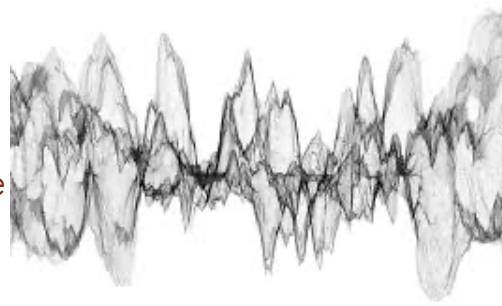


THTR 250

Sound Design for the Stage & Screen



Tuesday & Thursday 9:45AM-11:15AM
PLH 206
WISE: THTR-250-01-21/SP
Instructor: Rachel Kinsman Steck
E-Mail: rsteck@willamette.edu
Phone: (503) 370-6271
Office: SMU 110 (via 108)
Zoom: [rachelkinsmansteck](#)
Office Hours: By Appointment

Overview

This course is an introduction to sound design for the stage and screen; specifically, an opportunity for all of us to explore the technical and artistic methodologies. This is small class and therefore, it should be noted that this is a shared learning experience. By this, I mean that each of us will share our strengths and experiences for the purpose of better understanding sound design and technology.

Texts and Materials

Kaye, Deena & James Lebrecht. *Sound and Music for the Theatre: The Art & Technique of Design 4th Ed*. New York: Routledge 2016. Print.

All other texts will be available on WISE

Goals for this course

- Engage, read and think about texts (plays, film, visual media, blogs, radio, books, articles, aural and visual images)
- Contribute positively to discussions
- Think critically
- Present materials clearly and concisely
- Take intellectual and creative risks
- Develop a design concept in a collaborative environment
- Create a minimum of two portfolio pieces
- Have a stronger understanding of his/her/their aesthetic in terms of theatrical design

Credit Hour Compliance

Students will spend 3 hours on homework and outside assignments for every hour in class. Simply stated, expect to work 9 hours/week on homework and co-curricular activities.

Lab Computers & Software

We will be using several computer programs. For the most part, we will be learning the basics of these programs in class: QLab 3 and Logic Pro X. Since much of your work will be on lab computers, I highly suggest you purchase a thumb drive for class. A small drive of 8GB will be sufficient. You will also be able to upload to Google Drive although there are some known challenges with Google Drive and QLab, hence the thumb drive as backup. Please do not leave your projects on lab computers. The lab computers are often wiped during the semester and your work could be lost.

Grading Policy

Attendance: Due to the way in which this course is taught, class attendance is fundamental to your success and the success of your colleagues. Due to the challenges of Covid-19, if you are unable to attend class in person, you let me know before 8:00AM each class. I also ask that you respect your colleagues by arriving to class, ready to begin on time.

Participation: Active participation in class discussion and group presentations is expected and will be a factor in each your grade. The participation grade will be based upon thoughtful contributions in discussion and other class exercises. You will be expected to participate in thoughtful discussions of close readings and presentations. Note that class participation does not simply entail speaking, but also listening in an engaged and respectful manner. All in-class projects will have a group critique attached to the assignments. Each student is required to participate in group critiques. Active participation in group critiques will count as significant part of the assignment as well as participation credit for the day.

Group critiques: are fundamental to the process of collaborating. At their heart, the group critiques come from a place of openness and generosity. Asking hard questions is an important part of the process, however mean-spirited critiques will not be tolerated. Each student is asked to participate in each critique so that the work grows. Students will have the opportunity to adjust work based on the critiques given in class.

Reading Assignments: This is a seminar/design class not a lecture course. We are going to be talking and listening to one another. Engaging in collective enterprise and exploration. We will be discussing concepts in aesthetics and design that are central to our personal identities. Accordingly, we can and should expect that we will not all agree with one another regarding the topics we will be discussing. This course should neither be seen as an opportunity to compel others to “achieve” a proper stance, nor as a space for trying to impress people. Vital to the success of this class is the commitment we make to listening and speaking with one another with respect and thoughtfulness.

You are required to thoughtfully read every text. When I say that you are required to read, I do not mean that you should mechanically scan every page, but you should grapple with the ideas. You will be required to take notes on each text so that you will read for comprehension rather than reading for completion. I want you to *ponder every idea* rather than looking at every word. This means that you may need to read and reread sections of the articles/chapters. Reading means *engaging* yourself with the ideas of the texts.

Presentations: Presentations are fundamental to this course. You will present regularly. The fundamental purposes of the presentation are communication and collaboration. Presentations should be well prepared, concise, and clear. Evaluations for presentations will include: content, collaboration, clarity, critiques (given and received), organization, creativity, risk.

The work load will be quite heavy at times. To stay afloat, plan for a sufficient amount of time to complete the assignment. Remember to make use of your resources: meet with me outside of class, form design groups with your classmates, TALK TO ONE ANOTHER!

