

INTRODUCTION TO AUDIO PRODUCTION

Comm 130, Sec. 201, Fall 2020

TUESDAYS (ONLINE, SYNCHRONOUS), 5:30pm - 8:00pm CST

WTC, School of COMM

Instructor: Drew Durepos (preferred pronouns: he/him/his)

Email: fdurepo@luc.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introduction to the world of audio production. It is meant for undergraduate students with an interest in audio and its applications in modern media and art. Students will learn to employ audio as a creative tool for documentary storytelling, fiction filmmaking, video art, news media, radio production, comedy sketches, commercials and internet production.

Creativity and careful execution are major factors in the grading of ALL projects.

COURSE GOALS

- Understand basic audio concepts and terminology.
- Develop critical listening skills, learn how to effectively discuss sound.
- Gain a working knowledge of basic audio technology including microphones, recorders, mixers, and DAWs.
- Conceptualize, plan, and execute effective sound designs.
- Master basic skills in audio editing and mixing, and gain familiarity with design processes and methods.
- Practice the art of storytelling using sound.
- Develop directing and writing skills for audio production.
- Understand audio workflows, practices, and standards.
- Develop interviewing and field recording skills.
- Learn basic music editing and concepts.
- Learn how sound and image work in tandem to tell stories.
- Provide and incorporate constructive criticism to and from your colleagues.
- Manage effective collaborations.

EQUIPMENT to be covered

- Movo PM20S lavalier microphones ([REQUIRED, eligible for reimbursement - link here](#))
- Zoom H4n Recorders
- Mics (Shotgun, Cardioid, Dynamic, Lavs)
- Adobe Audition software

MATERIALS (required)

- External Hard Drive of at least 16 GB (suggested brand: [WD Passport 1TB](#))
- Headphones (no Bluetooth, no noise cancelling; suggested brand: [Sony MDR7506 professional stereo headphones](#))
- Note-taking Materials

*****The student will be responsible for all backups of media assets.*****

PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENTS (75%)

(More detailed requirements provided in the Assignments section of SAKAI)

Audio Diary: Record, log, and edit a short (1.5-3 minutes) audio diary about a subject of your choosing, using a recording ratio of at least 10:1. Provide 1 edited and mixed file, and 1 raw, uncompressed recording. (Complete/Not Complete - 5%) Due: Week 4 (Sept. 15)

Soundscape: Plan and produce a short (1.5-3 minute) audio soundscape or sonic portrait of a specific (physical and/or psychological) environment, person, or event using only sound effects and ambient audio (no interviews or music!). (10%) Due: Week 6 (Sept. 29)

Sound Library: Create a library of at least 50 sound effects. Be ready to share your favorites with the class. (Complete/Not Complete - 5%) Due: Week 8 (Oct. 13)

Audioplay: Record and edit a short (2-4 minute) audio documentary, radio drama, or spoken word piece into a fully produced, radio-ready audio project. Your project must incorporate voice recordings, SFX, and music. (10%) Due: Week 10 (Oct. 27)

Video Sound Design Project (Opposing Tone): Students select a short video clip (min. 2 minutes), remove the audio, and spot, design and build a soundtrack that coheres with the imagery to generate an opposing tone or surprising new meanings. [ex. Turn *The Shining* into a comedy, turn an old home movie into a science fiction thriller, etc]. (15%) Fine Cut: Week 12 (Nov. 10), Final Cut: Week 13 (Nov. 17)

Final Project: Plan, record, edit and mix a short (4-7 minute) creative audio project of your choosing. The form and content are entirely up to you: it could be a short story, poem, comedy sketch show, experimental sound piece, drama – you name it. Projects should be a demonstration of your fluency in the concepts and techniques taught throughout the course. (30%) Fine Cut: Week 14 (Dec. 1), Final Cut: Finals Week (Dec. 8)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (5%):

Sound Design Analysis Paper: Provide a critical analysis of the sound design of a film. (5%) Due: Week 9 (Oct. 20)

TEST & PARTICIPATION (20%):

Midterm Exam: 10% Due: Week 7 (Oct. 6)

Class Professionalism: 10% – Critique participation & professional readiness for synchronous sessions!

