Weber State University

THEA 3500: Sound Design / Fall 2013

Tues/Thurs 12:00 PM- 1:15 PM

**Instructor:**

Jessica Greenberg **Office:** Browning Center302

**Office hours:** Tues 9am-11am and Weds 3pm-5pm

**Email:** jessicagreenberg@weber.edu

This course will be an introduction to the art and craft of sound design for theater. It will explore the tools and processes essential to conceptualizing and implementing both the content of a sound design and the sound system for delivery of that content. We will read and discuss plays, and we will also work on and attend university productions.

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop a concept for the aural world of a piece of theater.

- Find and create sound content that fulfills their concept of the aural world of their design.

- Assemble the essential components of a sound system and implement its proper operation.

- Design a sound system suited to the physical layout of the theater, the scenic design, and the original aural content.

- Express themselves with confidence through the written word and verbal presentations, as well as technical paperwork.

- Discuss the basic behavior of sound as a physical entity.

**Program Outcomes for Theatre:**

**1.** Have writing skills and ability to use research tools (library, internet, etc.).

**7.** Have the ability to critically evaluate what they and others have created.

**8.** Develop necessary skills to be proficient in at least one area of theatre (performance, teaching, technical/design-costume, technical/design-scenery, technical/design-lighting, technical/design-sound, directing, theatre management, or playwriting), with the ability to identify, analyze and resolve specific problems pertaining to that area.

**10.** Have experience with individual and collaborative processes needed to produce and understand theatre.

**Attendance:** The Theatre area recognizes the importance of class participation and performance. To this end we enforce the following attendance policy: Tuesday/Thursday classes are allowed 2 absences, Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes are allowed 3 absences, however these absences may not be on a scheduled test day. Once the allowed absence limit has been reached the student's grade will drop incrementally for each additional absence.

Example: Mitzi, an “A” student, has missed 3 classes in a MWF theatre class. Today she is missing class and her grade will drop to an A-. If she misses the next class, her grade will drop to a B+. One more absence and she will have dropped a full letter grade to a B.

Tardies are as important an issue as absences. Therefore, 2 tardies equal 1 absence. Students should plan ahead and use absences and tardies wisely.

**Required Text:**

***Audio Made Easy*** Fourth Edition. By Ira White

**Required Technology:**

**Required**: Protractor. Flash Drive for media. **Optional**: A laptop with free student versions of *QLab* (Mac only) and *Audacity*. Headphones – closed back.

**Recommended Resources:** These are NOT assigned; instead they are resources that I have found useful.

***Sound and Music for the Theatre***, Third Edition. By Deena Kaye and James LeBrecht.

***Mixing a Musical, Broadway Theatrical Sound Techniques***. By Shannon Slaton

***Sound Systems: Design and Optimization***, Second Edition. By Bob McCarthy.

**Late Policy:**

Work is considered late if it is not turned in at the beginning of the class period for which the assignment is due. Computer or printer problems do not constitute a valid excuse, the work will still be considered late. Work submitted late will lose a full letter grade per 24 hour period for the first 3 days, after which they will no longer be accepted and will receive a 0. Late work may be submitted to my box in the DPA main office (have the person at the front desk sign for it and mark the time it was received). Late work will not be accepted via email. There will be no extensions for presentations or the written work which accompanies them; failure to present or submit written work on the assigned date will result in a 0 for the assignment.

**Evaluation:**

A student’s final grade for the class will be determined by dividing the total number of points earned over the course of the semester by 1000 (the total possible points).   There may be some opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester, however there will be NO individual assignments for extra credit, nor any extra credit after the final grade in the class is determined.

