

Syllabus

Expressive Culture: Sounds

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

College Core Curriculum - CORE-UA.730.001 (9251)

New York University

Fall 2021

M/W 11:00-12:15pm – Silver 320

Instructor: Jaime Oliver La Rosa

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

Office: Waverly Building, Room No. 266F

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Recitation Instructors:

Youssef ElBeshlawy

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

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

Office Hour: Friday 13:00 - 14:00

Office Hour Location: 268 Waverly

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Kenneth Lim

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

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

Office Hour: *pending*

Office Hour Location: 268 Waverly

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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, mixers, digital files, musical instruments, speakers, streaming platforms, 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 transform music making and its reception.

The primary materials for this class are music (and video) 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 sound art, 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 two guests performing live in class throughout the semester. Due to covid restrictions we are awaiting confirmation.

Concert Reports, Short Papers, and Quizzes:

Short papers (2-4 pages) should help you obtain experience 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.

Covid regulations permitting: 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. During classes, we will develop a list of terms that you should understand and know how to use.

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. As covid may impact your ability to attend classes, we will encourage you to participate in other ways if/when this happens. But you should engage and participate and make sure your recitation instructor is in contact with you.

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. 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 whose work depends on a computer.

Attendance is very important. We will not have all lectures recorded so you should not expect to have access to them unless you are present or can ask a friend for their notes. I will however make my slides available as well as all audio files used for the class. IF however, you are experiencing covid symptoms, do not come to class and follow NYU's safety protocols.

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. I hope they become an important resource for your learning process and that you are able to experience some of their own work and interests.

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 discreetly. Furthermore, turn your cellphones off so that they don't interrupt the lectures and discussions.

Academic Writing:

Academic writing in general is an art in itself. You need to learn that how you express your ideas on writing reflects on the ideas themselves. So if you are writing academic essays for the first time, or if English is not your first language, I strongly recommend you consult with the NYU Writing Center and make an appointment.

More information at http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

Status of This Syllabus:

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

Covid:

I am, as I imagine you are too, both excited and somewhat anxious to return to in-person classes. Excited because we have all been through a difficult time and to have human interactions that feel a bit more normal is a welcome change. However, I am also anxious because although we are at the forefront of trying to bring our lives back to normal through the multi-pronged approach NYU is taking to ensure we all stay safe, we all have people we care for who we need to keep safe. For that reason, I will be very adamant in enforcing you are all properly masked in nose and mouth and I will encourage you to follow all the protocols that NYU has put in place to keep us and our community safe. So please:

- Be very mindful of your masking.
- Don't come to class if you are feeling sick.
- Pick a seat in this class and use it every time.

Course Outline:

week 1

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

Reading:

McLuhan, Marshall. (2013). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Gingko Press. pp12-22 (Selections)

week 2

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. pp. 12-49

Listening:

Enrico Carusso, La Giubba
 Geraldine Farrar, Madame Butterfly
 Bing Crosby, Learn to Croon
 Billie Holiday, Blue Moon

week 3

Session 4: 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*. pp. 76-81.
 Chion, Michel. *Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, Taylor & Francis Group, 2012. pp.48-53

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 5: The Music 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>

week 4

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:

Schafer, R. M. (1977). The tuning of the world.
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, P. (1995). Acoustic and virtual space as a dynamic element of music. *Leonardo Music Journal*, 5(1), 19-22.

Listening:

Hildegard Westerkamp, Kits Beach Soundwalk, 1989.
Annea Lockwood, A Sound Map of the Hudson River 1982
Francisco Lopez, La Selva

Session 7: SOUNDWALK DAY

This session meets in central park at 2pm. More details to follow...

week 5

Session 8: Quiz 1

Session 9: Theremin and Early Electric Instruments

Leon Theremin, the theremin instruments, and the Schematic.

Reading:

La Rosa, J. E. O. (2018). Theremin in the Press: Instrument remediation and code-instrument transduction. *Organised Sound*, 23(3), 256-269.

Listening:

Les Baxter, "Lunar Rhapsody" 1947
Clara Rockmore & Jascha Heifetz, Achron,
Percy Grainger, Free Music Number 1
Led Zeppelin, Whole lotta love.
Edgard Varese, Ecuatorial

week 6

Session 10: Elektronische Musik and the Robots

Eimert & Stockhausen, Serialism, Dehumanization, Kraftwerk

Reading:

Eimert, H. (1957) "What is Electronic Music?" 11-13 Die Reihe Vol 1. 1-13
Cross, L. (1968). Electronic Music, 1948-1953. *Perspectives of New Music*, 32-65.

