

COMM 4405: SOUND DESIGN

SPRING 2019 MON-WED 9:30 – 10:45 AM ANTH G15

CRN 13052

3 sem. hrs.

INSTRUCTOR: Christopher Renaud

Office Hours: M/W 11– 1 PM; F 12 - 2

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PREREQUISITES: COMM 3351, 3352 or 3353. You must also have earned a **minimum of “C” in COMM 1154, ENGL 1102 and COMM 3353** to take this course.

REQUIRED MATERIALS



No Textbook - Readings and Supporting Materials will be distributed electronically via CourseDen.



USB 3.0 Hard Drive** to store your work files, at least 300 GB space for this course.



Personal Headphones** for use in the editing lab and with our sound recorders.



One movie ticket (about \$10) for a contemporary theatrical listening experience – TBA



Software (optional) – Adobe Audition and Premiere are provided **free** in our lab classroom and editing suites. Optionally, if you commute or are otherwise interested, UWG students may subscribe to the full Adobe Creative Cloud Suite (including all Adobe programs) for \$19/mo., to work from your home computer or laptop.

** These are one-time purchases, which you may already own; aspiring filmmakers definitely should. You will use them over the duration of your course of study in Mass Communications. See the Mass Communications Required Materials handout.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This intensive, intermediate-level skills workshop is focused on understanding and exploring the unique **communicative and expressive potential of sound**. Through critical listening, analysis, reading, and a number of exercises and creative projects, you will learn to harness and develop the resources of carefully considered sound recording, construction, manipulation and mixing applicable to a wide range of audio-visual media.

A major goal of this course is to **normalize** the idea of **early, intentional and exploratory creative decision-making about sound** – a vital but frequently overlooked part of media making. Students will consider how the manipulation of sound generates experience, emotion, meaning and identification for listeners and viewers.

You will learn to make **deliberate choices** at every stage of the sound gathering and mixing process, from microphone selection and placement to post-production editing, use of EQ and filters to layering and mixing in Adobe Audition.

Along the way, we will touch on the **history** of sound recording practice and exhibition in the field of sound design, **analyze** the **work** and **writings** of practitioners in the field, and **practice** technical concepts related to the gathering and polished mixing of high-quality sound recording, construction and design.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

This course meets Mass Communications Department Learning Objective #3

“Students will demonstrate *ability to relate and/or apply* concepts, theory/research, and professional principles to analyze and synthesize information, create, develop, produce, and/or write convergence journalism, film and media arts, and/or public relations communications for converging digital, multi-media, and traditional media.”

“Students will develop their **understanding** of the forms and modalities of film and video production, the associated technologies and methodologies, as well as the medium’s function as a means of communication and creative expression.”

1. Students will understand **concepts** and apply **theories** in the use and presentation of images, sounds and information. (ACEJMC SLO 2)
2. Students will think **critically, creatively** and **independently**. (ACEJMC SLO 7)
3. Students will apply **tools** and **technologies** appropriate for the communications professions in which they work. (ACEJMC SLO 12)
4. Students will **analyze** and **explore** strategies of **communication through sound**, both independent from and in conjunction with moving images.
5. Students will **activate** and **develop** their listening perception, both in the world-at-large and in the media they encounter or create.
6. Students will **understand** and **apply** practices of good sound recording.
7. Students will **apply** various technical and conceptual factors to the design of sound constructions and sound-tracks, both as independent work and for moving images.
8. Students will **plan** and **execute** design strategies in **collaboration** with others to **construct** systems of sound that deliver information and produce intended effects for viewers.
9. Students will **synthesize** technical and aesthetic concepts to **produce** portfolio-quality work.
10. Students will **develop** analytical and communication skills necessary for the productive analysis and critique of creative work – whether theirs or others.

BIG PICTURE STUFF

This will be an intensive hands-on and ears-on workshop. Expect and plan for a combination of reading, listening, writing or computer-based creative work every week.

Learning is doing. A significant amount of learning happens *outside of class*, as you work on assignments and exercises.

Learning new software and tools requires significant time. Factor this into your schedule to complete assignments. Doing assignments means applying concepts (both technical and abstract) to your own work and process, but also **empowering yourself to experiment, find solutions and take risks**.