**Outcomes Assessment:**

Journals   (15)                                                             100 Points                                           10%

*Subjective Assessment*

Scene Project                                                              200 Points                                           20%

*Subjective Assessment*

Editing & Cue Lists (3)                                              200 Points                                           20%

*Subjective Assessment*

Final Project                                                   200 Points                                           20%

*Subjective Assessment*

History Presentation                                                  100 Points                                           10%

*Subjective Assessment*

Participation and Crew Hours                                   200 Points                                          20%

**Total**                                                                           1000 Points                                         100%

**Extra Credit Opportunities:**

Attend and write a one page response due 1 week later. Up to 50 points on your final grade.

*Guerilla Girls* lecture on Wed Sept 11th at 7pm in the Kimball Visual Arts Center. Event is free.

*Orchesis Dance Theatre*, Nov 14, 15, or 16 at 7:30pm in Browning Center Allred Theater. $9.

Any 1 performance with the music program.

**Respecting the Lab:**

You will need to use the technology lab to complete homework assignments. The complete lab schedule will be available soon. It is currently not open on late nights or weekends. Please respect this space and the equipment. Bottled water only, no food allowed.

**Assignments:**

**JOURNALS**

Once each week, describe in detail sound you observe in the world. Include the date, time of day, weather conditions, and the location of your observations. Look for: how the environment changes sound, how sound affects your experience of a space, examples of reverberance, echo, and reflection. Write down your impressions of how you feel observing the sound. Be as poetic as you like.

**PRODUCTION HOURS**

You will be required to do 10 hours of sound related production work over the course of the semester on Weber Theatre Productions THE PLAIN PRINCESS and / or OF MYTH AND MUD. You will have a crew hours sheet to be signed by a supervisor confirming your work. Scheduling information to come.

**SCENE PROJECT**

You will come up with a sound design concept with paperwork for a scene in the play OF MYTH AND MUD by Sarah Saltwick. You will write a 1 page analysis, find or create content, edit content, and create a cue list from that content. You will create a signal flow diagram for a sound design in a theater space, with thought to microphone and speaker placement, mixing, and architecture. You will create other corresponding paperwork. You will speak eloquently about your work and present to the class.

**SOUND DRAMATURGY PRESENTATION**

In a short presentation, you will choose a time and place in history and research music / aural qualities of that period. You will bring in at least 5 audio samples to share and discuss important music trends, instrumentation and technology if applicable, important musicians, etc. If you were doing a sound design for a play in this setting, what should you know about?

**EDITING & CUE LIST (3)**

You will use software *QLab* and *Audacity* to realize your design concept for 3 difference exercises: Quick Fire Challenge, your M & M chosen scene, and the Final Group Project. You must demonstrate an understanding of the basic tools in these programs to implement your artistic choices.

**Week #1, Class 1-2**

Aug 27 Tues Introduction. Syllabus. What is sound design?

Assigned: Reading OF MYTH & MUD

Aug 29 Thur Discuss Script. Foundation of Sound Design. Developing Concept.

DUE: Reading OF MYTH & MUD

Assigned: 1 page Analysis

**Week #2. Class 3-4**

Sept 3 Tues Jump Right In! Crash Course in Zoom Handy Recorders

Record 10 sounds with recorder.

Sept 5 Thur Jump Right In! Crash Course Audacity.

*Audacity* Tutorial Editing Existing File. *Audacity* Tools, effects.

**Week #3, Class 5-6**

Sept 10 Tues Basics of Sound. Properties. Important Vocabulary.

Assigned: Read Hand Outs.

Sept 12 Thur Basics of Sound. Technology. Important Vocabulary. Possible Guest Speaker.

DUE: Read Hand Outs.

DUE: 1 page Analysis

**Week #4, Class 7-8**

Sept 17 Tues DUE: Presentations of 5 Sounds Project.

Basic of Sound Technology Continued.

Assigned: Read Ch 1-4 in Audio Made Easy

Sept 19 Thur Microphones

DUE: Ch 1-4

DUE: Four Journals

Assigned: Read Ch 5-6. Skim 7.

**Week #5, Class 9-10**

Sept 24 Tues Gain, Signal Flow, Mixing, Basic Plumbing.

