DC 215 Syllabus - Winter 2014 - Brian Mellen

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Office hours: TuTh 11:00am to 11:45am **Location TBD**

Summary of Course:

Through careful analysis of film and video clips, students will learn how to think critically about the various elements of sound design that contribute to the overall effectiveness of a film. Students will also learn the basics of Pro Tools while completing several short sound and editing projects. Two papers will be assigned throughout the duration of the quarter. A **MIDTERM** and **FINAL** exam will be given on key concepts and assigned readings.

The ultimate goal of the class is for students to learn how sound functions in films and for students to be able to sound design their own projects.

NOTE: Pro Tools will be the software of choice but keep in mind that this is not an Intro to Pro Tools class. Instead, the class will focus on how sound can be used creatively in a movie to give the viewer a unique aural experience that enhances the visuals.

* Syllabus is subject to change

Recommended Textbooks and Printed Resources:

Sound Design: The Expressive Power of Music, Voice and Sound Effects in Cinema by David Sonnenschein

Pro Tools 8 Visual Quickstart Guide by Tom Dambly

Required Supplies:

DC majors should have their own external drive for their sound design work for this and other DC classes. The University cannot guarantee that media or projects left on lab computers will be safely maintained. Non-majors should at least have some sort of external or flash drive big enough to store their work.

Grading:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Analysis papers	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Projects	30%

Grading Scale:

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82- 80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C-
= 72-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is
unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work

Student responsibilities:

Each student is responsible for their time management and for meeting the expectations
in the syllabus. The instructor is not responsible for reminding students of assignment
deadlines in class. In the event of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact
the instructor for an assignment sheet detailing any homework. If an assignment is
listed on the syllabus you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time.

Deadlines:

Video production requires strict adherence to deadlines, therefore late assignments will
not be accepted for grading and written feedback will be given at the instructors
discretion. **You will not be eligible for an A in the class unless you turn in all
assignments on time.**

Attendance & Participation:

This course demands class participation - attendance is mandatory. Students arriving
more than 15 minutes late, or leaving before class is dismissed will be considered
absent. You are allowed two (2) unexcused absences. After that, a one letter deduction
for each absence will be taken from your final course grade. Excessive tardiness will
also be penalized.

Course Lectures/Reading Assignments:

Readings are due for the next class session unless otherwise noted. Please keep up or
it will be hard to follow in-class demos and lectures.

Lecture presentations will occur weekly. The readings offer an opportunity for independent
learning that supplements lectures. The instructor will use both the classroom and the
readings for test questions. Lectures may introduce additional material not available in the
readings, and the readings may explore concepts not mentioned in class. **BOTH SOURCES
ARE NEEDED.**

Quizzes:

Over the duration of the quarter, quizzes will be given, testing students on the readings
and in-class lectures.

Analysis Papers:

Students will be required to select a scene from a movie and write a **thousand word** analysis on the sound design in that film.

Content Changes:

Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling.

CLASS SCHEDULE

* Syllabus schedule is subject to change

Week 1 01/07 and 01/09

Review Syllabus, D2L, How does sound help tell the story? Pro Tools Intro

> *Readings:* **Designing for Sound** by Randy Thom, **Real Basic Audio Stuff** by Peter Perry, **Open Letter from Your Sound Department**
>
> *Videos:* Intro to Pro Tools
>
> Paper #1 (Due 01/14): Pick a specific space in your residence. Sit there for 30 minutes or so and begin noting what you hear. Write a 500 word paper describing what you hear around you and how your perceptions of sound are altered. Double spaced/12-point font.
>
> > Use the naming convention **Lastname_DC215_Paper1**. Upload to the D2L Dropbox. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.
>
> Project #1 (Due 01/30): Tell a story through sound in one-minute. No dialogue. Bounce as a .WAV file "stereo interleaved." Upload to D2L.
>
> > Use the naming convention **Lastname_DC215_Project1**. Upload to the D2L Dropbox. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

Week 2 01/14 and 01/16

Sound Basics, Pro Tools Basics Basics 1, In-Class Editing Exercises

> *Readings:* **Behind the Art** by Randy Thom
>
> *Videos:* **Pro Tools Basics** Lessons 1-3

Week 3 01/21 and 01/23

Four Dimensions of a Soundtrack, Pro Tools Basics 2, In-Class Editing Exercises

> *Readings:* 10 Things About Sound You May Not Know, 8 Practical Pro Tools Shortcuts, Managing Your Pro Tools Projects, 10 Quick Editing Tips
>
> *Videos:* Pro Tools Basics Lesson 5, Pro Tools 10 Sound Design Workflow
>
> Paper #2 (Due 02/06): Choose 15 to 20 minute sequence from any movie and write a **thousand word** analysis of the use of sound - how does sound help tell the story? Double-spaced/12-point font.
>
> > Use the naming convention **Lastname_DC215_Paper2**. Upload to the D2L Dropbox and **BRING A HARD COPY TO CLASS**. Points will be deducted for not following instructions.

Week 4 01/28 and 01/30

Microphones - Lecture/Demo/Recording Exercises

> *Readings:* **Behind the Art** by Nicholas Becker

Week 5 02/04 and 02/06

Production Sound Basics, Discuss Midterm

Recording exercises (Each team needs to bring the following gear: H4, Boom Pole, Headphones, an MKH-50/416/ME66/ME67/Rode NTG 2 or 3, show mount and an xlr cable.) Please test all of the equipment before coming to class.

> *Readings:* 5 Tricks to Record Better Atmospheres, An Introduction to Gathering Sound Effects, Designing Sound - Backgrounds, How to Record Your Own Foley Tracks at Home, Quick Tip/Using Markers, Room Tone = Emotional Tone
>
> *Videos:* Pro Tools Basics Lesson 8, Quick Tips for Video - Boom Mic Techniques, Recording Levels
>
> > Project #2 - Field-Recording Project (Due 02/20): Details will be discussed in class.

Week 6 02/11 and 02/13

Midterm Exam, Based Upon Readings, Lecture, Clips, and Lab Experience. The Midterm Exam will also include a Pro Tools Practical Exam.

Audio Post Production

> ***Readings:*** 8 Steps to Better EQ, The Beginner's Guide to Compression, Using Playlists

Week 7 02/18 and 02/20

Timecode and sync

Screening and Commentary: TBA

> ***Readings:*** Deciphering the Film Slate

> ***Videos:*** Demystifying Timecode: Parts 1 and 2

>> Project #3 Sound Effects Editing/Mixing (Due 03/06): Details will be discussed in class.

Week 8 02/25 and 02/27

Introduction to the Sound Studio

> ***Readings:*** De-essing, How to Use a Parametric Equalizer

> ***Videos:*** Faster EQ and Compression in Pro Tools, Pro Tools Basics Lessons 9-12, Understanding a Compressor

Week 9 03/04 and 03/06

DSP and Signal Flow 1, Mixing

> ***Readings:*** Pro Tools OMF's and the Audio Post Workflow, Using Automation in Pro Tools
> ***Videos:*** Pro Tools Basics Lesson 13, Pro Tools 10: AVID Channel Strip, Plug-in Overview, Plug-in Workflow Parts 1-2

>> Project #4 Sound Effects Editing/Mixing (Due 03/18): Details will be discussed in class.

Class 10 03/11 and 03/13

DSP and Signal Flow 2

Final Exam in CDM 922

Project 4 Due March 18, 2014 by 11:45am