Listening:

P. Boulez, Piano Sonata II
K. Stockhausen, Studie Elektronische II
K. Stockhausen, Kontakte, strukturs ix, x, & xi.
Kraftwerk, We are the robots

Session 11: Synthesizers 1

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

Reading:

Pinch, T. J., & Trocco, F. (1998). The social construction of the electronic music synthesizer. *ICON J Int Comm Hist Technol*, 4, 9-31.
Pinch, T. J., & Trocco, F. (2004). *Analog days*. Harvard University Press.: 1-89

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
Bob Marley, Stir it up, 1978.
St. Vincent: Bring Me Your Loves, 2014
Sun Ra!

week 7

Session 12: Synthesizers 2

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

Reading:

Diliberto, J. (1983) An interview with Donald Buchla, *Polyphony*: 14-17

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 13: Discussion of Case Studies About the Public's Perception of Technology

*Player Pianos, Drum Machines, Crooning, Dylan, Intonarumori, and Synthesizers.
Bob Dylan's switch from folk to electric band rock format.*

Reading:

Pinch, Trevor J., and Karin Bijsterveld. "" Should One Applaud?" Breaches and Boundaries in the Reception of New Technology in Music." *Technology and Culture* 44.3 (2003): 536-559.
Frith, Simon. "Art versus technology: The strange case of popular music." *Media, culture & society* 8.3 (1986): 263-279.

Listening:

Dylan, *Russolo*

week 8

Session 19: Quiz 2

Session 20: Amplification 1: Overdrive and Feedback

Chuck Berry, Sister Rossetta Tharpe and Jimi 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.

Reading:

Waksman, Steve. *Instruments of desire: The electric guitar and the shaping of musical experience*. Harvard University Press, 2001: 1-14, 167-206.

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

week 9

Session 21: 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). *Wake the Town & Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica*. Duke University Press. Chapters 3 & 4. pp. 41-114

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 22: Liveness

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

Reading:

Auslander, P. (2008). *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture*. Routledge: Chapter 2: p73-127.
Benjamin, W. (1936). *The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility*. p. 1-26

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

week 10

Session 23: 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:

Provenzano, Catherine. "Auto-tune, labor, and the pop music voice." *The Relentless Pursuit of Tone: Timbre in Popular Music* (2018): 159-184.

Listening Examples:

Max Mathews, Daisy
Charles Dodge, Speech Songs
Kraftwerk, We are the Robots
Laurie Anderson, Oh Superman
Cher, Believe.
T-Pain, Buy U A Drank, Official Video
T-Pain, Buy U A Drank, NPR acoustic Performance.

Session 24: Distributing, and Consuming Music (and Meaning) in the Analog Era

MUZAK; from Vinyls, 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. Introduction. pp. 1-22
Moore, T. (2005). *Mix Tape: The Art Of Cassette Culture*. pp. 1-95
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 pp. 1-30

Listening:

MUZAK
Brian Eno, *Discreet Music* 1975
LL Cool J, *I Can't Live Without My Radio*, 1985
ISC Selection
Selections from the Riot Grrrl Movement.
Throbbing Gristle, Don't do as you're told do as you think, 1980

week 11

Session 25: 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). *Capturing sound: how technology has changed music*. Univ of California Press. Chapters 6 and 7, p.98-159
Demers, J. T. (2006). *Steal this music: How intellectual property law affects musical creativity*. University of Georgia Press. introduction + Chapter 1. pp. 1-30.
Shusterman, R. (2018). *Performing live: Aesthetic alternatives for the ends of art*. Cornell University Press. pp. 60-75

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 26: New distribution models: Internet, P2P, Webradios, Streaming, 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). *Steal this music: How intellectual property law affects musical creativity*. University of Georgia Press. Chapter 3. pp. 71-110

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

week 12

Session 27: Mobile Music: Audio Streaming and Recommendation systems.

Pandora, Spotify, Bandcamp, Soundcloud.

Reading:

tbd

Listening & Web-browsing:

tbd

Video:

tbd

Session 28: Quiz 3