This class values both skills development and creative exploration. To the greatest degree possible, you will be evaluated **objectively** in this class. I will provide **rubrics** as often as possible. Yet, the remaining **subjective** portion of a grade tends to look favorably towards those projects that wander into unfamiliar territory to explore the possibilities of the medium.

Success here depends on your own drive and engagement, the time you devote, and an interest in discovery. We want to talk about your discoveries in class.

Discussion. Speaking **precisely, genuinely** and **frankly** about what you or others have created, or what you have **experienced** through others’ work, is crucial to this and every production course. We’ll have daily discussion that relies upon your input. Your silence will be loud. Risk speaking, especially when you feel unsure. If you are a shy person, I’ll endeavor to provide a safe environment for you to speak.

At this level, your classes are developing material for your **portfolio** and for **internship** opportunities. The work you make in this class should be geared for **public viewing**, ie. outside of this class. We will have an end-of-semester **public screening** of your work from this class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Read the handouts that accompany each project carefully. They will answer many of your questions. Don't wait until the last minute to begin. There will be approximately 6 weeks worth of readings and analysis, but the bulk of your grade will come from creative projects.

Production Exercises	30%
Reading/Listening Responses	10%
Exam – Terms and Concepts	10%
Participation	10%
Final Project and Self-Evaluation Paper	30%
GoogleDrive Portfolio	10%
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TOTAL	100%

Production Exercises (30%)

Much of what you stand to learn is in the doing of these exercises, but this is not automatic. They require your dedicated commitment to understanding the purpose of each exercise, and following through with hard spent time. The exercises in this class will depend upon a combination of individual and group components, as in almost all media production. Many projects will have several phases that require you to meet specific deadlines and format requirements. Both are important. It's not accidental that a media production unit is called a "team." You will have opportunities for both playing your part and for sprinting towards the goal.

Naming and Digital Delivery of Assignments: In the professional world, you are asked to deliver files within very specific parameters of file type and naming. We will set up your GoogleDrive portfolio early in the semester, for which you will provide Share access to me. The naming and organization of assignment files and folders will follow a pattern and is crucial to me finding your work. The naming pattern is generally: 4405 SP19 *PROJECT#* Your Name ASSIGNMENT NAME

Reading/Listening Responses (10%)

For most of our reading and listening exercises, I will ask you to do a small amount of writing. This will be detailed on a handout for each exercise. This is not busy work. Writing is an important extension of thought, important for exploring and clarifying your ideas. Investment in this writing is as important as any creative assignment. The goal is to activate your thinking and give it voice; and prepare you for discussions.

Exam on Terminology and Concepts (10%)

This will occur towards or after mid-semester and will be written short answer. Along the way I will ask you to create and maintain a glossary of important sound-related terms and concepts.

Final Portfolio of Projects (10%)

File management and **meeting delivery requirements** are important professional skills we will practice in this class. You will be graded on **organization and completeness**

Your Final Portfolio will be an organized online folder with of digital versions of **all of your creative production work** for the semester, which you will maintain throughout and submit with your final project during finals week. You are responsible for keeping this archive up to date, but I will help you set it up.

We will use your **mywestga.edu GoogleDrive** account for storage and **delivery** of your **finished** work, as well as for collaborative file sharing.

Your **work files (project and media files)** should be always be stored on your personal **external hard drive**. This gives you the most flexibility in terms of where you can work. **You will also keep master copies of your finished, exported work on your own hard drive.**

Final Project (30%)

The final project for this class will be a short audio-visual piece, with particular emphasis on the soundtrack, to be pitched and developed around mid-semester. Applying the skills, concepts and principles that you've developed in the course, you will plan and execute this piece for your capstone work in this class. Details will be given later in a separate handout, but you should begin gathering ideas and inspiration as soon as possible. You will also turn in a **3-4 page response paper and self-evaluation** summarizing what you have learned this semester. This will be detailed in the final project handout.

<p style="text-align: center;">FINAL CLASS MEETING ("Exam" Period) – FINAL PROJECT and PORTFOLIO DUE Wednesday, May 1st, 8:00-10:00 am</p>
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You are required to attend as for any other final exam.

GRADING

You build your grade from zero by earning points on assignments and exams. Your grade is not a reflection of how much I like you, how good of a person you are, your talent or your potential. Grades are measures of your performance on each of the assignments you submit for this course. Your final grade is mathematically determined by accruing points for each assignment. We use a simple system. 100 points for the semester = 100%. Thus, a **10 point assignment** is worth **10% of your final grade**.