COURSE SCHEDULE

As of now, all regularly scheduled class meetings, including instructor-led online demos, are SYNCHRONOUS and will begin promptly at 5:30pm (though they will not always necessarily extend to 8pm). Exceptions include days designated for INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS. The schedule is subject to change; students will be notified about any updates to the syllabus and schedule.

Week 1 – August 25 - Introduction

- Instructor & Student Introductions
- Syllabus & Course Goals for the Semester
- OWL Lab; WLUW Radio and podcast studio; Equipment Needs & Best Practices
- Using your Cellphone or Computer as Sound Recording Devices
- Searching for a Sound

- Assign Audio Diary Project (Due Week 4, Sept. 6)

Homework:

- READ Antonioni, "From a Thirty-Seventh Floor over Central Park" (Due Next Week)
- READ *Voice and Vision* Chapter 15 (Due Next Week)

Week 2 – September 1 - Characteristics of Sound

- Essential Audio Terminology
- Discuss Readings
- Mics: Types, pick up patterns
- Recording Best Practices
- File Management & Logging

Homework:

- Record for Audio Diary Project (Due Week 6, Sept. 29)
- READ *Voice and Vision* Chapter 23 (Due Next Week)

Week 3 – September 8 – The Digital Audio Workstation

- Assign Soundscape Project (Due Week 6, Sept. 29)
- Assign Sound Library Project (Due Week 8, Oct. 13)
- Adobe Audition, Part 1
 - Importing Files
 - Arranging on the Timeline
 - Transitions
 - Presence
 - Layering
 - Bouncing

Homework:

- Finish Audio Diary Project (Due Next Week)

Week 4 – September 15 - Soundscapes

- Listen & Critique Audio Diary Project
- Soundscapes
 - Directing the Ear
 - Punctuation and Drones
 - Field Recording Techniques
 - Sound Effects
 - Critical Analysis and Spotting

Homework:

- Collect sounds for Soundscape and Sound Library
- Begin mixing Soundscape Project (Due Week 6, Sept. 29)
- READ *Voice and Vision* Chapter 16 (Due Next Week)

Week 5 – September 22 - Sound Design

- Adobe Audition, Part 2: Further Sound Editing/Mixing Techniques
 - EQ
 - Reverb
 - Echo
 - Panning
- Students will have time to work on Soundscape, and share and discuss with class and instructor

Homework:

- Finish Soundscape Project (Due Next Week)
- Keep adding sounds to Sound Library (Due Week 8, October 13)

Week 6 – September 29 – Storytelling with Sound

- Assign Audioplay Project (Due Week 10, Oct. 27)
- Assign Midterm Exam (Due Week 7, Oct. 6)
- Listen & Critique Soundscape Project
- Discuss audio plays, docs, drama, spoken word, podcasts, etc.

Homework

- Decide concept and begin gathering sounds for Audioplay (Due Week 10, Oct. 27)
- Continue to collect sounds for Sound Library (Due Week 8, Oct. 13)
- Complete Midterm (Due Next Week)

Week 7 – October 6 – Individual Meetings

- INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS: Share progress on projects and check-in with instructor
- Turn in Midterm Exam

Homework:

- Work on Audioplay (Due Week 10, Oct. 27)
- Keep collecting sounds for Sound Library (Due Next Week)
- READ *Voice and Vision* Chapter 22 (Due Next Week)

Week 8 – October 13 - Sound for Film I

- Assign Video Sound Design Project (Fine Cut Due Week 12, Nov. 10)
- Assign Written Assignment (Due Week 14, Nov. 24)
- Film Sound: Pre-Production through Post
- Elements of a Soundtrack
- Dialogue Editing

Homework:

