

Course Syllabus: Fall 2016
ENG6939: Sound, Silence, Environments
Tuesdays 6:00-9:00pm, TBD

Course Description and Objectives:

Not much is as ubiquitous and as historically under-examined as sound. The place of conceptual privilege has been given to vision, not sound, as the lens through which human beings experience the world. Yet sonic interactions are constitutive of the experience of environments for a wide range of species and individuals. Sound is all around and through our environments, from the earbuds in nearly every ear to the call of birds overhead to the conversations we have between friends. Yet what is the relationship between sound and noise? What role does silence play in an increasingly diverse sonic world? How do emerging technologies help us better understand, more easily manipulate, and more readily create sound? How do sonic interactions affect the rest of the listening and hearing world? This course addresses key questions like these.

In this graduate seminar, we will share in a philosophical examination of the nature and scope of sound and soundscapes. We'll develop strategies and techniques to apply that examination to the study and manipulation of sonic environments. Graduate students should expect to play a role in developing the content of the seminar, bringing their own interests to bear on the topics and themes we address. Participation in this course will include furthering the academic study of sound and soundscapes as well as developing technical skills and technological familiarity in the recording and analysis of sound. I anticipate that we will all actively contribute to the course through discussion and development of unique topics or case studies.

Participants in this course will:

1. Develop topical expertise in concepts, theories, and approaches to the study of sound.
2. Cultivate technical expertise in the recording, analysis, and development of sound and soundscapes.
3. Build familiarity with a range of perspectives and topics in sound studies, and
4. Acquire pedagogical skills through practicing listening, developing research projects, and delivering presentation materials on relevant issues drawn from your home disciplines and/or individual interests.

Office Hours:

Office hours will be held regularly. I will guarantee to be available from 8:00am-11:00am on Fridays each week. Additionally, I will work with you to find a mutually agreeable time to meet at other times as needed.

Instructor Contact:

Dr. Jonathan Beever

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Course Requirements:

1. Participation and Attendance 5%
2. Critical annotations 10%
3. Site Recordings 15%
4. Presentation 20%
5. Annotated Bibliography 10%
6. Evaluation of Peer Presentations 10%
7. Soundscape Project 20%
8. Critical Analysis 10%

Required Texts & Materials:

1. Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*.
2. Readings and multimedia content provided through our UCF Canvas webcourses site.

Topics to Include:

- ❖ Hearing and listening
- ❖ The nature of sound
- ❖ Soundscape ecology
- ❖ Noise and sound in local communities
- ❖ Sounds of protest – social justice
- ❖ Education and big data of sound
- ❖ Sound in/as music and art
- ❖ Sound and health
- ❖ Sound and ethics

Course Evaluation:**1. Participation & Attendance (5%)**

Participation and attendance is required. I will work with you to address conflicts and emergencies on a case-by-case basis, but expect you to attend class. Participation hinges on engaging thoughtfully with the readings and your colleagues' analysis of them.

2. Critical Annotations (10%)

Critical annotations will push you to develop understanding of theories, concepts, and figures related to course content. These weekly short analytic exercises will scaffold toward your final project. These assignments will ask you to annotate the week's readings and to draw connections to other works or figures, reminding yourself of comments, questions, or concerns you'd like to bring up in class. Write with the intention of developing a conference-length paper from one or more of them later on. Critical Annotations are due no later than 12:00pm the day of the relevant class session.

3. Site Recordings (15%)

Identify a specific place or places at which to capture recordings over time. Use these recordings as the data for a final project, or as a means by which to explore methods and instruments for the capture, recording, and analysis of soundscapes. Once every two weeks, share a selection of these recordings with me and your peer students.

4. Presentation (20%)

Choose a topic related to the class content and your own interests on which to do an in-class presentation followed by a Q&A period. Presentations can be in any format. Your presentation should seek to give the rest of the class (and us) access to the way your disciplinary background views and engages with relevant issues. Your presentation will be scored with a presentation rubric that values technical communication, clarity, organization, and creativity.

5. Annotated Bibliography (10%)

This list of at least 10 references and summaries will be related to the topic of your presentation. The majority of references should be to academic sources. Citation format should be discipline-specific. Annotations should do at least two things in approximately 2 short paragraphs. They should foremost tell us why you included it as an entry - why is it important for your presentation? Second, they should tell us something about the content - main thesis, approach, important premises, etc. See the [Purdue OWL](#) for more information and for help with formatting. The complete annotated bibliography is due no later than 12:00pm the day of your scheduled presentation.

6. Evaluations of peer presentations (10%)

Offer evaluations of two (2) of your peers' presentations. These should: a) evaluate content delivery, b) assess engagement with relevant issues, c) and pose comments and/or questions for the presenter. You will use the same presentation rubric that I do and include a numeric score along with brief written remarks. Return these comments to me no later than Friday 11:59pm after the relevant presentation. I will anonymize and collect these comments to share with the presenter.

7. Soundscape Project (20%)

Your project should work to carefully and critically engage with the theoretical frameworks and figures we've discussed during the term. Seek to build a pilot or initial exploration of a research project you've identified over the course of the term. The project should take the form of either an audio podcast or a multimedia project that incorporates sound as a key element. Your goal should be furthering a research interest of your own as it relates to sound: this project might become a future publication or new research project.

Your soundscape project will be graded using a critical thinking rubric I will provide in advance. You will receive substantial feedback on this work.

8. Critical Analysis (10%)

Your final critical analysis should be a traditional academic essay, completed with references, that expands the critical work done in your soundscape project. Expect to write between 2500 and 3000 words

Course Grading:

This course will be graded on the following scale, in line with [UCF academic regulations](#).

Letter Grade	GPA	Percent Score
A	4.00	92-100
A-	3.75	90-91

Letter Grade	GPA	Percent Score
C	2.00	70-75
C-	1.75	68-69

B+	3.25	87-89
B	3.00	82-86
B-	2.75	80-81
C+	2.25	76-79

D+	1.25	66-68
D	1.00	62-65
D-	0.75	60-61
F	0.00	<59

Academic Integrity:
Plagiarism, or cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that

assignment and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course and/or the placement of a "Z" designator with your grade. Academic dishonesty will subject you to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule and <http://z.ucf.edu> for further information.

Course Accessibility Statement:

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning, please meet with me (with or without a Student Accessibility Services (SAS) accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. Helpful information is found at SAS: Ferrell Commons 185; 407-823-2371; sas@ucf.edu. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about concerns, but it is best if we talk at least one week prior to the need for any modification.

Teach Act Statement:

The materials for this course are only for the fair use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated. The instructor receives no royalty payments for any materials used in this course.

Syllabus Subject to Change:

I anticipate that I will follow the schedule outlined here, but I may make adjustments based on your interests and what decisions we make together in class. All changes will be clearly announced in person and online. Remaining in the course after reading this syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes and responsibility for being aware of them.