Work Days: are designed to bring ideas, challenges, and questions to the studio. It is expected that each student will bring a minimum of one idea, challenge, or question to each work day. Preparation for work

days shall happen prior to class. For example. If a student would like to see what a certain microphone will do, s/he must bring that microphone (or arrange for it to be in class) to the work day. It will not be acceptable to hunt for materials during class. Our class time is limited and therefore preparation is vital to get the most out of our time in class.

Assignments: Projects will be due at the beginning of class. Late projects will be levied -10% per day. To be clear, materials for in-class presentations must be uploaded to the appropriate assignment on WISE prior to the beginning of class. All assignments must be uploaded to WISE.

Project Criteria

An "A" assignment actively seeks and follows through on appropriate yet untested and potentially risky directions/approaches to the design question. It has a transparent process and communicates clearly to both artistic and production collaborators. It incorporates new directions/approaches into the design project while supporting the directions/approaches with thoughtful and creative evidence and analysis. An "A" assignment considers the intended audience and is distinctive, furthering the designer's choices.

A "B" assignment incorporates new directions/approaches to the final project within the design question. It selects a consistent plan and communicates amongst collaborators. It considers alternative directions/approaches to the design project while supporting the directions/approaches. A "B" assignment is relatively clear and error free. It grasps the significance of its intended audience and its connection to designer's choices.

A "C" assignment has a direction/approach to the design question but does not take creative risks in its development. It may fail to develop a consistent process and may be ineffective in its communication amongst collaborators. In addition, an assignment will receive a "C" if it does not have supporting material for design choices/decisions, lacks a sense of audience, and is stylistically unsophisticated.

A "D" assignment fails to present a direction/approach to the design question. It lacks process and communication amongst collaborators. Additionally, a plethora of mistakes may turn any assignment into a "D" if such lapses significantly affect the project's process, final product, and/or "readability".

An "F" assignment results when the designer neglects to hand in the assignment; refuses to address the assignment's topic; or violates common standards of decency. Additionally, plagiarism will result in an assignment grade of "F".

The following is the grading breakdown for this term:

Class Participation: 25%
Projects: 50%
Final Project: 25%

Land Acknowledgement

We are gathered on the land of the Kalapuya, who today are represented by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, whose relationship with this land continues to this day. We offer gratitude for the land itself, for those who have stewarded it for generations, and for the opportunity to study, learn, work, and be in community on this land. We acknowledge that our University's history, like many others, is fundamentally tied to the first colonial

developments in the Willamette Valley. Finally, we respectfully acknowledge and honor past, present, and future Indigenous students of Willamette.

Diversity and Disability

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please notify me as soon as possible. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Services office in Matthews 103 at 503-370-6737 or Accessible-info@willamette.edu to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations.

Course Content Considerations

We will be analyzing multiple standpoints and, at times, we may encounter individual resistance to the text(s). At times, such resistance may provoke unexpected responses. In such cases, please take personal care. Support services are available through Bishop Wellness and the Chaplain's office. I will always be available to assist as desired/needed.

Commitment to Positive Sexual Ethics

Willamette is a community committed to fostering safe, productive learning environments, and we value ethical sexual behaviors and standards. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including discrimination, harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success, and we encourage affected students to talk to someone about their experiences and get the support they need. Please be aware that as a mandatory reporter I am required to report any instances you disclose to Willamette's Title IX Coordinator. If you would rather share information with a confidential employee who does not have this responsibility, please contact our confidential advocate at confidential-advocate@willamette.edu. Confidential support also can be found with SARAs and at the GRAC (503-851-4245); and at WUTalk - a 24-hour telephone crisis counseling support line (503-375-5353). If you are in immediate danger, please call campus safety at 503-370-6911.

Academic Integrity

Students of Willamette University are members of a community that values excellence and integrity in every aspect of life. As such, we expect all community members to live up to the highest standards of personal, ethical, and moral conduct. Students are expected not to engage in any type of academic or intellectually dishonest practice and encouraged to display honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all they do. Plagiarism and cheating are especially offensive to the integrity of courses in which they occur and against the College community as a whole. These acts involve intellectual dishonesty, deception, and fraud, which inhibit the honest exchange of ideas. Plagiarism and cheating may be grounds for failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College.

<http://willamette.edu/cla/catalog/policies/plagiarism-cheating.php>

Intellectual Property & Privacy

Class materials and discussions including recorded lectures are for the sole purpose of educating the students enrolled in the course. The release of such information (including but not limited to directly sharing, screen capturing, or recording content) is strictly prohibited, unless the instructor states otherwise. Doing so without the permission of the instructor will be considered an Honor Code violation and may also be a violation of other state and federal laws, such as the Copyright Act.

