

Expressive Cultures: Sounds (V55.0730)
MW, 9:30-10:45 a.m., Silver 320

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Approach & Objectives: This course explores the various ways auditive phenomena (sound, silence, noise, music) are conceived, produced, perceived, and organized by humans into meaningful (and often musical) forms and events. Beginning with basic concepts in understanding sound and musical expression, we will discuss the audition and perception of musical sounds, the musicalization of natural and man-made sounds, and proceed to examine processes that shape them, such as memory, migration, religion, politics, etc. within various cultural settings. Our ultimate goal is to develop a broader concept and sense of what is music and musical and thereby enable students to appreciate today's soundscapes of mediated and multicultural musics.

Format: There will be classes consisting of lectures during this period on Mondays and Wednesdays each week, and one lab section (Wed. **or** Fri.). It is up to students to determine which particular lab section to be in for the whole term. Lab sections are meant to be review-study sessions and give opportunities for raising questions and further discussion of issues related to the lecture topics. Whenever possible, specialists and musicians will be invited to lecture or perform for the class. Relevant films will also be scheduled.

Blackboard Course Website: To ease administration of the class and facilitate communication between the instructor, preceptors, and students, a Blackboard course website has been set up for this particular class. Registered students are automatically enrolled and listed as authorized users and can access the site by logging on to <http://home.nyu.edu> and clicking on the "Academics" tab. You will see the course name and number of this class be listed under "Classes". Click on it and you will automatically be logged on. Make it a point to log on to the Blackboard website regularly every week to read the posted announcements and assignments and prepare for class.

Readings & Media Assignments: There is one required textbook (*Soundscapes: Exploring Music in a Changing World*, ed. by Kay Kaufmann Shelemay. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001) for this course. It is available at the NYU Main Bookstore. In addition, there are also assigned readings taken from various sources. Assigned readings are meant to supplement the lectures and serve as important source materials for the take-home written assignments to be given occasionally during the lab sections. Some of these readings are on the Internet and can be accessed by clicking on the links or typing the given URLs. The rest will be put up on the Blackboard website as Acrobat .pdf files prior to and during the week they are assigned and can be downloaded and printed out.

Listening assignments are also a necessary and important component of this course. Audio will be uploaded onto the course website and found under “Course Documents” along with their corresponding notes.

Much of the information needed for understanding the content of this course is based on information contained in the readings as well as in class lectures. It is therefore advisable that you take thorough lecture notes. Video sessions are TBA – dates and times will be announced on the Blackboard site well in advance of the session. They will normally be scheduled in one of the viewing rooms of the Avery Fisher Center for Music & Media on the mezzanine floor of Bobst Library.

Course Requirements: Attendance at all lectures, lab sections, and video sessions is compulsory. All students are expected to show up promptly for class, to fully participate in class discussions, and to complete all reading and listening assignments **by** the class period for which they are assigned. Written assignments are due on the date they are announced as “due”. Late assignments will be marked down by a half grade for each class session they are overdue. **No “Incomplete”-s can be given for the course unless a student shows adequate proof of emergency, medical or otherwise, which prevents him/her from fulfilling all the requirements of the course during the semester.** There will be one midterm exam and one final exam. They will feature a variety of question types (e.g. short answer, multiple choice, short essay, and listening questions). The midterm exam will cover the first half of the course. The final, however, will be comprehensive with emphasis placed on the second half of the course, although basic concepts and terms from the first half of the course will still be relevant. Both midterm and final exam questions will be based upon material from the reading, listening, and viewing assignments as well as class lectures. Request for make-up exams from individuals will only be granted after presentation of adequate written proof of a medical emergency from the attending physician.

Grading Breakdown:

Quizzes	10%
Written Assignments	20%
Lab (attentive presence, preparedness, participation, and Website contribution)	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Soundings

- 9/8 General Introduction and Course Overview
- 9/13 The Physical Basis of Sound
Read: “The Physics of Sound” in *The Sounding*
(<http://library.thinkquest.org/19537/Physics.html>)
“How We Perceive Sound: The Ear” in *The Sounding*
(<http://library.thinkquest.org/19537>)
- 9/15 Psychoacoustics & Bioacoustics
Read: Shreeve, James. “Music of the Hemispheres” in *Discover*
(Oct. 1996)(<http://www.cis.vt.edu/fac/janene/2204/music.html>)
Glausiusz, Josie. “The Genetic Mystery of Music” in *Discover*
Vol. 22, No. 8 (Aug. 2000)
(http://www.discover.com/aug_01/featmusic.html)
- 9/20 Sound/Silence
Read: Peek, Philip. “Re-Sounding Silences.” In: P. Kruth and H. Stobart,
eds., *Sound* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press,
2000), pp. 16-33.
Solomon, Larry J. “The Sounds of Silence: John Cage and 4’33” “
(<http://www.azstarnet.com/~solo/4min33se.htm>)
- 9/22 Noise/Music
Read: Brown, Barclay. “The Noise Instruments of Luigi Russolo”
- 9/27-9/29 Human Voice: From Speech to Song
Read: Nattiez, Jean-Jacques. “Inuit Vocal Games”.
View: *The Education of a Singer at the Beijing Opera* (VCA 3910)
- 10/4-10/6 Musical Instruments
Read: Shelemay, “Appendix.” *Soundscapes*, pp. 345-49.
- 10/11-10/13 Soundscapes
Read: Schafer, R. Murray. Chap. 2, “The Sounds of Life” **and** Chap. 5,
“The Industrial Revolution” from *The Soundscape: The Tuning
of the World*
Shelemay, “Chapter 1: Introduction.” *Soundscapes*, pp. 1-24
View: *Sound, Music, and the Environment* (Vol. 1 of *Exploring a World
of Music* Series, VCA 8864)

II. The Cultural & Social Foundations of Musical Sound

- 10/18-10/20 The Music of Everyday Life
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 25-58.
- 10/25 Review Session
- 10/27 MIDTERM EXAM
- 11/1-11/3 Music and Migration
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 59-96.
- 11/8-11/10 Music of Worship & Belief
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 153-80.
- 11/15-11/17 Music and Dance
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 181-210.
- 11/22-11/24 Music and Memory
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 211-46.
- 11/29-12/1 Music and Identity
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 247-80.
- 12/6-12/8 Music and Politics
Read: Shelemay, *Soundscapes*, pp. 281-314.
- 12/13 Review Session

*****DATE OF FINAL EXAM TO BE ANNOUNCED LATER*****