

**Sound and The City: Sound and Urban Intervention**  
**ITP NYU Spring 2011**  
**Daniel Perlin studio leader**

**Syllabus and overview**

Sound + The City is a studio course designed examine design and architectural strategies for sound in the urban context of New York City and its five boroughs.

This course is divided into two parts. First, we will examine the characteristics of sound: what, if any, are the differences between sound, noise and music? What makes sound? How can sound effect the way people engage and perceive public space? Aside from an examination of the physical attributes of sound itself, this first section will involve presentations and research into the histories sound art and sound design within the contexts of urban environments.

With this in mind, this research will be directed towards the second phase of the course: the production of a sound- based work that is to be proposed for public space in New York. Emphasis will be given on situating sound both spatially and temporally, understanding the work in terms of site specificity as well as its location within the larger discourses and histories of sound, design and urbanism.

Technical prerequisites are basic sound programs such as Audacity or any basic knowledge of some form of sound-making tools. Course examples may be given using Max/MSP, Processing, Logic, physical computing etc., but only to illustrate concept. The focus will be on the content and context of the works, and participants will be responsible for defining the best tools for the deployment of their ideas.

Final works will be presented as working prototypes/designs or full deployments of the sound interventions. This studio will include a midterm concept critique and final critique by guest architects, artists, designers and sound designers

Course requirements and evaluation:

- 30% Attendance
- 30% Class assignments
- 20% midterm
- 20% final working prototype

## Week 1.

### Course description and introduction.

Presentation 1: Daniel Perlin

A brief look at the history of sound design and recording

-topics: the skull, the ear, the body, Kittler, Attali, music vs. noise vs. sound, Cage, Flusser, Duchamp, film sound, Schaeffer,

Handout from John Cage Future of music: Credo

Assignment for week 1:

Deep listening exercise 1

Explanation of equipment and sign out

-----  
Authors/texts cited:

Jacques Attali *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* with introduction by Fredric Jameson, Brian Massumi translator

Fredrich Kittler: *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* Stanford University Press; 1 edition (April 1, 1999)

Rainer Maria Rilke: "Primal Sound" essay "Ur- Geraus" (*Primal Sound*, 1919)

John Cage *the future of music: credo from john cage: documentary monographs in modern art, edited by richard kostelanetz. praeger publishers, 1970*

Pauline Oliveiros *Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice*. iUniverse

[http://www.deeplisting.org/pauline/writings/quantum\\_listening.html](http://www.deeplisting.org/pauline/writings/quantum_listening.html)

[http://www.ele-mental.org/ele\\_ment/said&did/future\\_of\\_music.html](http://www.ele-mental.org/ele_ment/said&did/future_of_music.html)

## Week 2.

### What is sound?

Look/listen to some of the deep listening exercises from week 1.

Presentation 2: Daniel Perlin

Sound and Urban Intervention: brief histories of sound, sound art and sound cities

Lesson:

1. Different ways of hearing. Thinking about the speaker and the ear
2. Basic principles of frequency and dynamics, A-D, D-A, digital vs. analogue
3. Discussion of site, program for design
4. Listen/look to a sound walk example

Assignment:

Sound walk: make a sound walk of a neighborhood. map it: upload to google maps mashup.

-----  
Authors/texts cited:

Rem Koolhaas *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*

Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller

<http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/index.html>

Physics of Waves: <http://zonalandeducation.com/index.html>

Ovid *Metamorphoses*: Echo and Narcissus

R. Murray Schafer *The Soundscape* pg. 33

Vito Acconci: *Seedbed*

Guy Debord *The Naked City* (1959) and *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967)

Mark Wigley *Constant's New. Babylon. The Hyper-Architecture of Desire* (1999)

### **Week 3.**

#### **Approaching The City**

Look/listen to some of the deep sound walks from week 2.