Class Assignments

Project 1 ISMs Part I (due 2/2)

You will choose an ISM that is not realism and that differs from your classmates. You will have 10 minutes to present your ISM in class. Your presentation must include the following: definition, historical context, contemporary context (if there are any), and reactions (political, cultural, historical, contemporary, etc.). Finally, your presentation will include an aural element – created by you – that represents the ISM. This is a NON SCRIPT BASED assignment. In other words, texts will include aural and visual images (words may be included). This project challenges the American emphasis on script as text with the hope to open our imaginations and to interpret different texts within the performing arts: aural and visual images, the body, etc. Prior to class, presentations and aural elements are due on WISE.

Project 2 Room Tone (due 2/9)

“Room tone” requires the subject(s) to sit quietly in the room where they will be recorded in order to support any editing needed in dialogue. This project is meant to get you listening to your surroundings, specifically to begin to listen to how space interacts with sound and vice versa. For this project, you will use a simple recording device of your choice (mobile phone, computer, etc) to make two (2) recordings of 5 minutes a piece in two different kinds of spaces. You will use the same device for both recordings. You will then upload to WISE assignments (prior to the start of class) a journal style document that describes what you hear in the recording and your recordings. Things you might consider: how does the recording differ from the live experience; what types of sounds did you hear; what did you notice in the recording that you did not notice when recording; what does the recording miss in the live experience; did you change your process between recordings (explain); moving forward, what might you consider in the process of recording. Each journal entry (two total) should be no less than 250 words. The more time you take to listen and articulate what you are hearing, the more successful you will be in this class and in your design process moving forward. Finally, you will have 5 minutes to present your discoveries to class.

Project 3 Soundwalk (due 2/16)

Working as a team, discover and research two locations in Salem. Once the two locations are chosen, research the locations in terms of history, use, etc. From the research, develop a 5-minute soundscape for each location. The soundscape must be able to seamlessly loop. It should complement the history and current use of the space. It must also take into account transitions within the soundscape as well as how the space may change throughout the day, season, semester, etc. It must tell a story. Each soundscape will be presented in class along with the research materials. Each person must work on each aspect of each soundscape. Individuals will turn in their aspect of research, inspiration, and aural elements for each soundscape. The presentation will be a group presentation of the final products and research/inspirational materials. Each presentation will be no longer than 20 minutes in length. The presentation should be a culmination of everyone’s work as if the team was presenting a unified vision to a prospective job. Prior to class, presentations and aural elements are due on WISE.

Project 4 Musique Concrete (due 2/23)

The purpose of this project is to use found sounds to develop new meaning and experiences connected to text. You are welcome to look up more information on Musique Concrete. I've also placed one of the initial compositions in our WISE Resources by [Shaeffer, Pierre](#). This project has multiple parts. *Part One*: record [Elizabeth Woody's poem The Bridge](#) to an audio only track. This will be the text that will be underscored by you. You may use another person to be the performer of the poem. *Part Two*: produce field recordings of the sounds that will be ultimately used to underscore the poem. *Part Three*: in the style of Musique Concrete, use the sounds to develop a lyrical piece of music and underscore the poem. NOTE: You may not develop a series of field recordings (i.e. a car, a playground, a waterfall). I want you to think about one "site" that when you break down the sounds, you can develop a score that can be used to support the poem. *Part Four*: put it all together into one stereo track and export as an MP4.

Project 5 Film Short Part I (due 3/9)

The sound designer dropped out of the project at the last minute and you've been asked to step in and work finish the project. Please download Geri's Game from WISE. Watch this film short. Notice there is no audio. I strongly suggest you do not go online and find the original film with score as this will not aid in the process or support you in successfully completing this project. Develop a sound map and concept for the film. Support your choices with research (visual, aural, historical, imaginative). Upload your presentation and sound map to WISE prior to class. You will then have 10 minutes to present your sound map and concept for sound. Your presentation should use your research to support your concept.

Project 6 Film Short Part II (presentations due 3/23 & final work is due on 3/30)

Bring your concept from Film Short Part I to life. Design and execute your concept by underscoring the entire film. Note that you need not use a film editing program to support the project unless you already have the skills to drop in the film. The focus here is on concept and beginning to execute the concept. How do the ideas/concept/aesthetic choices transform into actual choices? Balancing the sound is more important than syncing the sound to the piece (the score needs to be relatable and understandable as we watch the film). Focus on the transformation of concept to tangible choices. Support your choices with research. If you discover something new, update your sound map and research files. You will be given 10 minutes to present your score with a 5 minute critique. Your final materials for Part I and Part II will be due on WISE prior to class on 3/30.

