most-common-film-audio-mistakes/>

10. Orality, Literacy and Technology

Instructor: Cameran Ashraf

In this class we'll explore the historical material contextuality of the human encounter with sound, including humans' evolution of psyche/awareness in relation to sound and the impacts of sound-relating human technology.

Readings & Listenings

Poems: Neruda, P. "Keeping Quiet" & Merton, T. "In Silence"

Carr, Nicholas G. 'The Tools of the Mind' in *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. New York: Norton, 2011. p. 39 - 57

Inayat Khan. 1996. 'The Power of the Word 2' in *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*. Boston: Shambhala.

Ong, Walter J. 1982. 'Some psychodynamics of orality' in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge. p. 31- 76

Konnikova, Maria. 2014. "What's Lost as Handwriting Fades." *The New York Times*, June 2, sec. Science.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/03/science/whats-lost-as-handwriting-fades.html>.

Recommended:

Havelock, Eric A. 1963. 'The Psychology of the Poetic Performance' in *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, Mass & London: Belknap / Harvard University Press. p. 160 – 179

Ong, Walter J. 1982. 'Writing restructures consciousness' in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge. p. 77 -114

11. Transduction & Music

Instructor: Ian Cook

In this class we'll explore the idea of 'transduction' before discussing how technology has mediated music production and listening, along with the relationship between music and other forms of production. We'll also explore the power of listening to music under certain conditions.

Readings & Listenings:

Mandatory:

Helmreich, Stefan. "An anthropologist underwater: Immersive soundscapes, submarine cyborgs, and transductive ethnography." *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 4 (2007): 621-641.

Jonathon Sterne - The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction – pages to be communicated later.

Krukowski, Damon. 2017. *Time*. Ways of Hearing. <https://www.radiotopia.fm/podcasts/showcase>.

Recommended:

Attali, Jacques. 1985. 'Listening' in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Manchester University Press. p. 3 – 20

Hagen, Trevor with Tia DeNora. 2013. "From Listening to Distribution: Nonofficial Music Practices in Hungary and Czechoslovakia from the 1960s to the 1980s." In *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, edited by T. J. Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld, 440–58. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

12. Sonification

Instructor: Zoltan Kovacs

Can we transform images into sounds? What can we learn from this transformation? What are the potential uses? You will be introduced to different software that explores the boundaries of image and sound making. The class will demonstrate an example of sound/image transformation in which you will participate in a hands on in-class activity before brainstorming about the practical applications of such transformation in everyday life.

Readings & Listenings:

Supper, Alexandra. 2013. "The Search for the 'Killer Application': Drawing the Boundaries Around the Sonification of Scientific Data." In *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, edited by T. J. Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld, 249–72.

Fenderson, Jerobeam. 2014. *How To Draw Mushrooms On An Oscilloscope With Sound*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtR63-ecUNo>

Recommended:

Katz, Bob. 2002. *Mastering Audio: The Art and the Science*. Waltham, Mass.: Focal Press.