

Radio Experiments - NMDS 5563-Spring-Online

15-weeks online - graduate production-studio course
The New School for Public Engagement | School of Media Studies
[MA Media Studies; MS Media Management]

Instructor: Joan Schuman

At root, radio is nothing but a pulse, a throb, an electrical charge. [It] is mostly a set of relationships, an intricate triangulation of listener, "player" and system. (Gregory Whitehead)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students explore the process and possibilities of experimental sound-making with a distinct ear towards radio-centric 'broadcast' realms. By critically exploring work by sound-rich storytellers as well as emergent mediated spaces, students are invited to engage in their own experiments. Students investigate form, content and media vehicles, and, in the process, explore the conventions of transmission artistry, broadcasting and podcasting (ongoing and short-form series). Short productions in various styles (documentary, impressionist narratives, radio art/ audio fiction) initially allow students to test their ears before completing final compositions. Students are expected to work individually and engage in numerous workshop critiques. Each production explores its relationship with radiophonic media, including terrestrial radio as well as online radio sites, independent podcasts, and lo-fi renegade radio, including New School's online, student-run radio station, WNSR (operating since 2007). The class is designed for those with basic audio production skills and access to tools (on-site at New School labs or via their own computer/audio set-up).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- compare storytelling in sound in various dissemination styles (broadcast, narrowcast, site-specific, GPS- facilitated, interactive web installation, etc.)
 - listen critically by utilizing familiar experiences with related media (literature, film, art)
 - investigate form, tone and content relationships by constructing and critiquing student productions
- use the audio medium creatively by exploring multiple narrative approaches and production techniques

PREREQUISITES:

Digital editing experience or audio/radio production or instructor permission. This level II audio production class requires students work in a self-directed fashion on editing software and recording equipment. Students should have access to recording tools such as a flash recorder, DV camera, mp3 recorder; quality microphone. Phones, nor laptops, tablets or Skype should not be used for recording unless you can significantly explore the lower-quality results as part of your narrative structure (that means, don't record your narration tracks with a phone; do record via Skype for a long-distance feel when it is warranted for the story. Students should have some experience in digital editing via Pro Tools, Audacity, Final Cut, iMovie, Garage Band, Audition, Cool Edit Pro, Sound Forge

or any freeware that offers at least four tracks of mixing. Help is available in class as much as can be facilitated virtually across the numerous platforms students will be using; this may include online tutorials and/or Canvas Chat meetings; New School campus labs/equipment check-out facilities are an excellent resource for students located in New York.

Required Books or Course Pack Information

There are no required books or course packs to purchase. All assignments are accessed online via links, PDFs, YouTube/Vimeo, or audio files.

COURSE PROJECTS

- **RADIO CONSTRUCTION:** Throughout the semester, we dialogue in an asynchronous discussion about making radio—anything from recording gear and editing software reviews to story construction. There's a rich landscape of community-making around the medium, particularly for independent producers. In particular, students are invited to explore the step-by-step storymaking podcast, *Out on the Wire*, to guide our conversations. Students must post three times during the semester.
- **SHORT PRODUCTIONS:** Students explore different sonic and narrative structures to tell the same story (using the same interview). Genres to explore: documentary/non-fiction; impressionist narrative; and radio art (blends of audio fiction and/or artistry along with the previous two genres). Project assessment is based on creative use of the audio medium; exploration from conception to production of the relationship of sound to radio platforms; narrative approach to the content/story; and production quality (based on production tools availability). Length: *5 minutes or shorter*.
- **CULMINATING PROJECT:** The three short productions invite students to experiment with radio genres. The final project is an expansion (in length and breadth) of one of those short production styles—documentary/nonfiction; impressionist narrative; radio art (a hybrid blend of fiction/impressionist/doc). The project involves conceiving its format and style; selection of sounds utilized; writing of text if using; and identifying a radio venue for the project. Critique is expected on other students' in-progress audio work; each student defends and explains stylistic choices and applies critiques to improve potential future iterations. Assessment is based on a sound-rich, compelling audio work for a completed design that is comparable in quality and scope to existing projects explored during the semester. Length: *8 minutes maximum*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 -ORIENTATION

Week 2 – Radio Experiments, then + now

Reading:

-D. Lander: Radiocasting: Musings on Radio & Art (1999)

Listening:

