

DC215 Introduction to Sound Design

Syllabus Autumn 15

Rob Steel

Tuesday, 1:30-4:45

DePaul Center 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 Lynda.com

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 3rd floor of the student center.

Drop dates:

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

10.27.15 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

Office Hours

Mondays 8:30am-11:00am. Online via Skype. Skype name is robertmsteel
Tuesdays 4:45-5:15pm in CDM 526.

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, Webcam Self-Interview #1 #1: 5 points, Webcam Self-Interview #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, 9.15

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 Due 9.22 by 1:30

Reading: **Designing for Sound, Real Basic Audio Stuff, Open Letter from Your Sound Department, Rain is Sizzling Bacon**

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (Introduction, 1. Getting Started)
[Webcam Self-Interview #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. Record a 2-minute analysis describing what you hear around you and how your perceptions of sound are altered. Please state your name and the project name at the top of the video. Deliver Quicktime Video.

Class 2, 9.22

Sound Basics

Pro Tools Basics 1

In-Class editing exercises

Homework Due 9.29 by 1:30

Reading: **Behind the Art, 11 Great Filmmakers Who Can Teach You The Most about Sound In Cinema Parts 1-2**

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (2. Learning the Interface)

Class 3, 9.29

The Four Dimensions of a Soundtrack

Pro Tools Basics 2

Homework Due 10.6 by 1:30

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

Lynda.com: Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (3. Importing)

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

Class 4, 10.6

Microphones- Lecture/Demo/Recording exercises

Homework Due 10.13 by 1:30

Reading: **Behind the Art, Using Microphone Polar Patterns Effectively, 9 Sound Design Tricks To Hack Your Listener's Ears**

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (4. Recording Audio)

[Webcam Self-Interview #2](#): Choose 20 to 30 minute sequence from any movie and record a 3-minute analysis of the use of sound- how does sound help tell the story? Please state your name and the project name at the top of the video. Deliver Quicktime Video.

Class 5, 10.13

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 Due 10.20 by 1:30

Reading: **5 Tricks to Record Better Atmospheres, An Introduction to Gathering SFX, Designing Sound – Backgrounds, How To Record Your Own Foley Tracks at Home, Quick Tip/Using Markers, Room Tone=Emotional Tone**

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (5. Using the Edit Tools)

Project 2: Team Field-recording project. Details on D2L. **(Due 10.27 by 1:30)**

Class 6, 10.20

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

Homework Due 10.27 by 1:30

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

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (6. Editing Audio)

Project 2: Team Field-recording project. Details on D2L.

Class 7, 10.27

Audio Post Production

Time code and sync

Homework Due 11.3 by 1:30

Reading: **Deciphering the Film Slate**

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

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (7. Arranging a Session)

Project 3: Sound effects editing/mixing project. Details on D2L. **(Due 11.17)**

Class 8, 11.3 (Meet in CDM 724)

Introduction to the Sound Studio

Homework Due 11.10 by 1:30

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**

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (11. Automation)

Project 3: Sound effects editing/mixing project. Details on D2L. **(Due 11.17)**

Class 9, 11.10

DSP and Signal Flow

Mixing

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

Homework Due 11.17 by 1:30

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

Lynda.com: Pro Tools 11 Essential Training with Skye Lewin (12. Mixing and Mastering, 13. Working with Video)

Project 3: Sound effects editing/mixing project. Details on D2L. **(Due 11.17)**

Class 10, 11.17

Project 3 In-class critiques

Project 4: in class (Working on deadline)

Homework Due 11.24 by 2:30

Study for Final Exam

Final Exam, 11.24, time 2:30-4:45pm

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 attendance 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 undistruptive 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.

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.

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