- Choose video clip for Video Sound Design Project
- READ “Phantom Audio Vision” by Michel Chion

Week 9 – October 20 - Sound for Film II

- Adobe Audition, Part 3: Finished products
 - Mastering
 - Formats and Media
 - Bussing, Compression, etc.
- Foley & Worldizing Sound

Homework:

- Work on Video Sound Design Project
- Choose and watch film for Written Assignment
- READ “Stretching Sound to Help the Mind See” by Walter Murch (Due Next Week)

Week 10 – October 27 – Working toward our Final Goals

- Assign & Discuss Final Project (Fine Cut Due Week 14, Dec. 1)
- Discuss Murch reading
- Listen & Critique Audioplay Project

Homework:

- Continue working on: Video Sound Design Project, Final Project, Written Assignment

Week 11 – November 3 – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS Round 1

Homework:

- Complete Fine Cut for Video Sound Design Project (Due Next Week)

Week 12 – November 10 – Critique & Project Troubleshooting

- Listen & Critique Rough Cuts of Video Sound Design Project
- Open discussion of Audition and any course materials or concepts
- Short screening

Homework:

- Finish Final Cut of Video Sound Design Project (Due Next Week)

Week 13 – November 17 – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS Round 2

- Turn in Video Sound Design Project

Homework:

- Finish Fine Cut for Final Project (Due Week 14, Dec 1)

November 24 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Homework:

- Finish Final Project Fine Cut (Due Week 14, Dec 1)

Week 14 - December 1

- Course Evaluations
- Listen & Critique Final Project Fine Cuts

Homework:

- Finish Final Project (Due Next Week)

FINALS WEEK - December 8 - 5:30-8pm

- Final Project UPLOAD on SAKAI During Final Exam Time Due
- Have a great winter break!

GRADE BREAKDOWN

75% (750pts) Production Assignments

- Audio Diary 5% (Complete/Not Complete: 50pts)
- Soundscape 10% (100pts)
- Sound Library 5% (Complete/Not Complete: 50pts)
- Audioplay 10% (100pts)
- Video Sound Design 15% (150pts)
- Final Project 30% (300pts)

10% (100pts) Midterm Exam

5% (50pts) Written Assignment

10% (100pts) Attendance & Professionalism (includes readings & SAKAI participation)

TOTAL: 1000pts

GRADING SCALE

93-100% A = 4.0

90-92% A- = 3.67

87-89% B+ = 3.33

83-86% B = 3.00

80-82% B- = 2.67

77-79% C+ = 2.33

73-76% C = 2.00

70-72% C- = 1.67

67-69% D+ = 1.33

60-66% D = 1.00

0-59% F = 0

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA & METHODS OF EVALUATING STUDENTS

- Attendance and punctuality.
- Completion of all assigned readings.
- Participation in all discussions, group projects, and critiques.
- Productive use of class time.
- Completion of all production exercises and assignments.
- Projects will be evaluated on their technical, aesthetic, and conceptual merit. The amount of effort you put into each project will guide the grading.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

PROFESSIONALISM

Student professionalism is important in making this class vital and useful to everyone. All students need to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading(s), and with creative assignments fully completed and ready to show. During critiques, it is expected that everyone gives constructive feedback. Attendance alone does not constitute "professionalism." In-class participation that contributes to raising the level of informed dialogue in the course will be taken into account during grading.

READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS & QUIZZES

Readings and assignments must be completed at the beginning of class on the date to which they are assigned. Production assignments must be in the correct media format, properly labeled, within the running time specifications and within all other specifications provided.