Project 7 Play Part I (due 4/6)

Concept, Research, and Sound Plot: you will present your concept, research, and initial sound plot for your *Cherrie Moraga's Giving Up the Ghost* in class. Presentations should last no more than 10 minutes with 5 minutes of critique. Presentations may be digital in format and should include more than aural materials. Research is both historical and inspirational, supporting your concept that should be clear in your presentation. Prior to class, presentations and aural elements are due on WISE.

Project 8 Play Part II (due 4/15)

Cues: Choose one scene from *Cherrie Moraga's Giving Up the Ghost* and develop cues for that scene. Cues may be scene framing cues, specific cues, underscoring, commentary sounds, segues, spot effects, ambiance, etc. You must develop one cue in Logic Pro X with at least one original element. All cues must be executed through QLab. Your presentation should first be the execution of all cues and then show the

class how you developed the Logic Pro X Cue. Your presentation should take no more than 10 minutes with 5 minutes for critique. Prior to class, presentations and aural elements are due on WISE.

Project 9 Play Part IV (due 4/22)

Recording: establish an aural element that you wish to record for Project 7's play. Presentation should discuss how you decided to record the element (which microphone did you use, why?) Did you need to manipulate the recording? What worked? What did not work? What would you do differently next time? How does it fit into the aesthetic of this production? Does this element change the design concept? Prior to class, presentations and aural elements are due on WISE.

Final Project Play Part 10 (Presentations due in class on 4/29 and the final work is due at 11am on 5/5)

This project ties everything together. Here you will finalize your Sound Plot for *Giving Up the Ghost*. You will cue the entire show. On 4/29, you will present your updated Sound plot and some samples of your production. You will work off of previous projects. While repetition in presentation is not necessary, note that you may want to remind us of concept. I strongly suggest your presentation include samples of some of your more difficult sections. This presentation is meant to aid in your development of the project. You should be approximately 75% there – think of the presentation as the beginning of Q2Q (but going through each cue will not be necessary). You will have 10 minutes of presentation with 3-5 minutes of critique. The final version of this project is due at 11am on 5/5 on WISE.

Class Schedule

Thursday 1/21	Introduction	Zoom Class (see WISE for Link)
Tuesday 1/26	Robert Edmond Jones "To a Young Stage Designer"	Zoom Class (see WISE for Link)
Thursday 1/28	Arnold Aronson's "Theatre Technology & the Shifting Aesthetic"	Zoom Class (see WISE for Link)
Tuesday 2/2	In-Class Presentations of Project #1	Discuss Project #1 Project #1 Due Discuss Project #2
Thursday 2/4	Ric Vier's Sound FX Bible CH 8 & Paul Virostek's " How Recording Room Tone Improves Your Field Recordings "	
Tuesday 2/9	In-Class Presentations of Project #2	Project #2 Due Discuss Project #3
Thursday 2/11	Anne Bogart's What's in a Story (Intro, CH 9, CH10, CH 11) Logic Pro X	
Tuesday 2/16	In-Class Presentations of Project #3	Project #3 Due Discuss Project #4
Thursday 2/18	Ross Brown's "Sound Design: the Scenograpgraphy of Engagement & Distraction" Logic Pro X	
Tuesday 2/23	In-Class Presentations of Project #4	Project #4 Due

Thursday 2/25	David Sonnenschein's Sound Design CH 1 Logic Pro X	Discuss Project #5
Tuesday 3/2	David Sonnenschein's Sound Design CH 2 Logic Pro X	
Thursday 3/4	Jeff Seamster's "Wrangling Aesthetic" AND Eric Somer's Abstract Sound Objects Expand the Vocabulary of Sound Design for Visual & Theatrical Media	
Tuesday 3/9	In-Class Presentations of Project #5	Project #5 Due
Thursday 3/11	Andy Farnell's "Designing Sound CH 6.5 & 6.6" & The Critical Response Process Logic Pro X	
Tuesday 3/16	S&FMT: CH 3 & CH 4	Discuss Project #6
Thursday 3/18	Workday: Logic Pro X	
Tuesday 3/23	In-Class Presentations for Project #6	
Thursday 3/25	SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES)	
Tuesday 3/30	S&MFT: Introduction, CH 1, & CH 2	Project #6 Due
Thursday 4/1	S&MFT: CH 5 & CH 6 QLab	Discuss Project #7
Tuesday 4/6	In-Class Presentations of Project #7	Project #7 Due Discuss Project #8
Thursday 4/8	S&MFT CH7 & CH8 QLab	
Tuesday 4/13	Workday: QLab	
Thursday 4/15	In-Class Presentations for Project #8	Project #8 Due
Tuesday 4/20	SSRD (NO CLASSES)	
Thursday 4/22	In-Class Presentations of Project #9	Project # 9 Due
Tuesday 4/27	Workday: Project #10	
Thursday 4/29	In class presentations & work day	Project #10 Presentations
Wednesday 5/5	Final Project due on WISE no later than 11AM	Project #10 Due