- Chorus of Refuge, A. Hepperman, HowSound - 2012 (15 min)
- The Secret History of Podcasting, Benjamen Walker, Theory of Everything - 2015 (37 min)
- Gregory Whitehead, On the Shore Dimly Seen - 2015 (45 min)
- Max Neuhaus - Radio Net (1977)
- Roman Mars, Re:sound, Third Coast Festival (11 min)

Viewing:

- Radioballett (2003)

Week 3 + Week 4 – Approaches to non-fiction: documentary

Reading:

- Alan Hall on Flourishing Radio Docs (2016)
- Veronica Simmonds, To Script or not to Script (2016)
- Nancy Updike, Better Writing Through Radio (2006)
- Sam Greenspan, Radio Producer as Flaneur (2013)

Historical radio reference:

- Studs Terkel – Born to Live (1961)

Listening: Narrated

- Nancy Updike / Death & Taxes, This American Life (40 min)
- Kelly McEvers / Yemen Airstrikes Punish Militants and Civilians, All Things Considered/NPR (7:46)
- Andrea Seabrook/Sam Greenspan / The Bathtubs or the Boiler Room, 99% Invisible (10:49)
- Scott Carrier - Refugee Trail (On the Border Greece & Macedonia), Home of the Brave (14 min)

Listening: Non-narrated

- Alan Hall / Still Points, Turning Worlds, BBC (30 min)
- Erica Heilman / An American Life, Rumble Strip Vermont (31 min)
- Christopher DeLaurenti / Fit the Description, Soundproof (ABC) (30 min)
- A. Henkin, W. Patrick / Talking to Strangers, Out of the Blocks, WYPR-Baltimore (7 min)

Radio Experiment:

- Zach Poff / Radio Silence

Week 5 – SHORT PRODUCTION – DOCUMENTARY/NON-FICTION

Week 6 + Week 7 – Approaches to narrative: impressionist narratives

Reading/Viewing:

- Mira Burt-Wintonick - Storytelling Through Sound: Making Radio Sound Real (2016)

Historical radio reference:

- Antonin Artaud - To have Done With the Judgment of God (1947) **Listening:**

Listening - Narrated Artistry:

- Annie McEwen / Oh Brother (Transom) (12 min)
- Emile B. Klein / The Reformation Bible Puritan Baptist Church (Here Be Monsters) (32 min)
- Diane Weipert, Briana Breen/ The Living Room (Love + Radio) (25 min)
- Katharina Smets / Menuet (Between the Essays, BBC Radio3) (13 min) aired Nov. 23, 2016

Montage Stories:

- Tessie Word / Convergence (Earlid) (13 min)

- Sherre DeLys / Jarman's Garden (The Listening Room/ABC) (14 min)
- Paolo Pietropaolo / Signal to Noise (In the Dark/UK) (13 min)
- Felix Blume / Los Gritos de Mexico (Soundproof) – (17 min)

Radio Experiment:

- Making Waves Soundhacking Performance (Art's Birthday) + Wave Farm

Week 8 - SHORT PRODUCTION – IMPRESSIONIST NARRATIVE

SPRING BREAK - Week 9

Week 10 + Week 11 – Approaches to radio art (fiction; new radio drama; blends)

Reading:

- Haters of Radio Art, Hear me Out – Julie Shapiro, Transom (2015)
- Interview with Ann Heppermann and Martin Johnson, The Timbre (2015)

Historical radio reference:

- Joe Frank, samples (1987-present)

Listening:

- Martin Johnson / Maria (Short Cuts, BBC) – 5 min
- Julie Klausner / Bloodless (Getting On With James Urbaniak) – 11 min
- Ellie Gordon-Moershel / The Record (Serendipity) – 2 min
- Louis Kornfeld, Jonathan Mitchell / Remember the Baby (The Truth) - 10 min
- Stacia Brown / Prince and Philando and Futures Untold (Scene on Radio) - 20 min
- Rikke Houd / The Light (Radiotonic - Radio With Pictures) - 5 min
- Pip Stafford / Iris (Soundproof) (15 min)

Radio Experiment:

- Radio Cegest (transmission broadcasts)

Week 12 - SHORT PRODUCTION – RADIO ART

Week 13 + Week 14 – episodic podcasts TBD + guests + prep week

[previous semesters: Tally Abecassis/First Day Back; Josie Holtzman/Frontiers of Change]

Week 15 + Week 16 – FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS