

Expressive Culture: Sounds

*Interactions between Technology and
Experimental and Popular Music
in the 20th and 21st Century*

College Core Curriculum (MAP) - CORE-UA.730.010

New York University

Fall 2014

M/W 11:00-12:15pm – Silver 320

Instructor: Jaime Oliver La Rosa

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30 - 13:30 or by appointment.

Office: Waverly Building, Room No. 266F

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Recitation Instructors:

Adele Fournet

Section 011 (R 9:30-10:45am, Silver 318)

Section 012 (R 11:00-12:15pm, Silver 318)

Office Hour: *pending*

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Kai Finlayson

Section 013 (R 2:00-3:15pm, Silver 318)

Section 014 (R 3:30-4:45pm, Silver 318)

Office Hour: *pending*

Office Hour Location: 268 Waverly

Email: kf951@nyu.edu

Course Description:

Think about your favorite music, musician, work, and/or song, and then think about the technologies that make them and your listening possible: microphones, recording studios, CDs, mp3 files, musical instruments, speakers, iPods, etc. Are these technologies essential to this music? Are they circumstantial? In this class we will explore music produced in the 20th and 21st centuries and its relation to technology, as a means to develop critical listening strategies.

Some musical practices are overtly technological and use screens, speakers, computers, and other gadgets as central aspects of their music. Other musical practices seem, at least at first sight, non-technological. As we will see in class, these various musical practices provide us with interesting spaces for discussion. We will analyze how media are not mere passive containers or transmitters, but that the use of technologies transformed music making.

The primary materials for this class are music recordings and readings. The repertoire of music we will listen to will comprise mostly two sets of music: (1) experimental electronic and computer music, and (2) a diverse range of popular music. Furthermore, we will attempt to explore the intersections and interactions between them. We will listen to the music examples to get our initial, gut reactions; then, we will use primary source readings to contextualize these works; and finally, we will use analytical readings to learn about the many ways we can think about them.

I hope that through these materials we will be able to better approach the following questions: What is music? What is sound? What is noise? What is music technology? Is music inherently technological? Can technology be expressive? What is real? What is mediated?

Very Amazing Guest Performers:

We are expecting to have three guests performing live in class throughout the semester. They are Katja Vetter, Pamela Z, and Maria Chavez. Check them out and have their pages as reference:

<http://www.katjaas.nl/>

<http://www.pamelaz.com/>

<http://www.mariachavez.org/>

Concert Reports, Short Papers, and Quizzes:

Short papers (2-4 pages) should help you to obtain experience for writing your concert reports and final papers. We do not expect you to provide a set of directionless unconnected observations, but rather to construct arguments that support a clearly defined thesis or central point.

You will be required to go to one concert and write a report (3-5 pages) that applies some of the ideas developed in class. You will be able to choose from a set of independent NYC venues: The Stone, Issue Project Room, The Kitchen, Le Poisson Rouge, and Roulette. Tickets vary in price, but you should expect to spend at least \$10 for a concert.

Quizzes are necessary to check that you have been reading and listening to the assigned materials, but they also serve as lists of bullet/talking points, vocabulary, and insights that can help you in class discussions and in preparing your papers.

Your final paper (5-7 pages) will be your opportunity to show us that you can choose a work of music, (or a music culture or situation, a venue, an album, etc. - your imagination is the limit), ideally one that you care about, and engage critically with it. We will require you to present your tentative paper subject for us to approve it, and we will work with you in shaping your paper, suggesting concepts that might apply or sources that might be helpful.

Required Materials: Texts, Audio and Video:

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, a collection of reading materials will be available in PDF format through New York University's Classes system. Bibliographic information for the required readings are given below in the class schedule. Listening materials will also be available on NYU Classes as mp3 files. We will sometimes also use websites and online videos.

Participation:

Participation in lectures and sections is not only part of your grade, but it allows you to contribute to the development of the class. If something interests you and you contribute,

chances are you will have better explored, and perhaps even guided, the design and development of the class. This class will largely be what you make of it.

Attendance, due dates and quizzes:

Attendance to all lectures and sections is mandatory, and due dates for your assignments are not flexible. You should not expect an extension for a paper or a make-up quiz unless you provide us with a written, detailed request, subject to the professor's approval, in advance of the due date with a valid reason. Similarly, an absence will bring down your attendance score unless you provide appropriate reasons for your inability to attend (i.e. a note from your doctor.). Computer meltdowns are not an appropriate excuse. Backing up your computer in hard drives, or archiving papers in your e-mail or cloud, is an indispensable step for anyone who's work depends on a computer.

Grading distribution:

+ Concert Reports / Short Papers	30%
+ Quizzes	25%
+ Attendance and Participation	20%
+ Final Paper	25%

Integrity of Scholarship:

Learning to properly engage with the work of other people by appropriately crediting their ideas as they impact your own is central to intellectual and academic life. This means that you should reference them in the body of the text and include proper citations and bibliographical references. Any case of academic dishonesty will be reported immediately and may result in disciplinary action. This policy is taken extremely seriously by all of our faculty and there are numerous precedents, so do not think that you will not be caught.

If we learn that you have committed any kind of academic dishonesty you will be immediately reported for the university to take action.

For more information on NYU's policies regarding academic integrity, please see this website: <http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html>

Status of the Recitation Instructors:

The recitation instructors for this course are brilliant graduate students who will soon be professors themselves. The recitation sessions that they lead are a central part of this course. Their evaluations of your written work and classroom participation will constitute the bulk of your grade. More importantly, they are on hand to answer your questions, help you learn how to become better writers and thinkers, and musicians, and to make sure that your experience this semester is rich and positive. I trust that you will work closely with them, learn from them, and treat them with respect.

Etiquette:

Carrying on conversations during lectures and recitation sections is distracting and disrespectful, so please refrain from talking when lectures and sections are in progress (this

also holds for when video and audio examples are being played). We require you to concentrate on the issues being discussed and engage with them. If you want a good class, then you must make it good. Questions, comments, insights, etc. are more than welcome during lectures; just raise your hand and make your comments available to the entire class, not just the person sitting next to you. In recitation sections, of course, you should routinely contribute to discussions.

Please do not use your computer or telephone during lectures or sections, not even discretely. Furthermore, turn your cellphones off so that they don't interrupt the lectures and discussions.

Status of This Syllabus:

This syllabus is a working document. As the semester progresses, we may make changes to reflect the needs of the group and the schedules of guest lecturers and performers. Updated versions of the syllabus will be posted on the NYU Classes site and mentioned in class.

Course Outline:

Session 1: What is technology, music technology, and can there be music without it?

Reading:

McLuhan, Marshall. (1994). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. MIT press.

Session 2: What is sound, musical sound, and noise?

Air pressure vibrations, periodicity and aperiodicity, pitch, rhythm...

Session 3: The Phonograph

Edison's Phonograph, Records, Fidelity, Phonograph Effects, Aura.

Reading:

Edison, Thomas .A. (1878) *The Phonograph and Its Future*. The North American Review, Vol. 126, No. 262 (May - Jun., 1878), pp. 527-536

The Phonograph (1877). *New York Times (1857-1922)*; Nov 7, 1877;

Possibilities of the Phonograph. (1878) *Boston Daily Globe (1872-1922)*; Feb 23, 1878;

Katz, M. (2010). Introduction and Chapter 1, *Capturing sound: how technology has changed music*. Univ of California Press.

Listening:

Enrico Carusso, La Giubba

Geraldine Farrar, Mme Butterfly

Bing Crosby, Learn to Croon

Session 4: The Studio

Multichannel mixers, magnetic tape, and production: Glenn Gould, The Beatles Sgt Pepper, Brian Eno.

Reading:

Hecker, Timothy. (2008). Glenn Gould, the vanishing performer and the ambivalence of the studio. *Leonardo Music Journal*, 18, 77-83.

Gould, Glenn. (1966). The prospects of recording. *High Fidelity Magazine*, 16(4), 46-63.

Eno, Brian. (2004). The studio as compositional tool. *Audio culture: Readings in modern music*, 127-130.

Listening:

Glenn Gould, video excerpts

The Beatles, partial cuts from Sgt. Peppers.

The Beatles, Strawberry Fields for Ever.

The Beatles, For the Benefit of Mr. Kite.

The Beach Boys, Vegetables

Serge Gainsbourg, Je t'aime... moi non plus

Software:

Nine Inch Nails, <http://www.ninremixes.com/multitracks.php>

Session 5: Musique Concrète

Pierre Schaeffer, Concrete vs Elektronische, Reduced Listening, Cinq Etudes, Permanence-Variation, Pseudo-Instruments, Acousmonium, Pierre Henry.

Reading:

Schaeffer, Pierre. (2004). Acousmatics. *Audio culture: Readings in modern music*, 76-81.

TBD

Listening:

P. Schaeffer Etude aux Chemins de Fer / Etude Violette 1948

F. Bayle, L'Oiseau Chanteur 1963

B, Parmegiani, Incidences Résonances 1978

P. Koonce, Pins 1995

Session 6: Listening and Soundscape

Pauline Oliveros and Deep Listening, R. Murray Shaffer and the soundscape, Francisco Lopez, Annea Lockwood, Hildegard Westerkamp, Christina Kubisch, Electrical Walks, and Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's Audio and Video Walks.

Reading:

López, Francisco. (2004). Profound listening and environmental sound matter. *Audio culture: readings of modern music*. New York (NY): Continuum International Publishing Group, 82-87.

Oliveros, Pauline. (2003). Acoustic and virtual space as a dynamic element of music. *Women, Art, and Technology*, 212.

McCartney, A. (2000). Soundscape composition and the subversion of electroacoustic norms. *Canadian Electroacoustic Community*.

Schafer, R. M. (1977). The tuning of the world.

Listening:

Annea Lockwood, A Sound Map of the Hudson River 1982

Francisco Lopez, La Selva

Session 7: Class Visit by Katja Vetter

<http://www.katjaas.nl/>

Reading:

Schedel, Margaret. (2007). 2 Electronic music and the studio. pp. 24-37

Session 8: Quiz 1

Session 9: Class Visit by Pamela Z

<http://www.pamelaz.com/>

Reading:

Pamela, Z. (2000). A Tool Is a Tool. *Theater*, 30(2), 62-64.

Session 10: Mechanical instruments - Lecture by Kai Finlayson

TBD

Reading: TBD

Listening: TBD

Session 11: Theremin

Leon Theremin, the theremin instruments, and the Schematic.

Reading:

Oliver La Rosa, Jaime. E. (2012). Theremin in the Press: Construing 'Electrical Music'. *Presented at the Electroacoustic Music Studies Conference.*

Listening:

Les Baxter, "Lunar Rhapsody" 1947

Clara Rockmore & Jascha Heifetz, Achron,

Percy Grainger, Free Music Number 1

Edgard Varese, Ecuatorial

Session 12: Elektronische Musik and the Robots

Eimert & Stockhausen, Serialism, Dehumanization, Kraftwerk

Reading:

Eimert, H. (1957) "What is Electronic Music?" 11-13 Die Reihe Vol 1.

Listening:

P. Boulez, Piano Sonata II

K. Stockhausen, Studie Elektronische II

K. Stockhausen, Kontakte, strukturs ix, x, & xi.

Kraftwerk, We are the robots

Session 13: Synthesizers 1

RCA Mark Synth, Bob Moog, Modularity, DIY, Voltage Control, Automation, Wendy Carlos, Minimoog.

Listening:

RCA Demo, Bach Fugue No. 2 1955

Milton Babbitt, Ensembles for Synthesizer 1964

Wendy Carlos, Switched on Bach, Bach Prelude and Fugue, 1968

Emerson, Lake and Palmer Trilogy, 1972

Chick Corea & RTF, Vulcan Worlds, 1974

Stevie Wonder, Boogie On Reggae Woman, 1974

St. Vincent: Bring Me Your Loves, 2014

Session 14: Synthesizers 2

SFTMC, Don Buchla, Pauline Oliveros, Automation and the Sequencer, Randomization, Morton Subotnick, Laurie Spiegel & Generative Music.

Reading:

Pinch, T. J., & Trocco, F. (1998). The social construction of the electronic music synthesizer. *ICON J Int Comm Hist Technol*, 4, 9-31.

Diliberto, J. (1983) An interview with Donald Buchla, Polyphony

Listening:

Pauline Oliveros, Bye, Bye Butterfly 1965

Eliane Radigue, Arthesis Theater Vanguard, Los Angeles, 1973

Morton Subotnick, Silver Apples of the Moon 1967

Laurie Spiegel, Appalachian Grove 1974

Video:

Eliane Radigue IMA Portrait

Session 15: Quiz 2

Session 16: Class Visit by Maria Chavez

<http://www.mariachavez.org/>

Reading:

Chavez, Maria (2010). *Pink noises: Women on electronic music and sound*. Rodgers, T. (Ed.). pp. 94-103, Duke University Press.

Session 17: Amplification 1

Chuck Berry and Hendrix: Rock and Roll, Electric Guitars, Overdrive and Feedback; Eliane Radigue & Tape Feedback; Cage: Amplifying small sounds; David Tudor: Feedback Networks and generative systems. Example in class: clipping, contact mics and no input mixers.

Listening:

Chuck Berry Maybellene 1955
Chuck Berry Roll Over Beethoven 1956
The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Foxy Lady, 1967
Eliane Radigue, Stress-Osaka June 1969
Jimi Hendrix, Machine Gun, 1970
David Tudor Pulsers 1972

Session 18: Amplification 2: The case of Jamaican Dub

Amplifiers, Radio Waves, Sound Systems, DJs and Dub Versions; from Mento to Ska, to Reggae, to Dancehall; Modern Dub.

