

## DC215 Introduction to Sound Design

### Syllabus Autumn 14

Rob Steel

Tuesday, 1:30-4:45

CDM 526

### General Course Information

#### **Course description:**

This course is an introduction to sound editing and sound design. The course examines the place of sound in cinema, both artistic and technological. The course will cover the basics of sound, microphones, and analogue-to-digital conversion. Lectures, readings, and film clips will be used to illustrate the language of film sound, as practiced by film directors, sound designers, and editors. Students will learn to edit sound assignments with Pro Tools and current technologies. Prerequisites: None

This is a lecture/lab course.

#### **Course Management Systems:**

D2L and Gobbler

#### **Tutorials and printed resources:**

These materials are available on D2L via Dropbox download link.

#### **Software:**

Pro Tools will be the main software we work with in this class. Labs which include Pro Tools are CDM 526, CDM 922, CDM 9th floor IMacs (get an iLok from the cage), C106C and the Editing Suites in the basement of the DePaul Center, and the MAC Lab on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the student center.

#### **Drop dates:**

9.23.14 is the last day to *drop* this class with no penalty.

10.28.14 is the last day to *withdraw* from this class.

#### **Materials/Equipment**

Students should have their own external Thunderbolt/USB3 drive for their project work for this and other DC classes. The University cannot guarantee that media or projects left on lab computers will be safely maintained.

**Project Naming Conventions:** DC215lastnameprojectname. Failure to do so will result in a 1 point reduction in the project grade.

## **Instructor Information**

### **Email**

[rsteel@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:rsteel@cdm.depaul.edu)

### **Office Hours**

Mondays 9:30am-11:30pm. Online via Skype. Skype name is robertmsteel

Tuesdays 12:30-1:30 in CDM 600a

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze a film in terms of its aesthetic and technical sound components.
2. Plan and create an original sound design for a short film.
3. Record original sound effects, backgrounds, and voice recordings.
4. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the sound designer on a professional film.
5. Navigate basic editing and mixing functions in a digital audio workstation.
6. Understand the basic physics of sound.

## **Grading**

Attendance: 10 points, Analysis Paper #1: 5 points, Analysis Paper #2: 5 points, Project #1: 15 points, Project #2: 15 points, Project #3: 15 Points, Project #4: 10 points, Midterm Exam: 10 points, Final Exam: 15 points. A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, B = 87-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-78, C = 77-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-68, D = 67-63, 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.

## **Week-By-Week**

### **Class 1, 9.16**

Short film of the week

Review syllabus, expectations in class. Please note: this syllabus is subject to change. D2L and Gobbler.

What do you hear? Listening and writing. How does sound help tell the story?

Clips

Pro Tools Preview

### **Homework**

Reading: **Designing for Sound** by Randy Thom, **Real Basic Audio Stuff** by Peter Perry, **Open Letter from Your Sound Department**

Video: **Intro to Pro Tools**

[Paper#1](#): Pick a specific space in your residence (This should take place in your bedroom, living room, kitchen or bathroom. This experience should not take place in a public or common space). Sit there for 30 minutes or so and begin noting what you hear. Write a 500-word analysis describing what you hear around you and how your perceptions of sound are altered. Paper is to be double spaced and use a 12-point font. No PDF's. Word or Pages only. **Due 9.23 by 1:30.**

### **Class 2, 9.23**

Short film of the week

Sound Basics

Pro Tools Basics 1

In-Class editing exercises

### **Homework**

Reading: **Behind the Art** by Randy Thom

Video: **Pro Tools Basics**: Lessons 1-3

### **Class 3, 9.30**

Short film of the week

The Four Dimensions of a Soundtrack

Pro Tools Basics 2

In-Class editing exercises

#### **Homework**

Reading: **10 Things About Sound You May Not Know, 8 Practical Pro Tools Shortcuts, Managing Your Pro Tools Projects, 10 Quick Editing Tips**

Video: **Pro Tools Basics: Lesson 5, Pro Tools 10 Sound Design Workflow**

**Project 1: Tell a story through sound in 1 minute using Pro Tools. No music, no dialogue allowed. Deliver Wav, 24/48. Due 10.7 by 1:30.**

### **Class 4, 10.7**

Short film of the week

Microphones- Lecture/Demo/Recording exercises

#### **Homework**

Reading: Nicholas Becker - **Behind the Art**

**Paper#2:** choose 20 to 30 minute sequence from any movie and write a 1000 word analysis of the use of sound- how does sound help tell the story? Paper is to be double spaced and use a 12-point font. No PDF's. Word or Pages only. **Due 10.14 by 1:30.**

### **Class 5, 10.14**

Short film of the week

Production Sound Basics

Recording exercises (Each team needs to bring the following gear: H4, Boom pole, Headphones, MKH50/416/ME66/Me67/Rode NTG 2 or 3, shock mount and an xlr cable. Please test all of the equipment.) Discuss Midterm.

#### **Homework**

Reading: **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**

Video: **Pro Tools Basics: Lesson 8, Quick Tips for Video – Boom Mic Techniques, Recording Levels**

**Project 2: Field-recording project. Details on D2L. (Due 10.28)**

## Class 6, 10.21

Short film of the week

Midterm exam, based upon readings, lecture, clips, and lab experience. The midterm exam will include a Pro Tools Practical exam.

### **Homework**

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

**Project 2: Field-recording project. Details on D2L. (Due 10.28)**

## Class 7, 10.28

Short film of the week

Audio Post Production

Time code and sync

Screening and Commentary: TBA

### **Homework**

Reading: **Deciphering the Film Slate**

Video: **Demystifying Time code: Parts 1 and 2**

**Project 3: Sound effects editing/mixing project. Details on D2L. (Due 11.18)**

## Class 8, 11.4 (Meet in CDM 724)

Introduction to the Sound Studio

### **Homework**

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

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

**Project 3: Sound effects editing/mixing project. Details on D2L. (Due 11.18)**

## **Class 9, 11.11**

Short film of the week

DSP and Signal Flow

Mixing

Discuss Final Exam, based upon readings, lecture, clips, and lab experience.

### **Homework**

Reading: **Pro Tools OMF's and the Audio Post Workflow, Using Automation in Pro Tools**

Video: **Pro Tools Basics: Lesson 13, Pro Tools 10: Avid Channel Strip, Plug-in Overview, Plug-in Workflow Parts 1-2**

**Project 3: Sound effects editing/mixing project. Details on D2L. (Due 11.18)**

## **Class 10, 11.18**

Project 3 In-class critiques

**Project 4: in class (Working on deadline)**

### **Homework**

**Final Exam**

## **Final Exam, 11.25, time 2:45-5pm**

Final exam based upon readings, lecture, clips, and lab experience. The final exam will include a Pro Tools Practical exam.

## **Course Policies**

### **Late Papers/Projects**

Late papers and projects are not accepted. If there is an emergency, proper documentation is required *before* the deadline of the assignment.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops 1 point after any unexcused absence. Four absences for any reason, whether excused or not, will constitute failure for the course.

### **Attitude**

A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

### **Civil Discourse**

DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students, both intellectually and personally, to be [Socially Responsible Leaders](#). It is the expectation that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of each student. Any instances of disrespect or hostility can jeopardize a student's ability to be successful in the course. The professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

### **Cell Phones/On Call**

If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an unobtrusive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

### **Changes to Syllabus**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed during class, posted under Announcements in D2L and sent via email.

## **Online Course Evaluations**

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#).

## **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

## **Academic Policies**

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

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