DUE: Read Ch 5,6,7.

Assigned: Ch 11.

Sept 26 Thur Speakers

DUE: Read Ch 11.

**Week #6, Class 11-12**

Oct 1 Tues Paper work. Groundplan, Section, Schematic, Gear List, Sound Plot.

Assigned: Read Hand Outs. Assigned: Paperwork. Review ground plans.

Oct 3 Thur In Space Tour of PRINCESS Sound System

***(PRINCESS Performances Oct 4-12. Please attend FIRST WEEKEND)***

**Week #7, Class 13-14**

Oct 8 Tues NO CLASS

Oct 10 Thur Preparing to Build Cues. In Class Intro to *QLab* tutorial.

Assigned: Outline Scene Cue Plot for M & M

Assigned: Listen to CD Ch 3,6 & 8 in book for Tuesday.

**Week #8, Class 15-16**

Oct 15 Tues System In Class Work Session for Paperwork. Bring Protractor.

Assigned: Choose Scene for *QLab* Project, find source material.

Oct 17 Thur Research and Sourcing Content

DUE: Four Journals

DUE: Paperwork first draft.

**Week #9, Class 17-18**

Oct 22 Tues *QLab* Tutorial In Class

Oct 24 Thur In Class Work Session- *QLab*

DUE: Source Material.

**Week #10, Class 19-20**

Oct 29 Tues Working With A Theatre Company

Oct 31 Thur Rehearsals. Running The Show. Collaboration

Assigned: Sound Dramaturgy eras. Due Week 13

**Week #11, Class 21-22**

Nov 5 Tues DUE: Presentation: *QLab* Cue List for Scene, with Revised Analysis & Paperwork.

Nov 7 Thur Acoustic Scavenger Hunt

***(MYTH & MUD Performances Nov 8-16. Please attend)***

**Week #12, Class 23-24**

Nov 12 Tues Assign Groups for Final Project

Nov 14 Thur In Space Tour of M & M Sound System

DUE: Four Journals

**Week #13, Class 25-26**

Nov 19 Tues DUE: Sound Dramaturgy Presentations

Nov 21 Thur Resumes, Portfolios, Websites, Interviews

**Week #14, Class 27-28**

Nov 26 Tues Stage Management

Nov 28 Thur HOLIDAY NO CLASS

**Week #15, Class 29-30**

Dec 3 Tues Set up for Final Presentations

Dec 5 Thur Final Group Design Presentations

DUE: Three Journals. Portfolio of semester’s work.

*The above syllabus is an approximate schedule and subject to change. Adjustments will be announced.*

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

**Academic Dishonesty:** As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course. Plagiarism is a violation of he WSU student code and is not acceptable in this course. WSU subscribes to Turnitin.com, an electronic service that verifies the originality of student work.

**Core Beliefs:** According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to “[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs.” As a note, I am not willing to censor your fellow students and their writing. Each student has an individual voice and it is very likely topics and language will come up that may be offensive to some.

**Department Course Content Policy**: Some of the writings, lectures, discussions or presentations in this course may include material that some students may find offensive. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking. If you have a concern, please discuss it with me at your earliest convenience.

**Disability Accommodation:** PPM 3-34 notes: “When students seek accommodation in a regularly scheduled course, they have the responsibility to make such requests at the Center for Students with Disabilities before the beginning of the quarter [semester] in which the accommodation is being requested. When a student fails to make such arrangements, interim accommodations can be made by the instructor, pending the determination of the request for a permanent accommodation.”

**Counseling Services:** College can be stressful. We all need a little help sometimes. Please remember that there are completely free services available to talk with someone about small or large issues you might encounter in any part of your life. Call the Counseling Center at 801-626-6406

or visit http://www.weber.edu/counselingcenter/

**Emergency Closure:** If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct our class via Canvas. Look for announcements through Weber email and on our Canvas page.