- Always test your media before turning it in.
- Always make a safety copy of your project and bring it with you on screening days in case of any technical difficulties.
- Production Exercises and Projects include the assigned paperwork.
- The days we go over rough or fine cuts are for you. They are meant to help you complete the best possible project with the peer feedback you receive. Everyone must share once on the earlier set of projects, and they are mandatory for the Video Sound Design and Final Project. This means that if you do not prepare a Fine Cut for the final two projects, in the form of a file that you can submit to Sakai, you cannot receive higher than a B+ for the grade on that project.
- Quizzes will be drawn from material covered in readings, class lectures and discussions. Some topics will be covered only in the readings, some topics will be covered only in lectures and some will be covered in both readings & lectures. Students are responsible for ALL of the material.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS & DUE DATES

- A penalty will be assessed for any assignment that is not turned in or uploaded to Sakai by the beginning of the class session that it is due.
- Assignments turned in one class late will lose one full letter grade.
- Assignments not turned in within the first 30 minutes of class will be considered late and lose one full letter grade.
- Assignments turned in two classes late will lose two full letter grades.
- NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER IT IS MORE THAN 2 WEEKS LATE.
- Late projects will not be screened in class.
- You must turn in a FINAL PROJECT in order to PASS the class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- The class will meet ONLINE every TUESDAY from 5:30am – 8:00pm. Attendance and punctuality are mandatory and will be reflected in your grade. If it is unavoidable that you will have to miss class, you must consult the professor about the situation beforehand (via email or in person) and may be asked to provide a written excuse for the absence. If a student is more than 30 minutes late to class, they will be marked absent. Three or more absences or frequent tardiness, whether or not for a reasonable cause, may result in the student failing the class if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W."

- It is the student's responsibility to find out any important information missed in their absence. You are expected to come to every class on time, prepared and ready to engage in classroom discussions and participate in group projects.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. If you have questions about what proper source referencing looks like, see someone at the Tutoring Center in the Sullivan Center, Suite 245, extension (773) 508-7708. It is also dishonest to turn in the same work for two classes, turn in a paper you have not written yourself, copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam. Visit and review Loyola's policies on academic integrity here:

https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

MANDATED REPORTER

As a faculty member at Loyola University Chicago I am committed to supporting students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Therefore, if a student chooses to confide in me regarding an issue of gender-based misconduct, I am obligated to inform Loyola's Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Title IX Deputy Coordinator will assist you in connecting with all possible resources for support and reporting both on and off campus.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY CENTER (SAC)

If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate these needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Formal arrangements must be made through the office before course adjustments can be made. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SAC website: <https://luc.edu/sac/sacstudents/>

MANAGING LIFE CRISES AND FINDING SUPPORT

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), you are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral ([LUC.edu/csaa](https://luc.edu/csaa)) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf - please email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites at [LUC.edu/dos](https://luc.edu/dos) or [LUC.edu/csaa](https://luc.edu/csaa). Or you may contact them directly at 773-508-8840 and at deanofstudents@luc.edu.

RECORDING ONLINE CLASS DISCUSSION POLICY

In this class software will be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class when the Sakai course is unpublished (i.e. shortly after the course ends, per the [Sakai administrative schedule](#)). Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Please discuss this option with your instructor.

The use of all video recordings will be in keeping with the University Privacy Statement shown below:

Privacy Statement

Assuring privacy among faculty and students engaged in online and face-to-face instructional activities helps promote open and robust conversations and mitigates concerns that comments made within the context of the class will be shared beyond the classroom. As such, recordings of instructional activities occurring in online or face-to-face classes may be used solely for internal class purposes by the faculty member and students registered for the course, and only during the period in which the course is offered. Students will be informed of such recordings by a statement in the syllabus for the course in which they will be recorded. Instructors who wish to make subsequent use of recordings that include student activity may do so only with informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. Recordings including student activity that have been initiated by the instructor may be retained by the instructor only for individual use.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Treat the class like a job
- Show up on time
- Come to class prepared
- Pay attention
- Do the work
- Stay for the entire class period
- Be fully engaged in class
- Pay attention and take good notes
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Be resourceful
- Take the initiative to learn and succeed
- Communicate
- Make no excuses
- Don't wait until the last minute to do the assignment

Syllabus is subject to change and students will be updated and informed of any change immediately.