Presentation 3: Guest Urban Planner from Metropolitan Exchange (MEx)

Lesson:

1. Brief outline of design strategies, elements:

Topics: Psycho, and the phantasmagoric voice from nowhere

2. Discussion of program.

Assignment:

Design proposal for sound + city

-----

Authors/texts cited:

Wilem Flusser : *The Shape of Things: A Philosophy of Design* 1999

Michel Chion: *Audio + Vision: Sound on Screen* with introduction by Walter Murch

Hitchcock: *Psycho* excerpt

#### **Week 4.**

##### **Design Proposal present**

Studio presentations of design proposals for sound + city  
Studio discussions of proposals

assignment: Readings: Flusser, Schaeffer. Assign weekly studio presentations of sound works/histories

#### **Week 5.**

##### **Sound Design for image**

First presentation of sound work/history

Discuss readings

Sound and image

Design Lesson: Signal – noise. Microphones, techniques

Presentation: Sound + Image

Topics: History, Race, Gender, Lying (ethics and faking), Star Wars, USSR, DIY

assignment: Create sound and image work. Write 1 page paper and blog post defining work. Paper is to be printed.

-----  
Authors/texts cited:

Microphone Techniques:

[http://www.deltamedia.com/resource/stereo\\_microphone\\_techniques.html](http://www.deltamedia.com/resource/stereo_microphone_techniques.html)

Magic Lantern Society of America: <http://www.magiclanternsociety.org/>

Balinese Gamelan: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldPMifPbngc>

Walter Murch: Introduction to *Audio+Vision* by Michel Chion

Weiss and Belton *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* chapters:

The Evolution of Sound Technology, by Rick Altman

Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing and Mixing, by Mary Ann Doane

Chris Marker: *La Jetée*

Andrei Tarkovsky: *Stalker*

**Week 6.**

**Sound + image + critique**

Second Studio presentation of sound work/history

Studio present sound and image work. Critique.

Discussion of designs for midterm critique. Works-in-progress.  
assignment: sound + city design prototype

**Week 7.**

**Midterm Critique**

Studio presents design and prototypes.

Guest critics to be announced.

assignment: redesign

**Week 8.**

**Noisy Networks**

Third studio presentation of sound work/history

Presentation: Noise, Radio, Telephony and Audio Networks  
Topics: Radio, Public Enemy, Shocklees, Matrix, Piracy

Lesson: Design an a networked sound broadcast

Assignment: Create a networked sound work

-----  
Authors/texts cited:

Douglas Kahn and Gregory Whitehead *Wireless Imagination: Sound, Radio and the Avant Garde*

Thomas Edison

Hank Shocklee: Twitter Excerpts from @shocklee

Allan Moyle *Pump Up the Volume*

**Week 9.**

**Music, Loops, Clouds and Notation**

Fourth studio presentation of sound work/history

Present networked sound works

Presentation: Notation

Topics: Xenakis, Riley, Skream, Beatles, 12 Tone, Corbusier, Gaming

Assignment: Create a Notation for your system. Write out your piece.

## **Week 10.**

### **Performativity and 'real-time'**

Fifth studio presentation of sound work/history

Presentation: Histories and strategies for sound and performance

Lesson: Create In-studio performance.

Assignment: Create a performance/broadcast/event based on your program.

-----  
Authors/texts cited:

Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Zizek :*Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*

Marina Abramovic: *The Artist is Present* MOMA books  
<http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/>

Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape and Helio Oiticica

Ozzy Ozbourne

Telematic Demonstration

## **Week 11.**

### **Flipping the everyday**

Sixth studio presentation of sound work/history

Presentation: Sound weaponry and Flipping the Everyday  
topics: Kittler, De Certeu, LRADs, Breughel, Microwave sound, Circuit benders, Voice of Allah

Lesson: In-studio circuit bend

Assignment: Redesign presentation

**Week 12.**

**Redesign Crits**

Seventh studio presentation of sound work/history

In-studio critique of redesign presentations I

Assignment: Redesign presentation

**Week 13.**

**Redesign Crits**

Final studio presentation of sound work/history

In-studio critique of redesign presentations II

Lesson: How to present works

Assignment: Prepare for final presentation

**Week 14.**

**Sound + City: Final Critique**

Guest Critics TBA.