A = 90 - 100% B = 80 – 89% C = 70 – 79% D = 60 – 69% F = 59% or below

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Regular attendance is crucial in this workshop, but it's only one element of participation. Good performance begins with being **present** and engaged. Being fully present, in this moment, is really the key to your success as a student, and is the best preparation for your professional life.

Cultivate a personal interest in the subject matter, and challenge yourself to work hard. Bring your "A" game.

Beware of giving yourself permission to miss class, tune out or be distracted. I will endeavor to make this one of the most interesting classes you take, but the reality is it's in your hands.

Be vocal and be curious. It's more lively and interesting when you do. Please don't hesitate to float an idea you are unsure about, or to ask questions when you don't understand something. Persist in asking follow up questions. You're often not alone in looking for the answer, and the discussion will benefit the entire class.

Professionalism and being "present": Knowing the appropriate time to use your **mobile device** should also be seen as a professional skill, and we will hold to a professional standard. Phone use during discussion, screening or listening exercises will negate your participation for the day; you will be asked to put it away. Be where you are.

Absences: Life happens. I understand this. However, media-making is fundamentally a group activity and you can't participate if you are not here.

You will be granted one absence without penalty, but you are still expected to meet deadlines for your work. After that, I won't adjudicate excused or unexcused absences; **you will simply lose 4% of your course grade for each absence, without a cap, as applied to your final course grade.** This adds up quickly, and frequently comes back to haunt even the best students. Perhaps those especially. Excellent work does not make up for lack of participation.

MY ROLE

I am fundamentally - as an instructor and human being - committed to helping you – to understand concepts, principles, software, technology and creative techniques.

I am also committed to guiding and pushing you towards make your very best work, and to help you articulate your thoughts and ideas to others in person and through your work.

In doing that...

- 1) to assign exercises and projects that will teach you both technical skills and their creative application
- 2) to provide interesting examples and context
- 3) to facilitate stimulating in-class discussions and fair assessments of your creative work
- 4) to be adaptive, responsive to your needs – and available during reasonable hours.

The one thing I can't do is read your mind.

If I can modify my instruction in any way to help you learn better, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I expect this to be an engaging, perception-altering and productive semester ~

I'm looking forward to working with you.

UNIVERSITY AND OTHER COURSE POLICIES

The University of West Georgia provides common language for all syllabi regarding policies, and those apply to this course. Please see the following link for the most up-to-date information:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

Email Policy

You are expected to have access to your westga.edu account for all communication regarding the course. If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask them in class. It's best to get clarification in there, where everyone can benefit. **If you need to contact me, do not use D2L. E-mail me from your westga account at crenaud@westga.edu - and importantly, include "4405" in the subject line of the email. I will endeavor to reply within 24 hours.**

Americans With Disabilities Statement

If you are a student with a documented disability and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through UWG Accessibility Services first. **A UWG-AS Counselor will coordinate those services, and provide you with the necessary documentation to give to me.** Students who need accommodations for learning or who have particular needs **should then share these concerns or requests with me early in the term (no later than week 3 of the course).** See the above link.

Late work

Late work is not acceptable. If you anticipate having to miss a deadline, please turn the assignment in to me *before* it is due. **Deadlines are not negotiable in this course.**

Classroom Etiquette

In order to create an atmosphere where individual expression and social interchange are respected, please (1) address each other with **respect**; (2) **contribute** to discussions often, without dominating them; (3) **stay focused** on the topic being discussed. Side-chatter is distracting for everyone, especially myself, and is wasted energy; focus that energy into the discussion. Disruptive behavior in the classroom is not acceptable.

Mobile Devices

Please be respectful and contribute to a **focused** classroom environment. Whether you are conscious of it or not, **side activity on your device is disruptive and obvious** to your neighbors and to myself. **No social-networking, working on outside assignments or texting in class.** Breaking with this policy will result in you being asked to leave the class for the day, with an impact on your participation grade. If you have an issue that requires attention to your device, please notify me before class.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated in this or any other UWG course. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by university rules. See the link above.

Equal Opportunity Statement

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from employment or participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by The University of West Georgia.

Affirmative Action Statement

The University of West Georgia adheres to affirmative action policies to promote diversity and equal opportunity for all faculty and students.