



24/7/365 Beats to Relax/Study To: A Year of Lonely Listening

PFS 265A: Modes of Production

W21, Section 001, CRN: 45516

Wednesdays 12:10-3PM

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Working from home, studying from home. Relaxing at home, listening at home. 2020 has been a year of self-isolation. But how does isolation affect our daily practices, from performing and playing to listening and learning? How does isolation impact our experience of time, ticks, clicks, beats? Of days, weeks, months, years? In this remote graduate seminar we will explore the fundamental concepts of digital sound (from amplitude and frequency, to sampling and synthesizing, to the Nyquist Theorem and Fletcher-Munson Curve) while engaging the burgeoning field of sound studies. We will read selections from Jonathan Sterne's field-defining *Sound Studies Reader* which includes theoretical precedents like Derrida, Barthes, Kittler, and Fanon; foundational texts like Schafer, Attali, Idhe, and Kahn; and contemporary voices like Gitelman, Mills, Rodgers, and Weheliye who are mixing sound studies with methods from media archaeology, disability studies, feminist theory, and critical race theory. Alongside our readings we will both listen to and perform our own sounds in the form of a weekly radio station featuring the history of electroacoustic music from Schoenberg, Russalo, Varèse, and Schaeffer's noises; to Stockhausen, Cage, Oliveros, and Reich's loops; to Moog, Bouchla, Doepfer, and Gillet's synths; to the history of house, techno, jungle, drum and bass...dubstep, nightcore, vaporwave, and hyperpop. Our touchstone while reading and listening will be the contemporary experiments happening from home during the COVID-19 pandemic using tools like Serum and Autotune, services like Splice and Spotify, and venues like Zoom, Twitch, and MineCraft. Alongside our weekly readings and listenings, our original sound design experiments and sound performances will include editing audio in Audacity, sequencing midi in Traktion, sonifying data in Super Collider, and building virtual synthesizers in VCV Rack. After a year of lonely listening, can we learn to play together? What will we be listening to in the next lonely year?

Previous sound design, music performance, or audio production experience is not required and during the first week of class we will work together to tune our weekly readings, listening, and making activities. All readings and software for the class will be free, but having a computer, webcam, microphone, and headphones/speakers will be required for weekly Zoom meetings and sound assignments.

Possible readings:

Stern, *The Sound Studies Reader* (2012)
Husserl, *The Phenomenology of the Internal Time Consciousness* (1893–1917)
Russalo, *The Art of Noises* (1913)
Oliveros, *Software for People* (1984)
Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999)
Roads, *Microsound* (2001)
Lanza, *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak* (2004)
Weheliye, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (2005)
Kramer et al., *Sonification Report: Status of the Field and Research Agenda* (2010)
Rodgers, *Pink Noises: Women on Electronic Music and Sound* (2010)
Mills and Tresch, *Grey Room 43: Audio/Visual* (2011)
Bauman and Murray, *Deaf Gain: Raising the Stakes for Human Diversity* (2014)
Cecchetto et al., *Ludic Dreaming: How to Listen Away from Contemporary Technoculture* (2017)
Weibel, *Sound Art: Sound as a Medium of Art* (2019)
Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (2020)

Possible listenings:

Satie, Schoenberg, Russalo; *Precedents in Ambience, Atonality, and Noise*
Varèse, Schaeffer, Stockhausen; *Poème Électronique, Musique Concrète, Elektronische Musik*
Theremin and Martenot, *Early Electronic Instruments*
John Cage, *Chance and Silence*
Pauline Oliveros, *Deep Listening at the San Francisco Tape Music Center*
Steve Reich, *Repetition, Loops, Phase*
Delia Derbyshire, *BBC Radiophonic Workshop*
Max Matthews and Laurie Spiegel, *Computer Music at Bell Labs*
Bob Moog and Donald Buchla, *East Coast and West Coast Synthesis*
Dieter Doepfer and Émilie Gillet, *Eurorack and Mutable Instruments*
Suzzane Ciani, *From Buchla Concerts to Xenon and Pop-and-Pour*
Wendy Carlos, *Synthesized Film Scores*
Yoshimura, Shimizu, Hosono; *Music for Museums, Media, and Muji*
Afrika Bambaataa, *Hip-Hop Drum Machines*
Brian Eno, *Ambient Music*
Rich, Richter, and Aphex Twin, *Lullabies, Lucid Dreaming, and Sleep Music*
Mindi and Keith Obadike, *Sound Art*
BGM, *Long Durational Game Music and Chiptunes*
House/Techno/Jungle, *A History of Dance Music*
Nightcore, Vaporwave, PC Music, Hyperpop

Possible workshops:

Audio Editing with Audacity (free), Audition, Pro Tools, or tool of your choice
Midi Sequencing with Tracttion (free), FL Studio, Ableton, or tool of your choice
Sonification with Super Collider (free), Pure Data, Max/MSP, or tool of your choice
Modular Synthesis with VCV Rack (free), Softube, Reason, or tool of your choice