Reading:

Norman C. Stolzoff. (2000). Chapters 3 & 4. *Wake the Town & Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica*. Duke University Press.

Listening:

Theodore Miller, Mento Band 1950s
Prince Buster, Oh Carolina 1960
The Wailers, Skatalites & Coxson, Simmer Down 1963
Bob Marley, Soul Rebel 1970
King Tubby, Dub Plates 1973-76
U Roy, Natty Rebel 1976
King Tubby, Take Five 5, 2002 release?

Session 19 & 20: Liveness 1 & 2

Live vs. Mediatized, Walter Benjamin's Aura, Video Killed the Radio Star, Remediation, Transparency vs. Hypermediacy; Mediation as Alteration; Original and copy?; The Unplugged Phenomenon.

Reading:

Auslander, P. (2008). Chapter 2 from *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture*. Routledge.
Benjamin, W. (1936). *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility*.

Listening Examples:

Les Paul and Mary Ford, Tiger Rag
Nirvana, Smells like teen spirit live vs. Studio. vs. Nirvana Unplugged.
My Favorite Things, John Coltrane vs. Julie Andrews
Mili Vanilli @ the Grammy's
Jessica Simpson @ SNL
Pink Floyd Live
Britney Spears Live
Eric Clapton, Tears in Heaven @ MTV Unplugged

Session 21: What is Special about the Voice? Vocoders and AutoTune

The Human Voice and Identity; Vocoders: Coding voices and the War & Robot and Computer voices; Auto-tune, Studio Production and live performance. Auto-tune and authenticity; Auto-tune the News.

Reading: TBD

Listening Examples:

Max Mathews, Daisy
Charles Dodge, Speech Songs
Kraftwerk, We are the Robots
Laurie Anderson, Oh Superman
Cher, Believe.
T-Pain, and Much more ...

Session 22: Quiz 3

Session 23: Distributing, and Consuming Music (and Meaning) in the Analog Era

MUZAK; from Vynils, to tapes, to CDs to MP3s; Walkmans and Boomboxes; "home taping is killing music" and the Mix Tape; Grrrl Riot, International Sound Communication (ISC), and self-producing and distributing media; Throbbing Gristle.

Reading:

Manuel, P. (1993). *Cassette culture: Popular music and technology in North India*. University of Chicago Press.

Moore, T. (2005). *Mix Tape: The Art Of Cassette Culture*.

Marcus, Sara. (2010) *Girls to the Front: the true story of the Riot grrrl revolution*. New York: Harper Perennial: Riot Grrrl and the revolutionary feminist force of tape distribution

Listening:

MUZAK

Brian Eno, Discreet Music 1975

LL Cool J, I Can't Live Without My Radio, 1985

ISC Selection

Selections form the Riot Grrrl Movement.

Throbbing Gristle, Don't do as you're told do as you think, 1980

Session 24: Sampling, Copyright and Authorship

Copyright and Oral tradition; Meaning in Music; Post modernism, the blurring of high and low culture and the loss of meaning; quotation and collage; DJ Turntable Techniques; Public Enemy's Fight the Power; Oswald & Plunderphonics; Girl Talk & Mash Ups;

Reading:

Katz, M. (2010). Chapters 6 and 7, *Capturing sound: how technology has changed music*. Univ of California Press.

Demers, J. T. (2006). introduction + selections. *Steal this music: How intellectual property law affects musical creativity*. University of Georgia Press.

Listening:

James Tenney, Collage 1, 1961

John Oswald, dab, 1988

Girl Talk, Whats it all about, 2008

Camille Yarbrough, Take Yo-Praise 1975

Fatboy Slim, Praise You, 1998

Public Enemy, Fight the Power, 1989

Video:

Documentary: Good Copy Bad Copy <http://goodcopybadcopy.net/>

Session 25: New distribution models: Internet, P2P, Webradios and Copyright.

Personal computers; The internet and Netscape; MP3s and mp3 players; Napster, Kazaa and P2P Filesharing; Economics and Law of filesharing and the drops in sales; Remediation: the iTunes Store and Webradio; New models for music production and distribution; Copyright and the right to culture.

Reading:

Demers, J. T. (2006). selections. *Steal this music: How intellectual property law affects musical creativity*. University of Georgia Press.

Sam Inglis, (2002) OVAL Markus Popp: Music As Software, <http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/oct02/articles/oval.asp>,

Listening & Web-browsing:

Ovalprocess, 2002

Nine Inch Nails, NINRemixes, 2005

Bjork Biophilia App. 2011

Video:

Lars Ulrich & Chuck D debate @ Charlie_Rose, 2000

Session 26: Quiz 4