

# University of Georgia — *Music in Digital Culture*

Instructor: Dan Tramte  
Email: listen@dantramte.com  
Meeting time: T/Th, 10:30am – 11:45am  
Office Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

*Bookmark the following links; you will visit them regularly throughout the semester.*

- Course Website: \_\_\_\_\_
- Online Streaming tutorials via Twitch.tv: \_\_\_\_\_

## **[Possible] Texts and excerpts from:** (\* will likely use)

Bard-Schwarz, David. *An Introduction to Electronic Art Through the Teaching of Jacques Lacan: Strangest Thing*. London & New York: Routledge, 2014.

\*Chion, Michel. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

\*Collins, Nick, Margaret Schedel, and Scott Wilson. *Cambridge Introductions to Music: Electronic Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

\*Cornell, Lauren and Ed Halter. *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-first Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015.

\*Holmes, Thom. *Electronic and Experimental Music: Technology, Music, and Culture, Third Edition*. New York & London: Routledge, 2008.

Kember, Sarah and Joanna Zylinksa. *Life After New Media: Mediation as a Vital Process*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012.

\*Miller, Kiri. *Playing Along: Digital Games, YouTube, and Virtual Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

\*Essays by: Steven Takasugi, Jennifer Walshe, Seth Kim-Cohen, and others regarding “new discipline” and “non-cochlear” music.

## **Course description:**

Students enrolled in *Music in Digital Culture* will study technical topics (e.g., physics of sound and its representation as binary digits, interactivity in music, and gaming) and critical topics (e.g., digital piracy, music and moving image, as well as the “New Discipline”). Students will survey the history of music technology with a focus on distribution, including the formal models (e.g., physical mediums to streaming) and Web 2.0 platforms (YouTube, Soundcloud, and various social media). Students will write blogs and a final paper on these topics. Meanwhile throughout the semester, students will work on projects designed to facilitate practical training in audio/video editing (e.g., recording, sampling, processing, and mixing tools).

## **Objective:**

As students pursue their academic/creative endeavors, it is not uncommon for trivial technical obstacles to hinder their research. It would be a shame, for example, if musicologists studying theater omitted a potentially crucial audio-visual example because they didn’t know how to edit video. The same issues apply to ethnomusicologists (perhaps with regards to recording techniques), theorists (analytical tools), performers (documentation), and of course

composers trying to find their outlets as digital technology becomes a dominant medium within our culture. *Music in Digital Culture* is thus heavily geared towards *practice*; students will gain hands-on experience with software in order to eliminate future technical obstacles.

Moreover, it is ever more crucial that musicians be aware of the ethical issues they encounter while using these recording/streaming/sampling tools in an online environment. It is because of this that in *Music in Digital Culture*, students are encouraged to engage critically with these issues.

### **Online Tutorials:**

To demonstrate fixed vs. live dissemination models, I will occasionally offer alternative mediums for learning software as a *supplement*, not a *substitute* for class time. These alternative learning environments will take the form of YouTube and Twitch tutorials respectively. YouTube tutorials will be prepared prior to class, and will target students who are relatively unfamiliar with various audio/video software. Twitch screen-cast tutorials will afford students the opportunity to interact with me in real time, and will thus serve as a flexible medium to address specific issues.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is expected and factors into the class participation component of the grade. Should a student accumulate more than three unexcused absences, they will be docked a full letter grade.

### **Blogs**

In order for students to familiarize themselves with readings/repertoire, and to practice engaging with it in a critical manner, students are required to participate in four blogs. These blogs are available at the listening/reading center <insert link> (password \_\_\_\_)

Each link is directed to a blog with a multi-topic prompt, where the students will contribute a 400 word response. Students should not give mere play-by-play reactions/synopses, but instead, engage critically with the materials. Responses may be a 'reply' to prior comments, but may not be reactive/antagonistic. The blog responses will be semi-public,\* encouraging students to consider the perspectives and interpretations of their peers.

\* The blogs are password protected, so they are only visible to members of the class. Students may choose to blog anonymously, in which case, they must pick a username and inform the instructor.

### **Projects**

Students will complete four projects (three small projects and a final project) to demonstrate their facility in the foundational software presented in class.

- PROJECT 1. Voice Manipulation via sample-editing  
—Using Audacity, cut up a speech (tbt) and re-order the words to produce a message of your own creation.
- PROJECT 2. Sound-representation with non-standard symbols  
—Using vector editing software like Inkscape or Illustrator alongside audio-visualization software such as sonic visualizer, produce a “graphic score” of a song or piece of electronic art. Do not use standard western notation.
- PROJECT 3. Field Recording/Documentation

—With a mobile recording device, document the sounds of your favorite space. With these samples, use a D.A.W. (digital audio workstation) such as REAPER, to assemble a 2 to 5 minute creative composition or a “sound-documentation project.”

• **PROJECT 4. *Final Project; Choose from list:***

— Interactive Media

Using one of the interactive mediums discussed in class (namely PD or Max), create a 5 min. piece or multi-functional sound toolbox.

—Re-score a film scene

Design sound, overdub voices, and create a background track for a film scene

—Design sound to be implemented in a small video game

—Compose a short (5 min.) audio-visual piece

**Final Paper**

Write an 8 to 12-page paper on one of the following topics:

• Copyright of sampling in the digital age

—Discuss issues involving copyright cases since new distribution platforms have emerged

• Tool-assisted analysis of music

—Produce an analysis of a non-notated piece of music using some of the tools discussed in class (e.g., transcription, FFT analysis, visualizations).

• Music in an expanding field

—Explore a trend-line in music of the last ten years as new media has facilitated new modes of expression

• The impact of Social Media on music

—Choose an artist or work that has been impacted in some way by social media and/or mobile phones

• Topic of Student's Choice

—Submit a 300-word proposal for approval by April 4

**Grade Breakdown**

Participation	10%
Blogs	10%
Project 1	10%
Project 2	10%
Project 3	15%
Final Project	20%
Presentations	5%
Final Paper	20%

## Schedule

\*\*\*Potential guest lecture to be worked into this schedule: Popular Music & Copyright in Uganda (Krystal Klingenberg, Ph.D. Candidate in Ethnomusicology, Harvard University).

### January

Week 1. Physics of Sound

~Listening: Alvin Lucier's *I'm Sitting in a Room*

Thu, Jan 19. Welcome; sound propagation

Week 2

~Listening: Pauline Oliveros Improvisations

~Reading

Tue, Jan 24. Physics of sound continued | Microphones

Thu, Jan 26. **BLOG 1 DUE**; Microphones continued; Audacity Workshop

Week 3

~Listening: Wendy Carlos's *Switched on Bach*

~YouTube Tutorial by instructor: Delays/Filters

~Reading: Ch. 4, the Post War Sonic Boom from *Cambridge Introductions to Music*

Tue, Jan 31. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Mediums & instruments; Final Audacity Workshop

### February

Thu, Feb 2. Digital Audio—to computer and back again; Binary representation

Week 4

~Listening: Iannis Xenakis, *Mycenae Alpha*

~Reading: Ch. 3, Digital Synthesis and Computer Music from *Electronic and Experimental Music*

Tue, Feb 7. **Project 1 due**; Audio visualization / representation

Thu, Feb 9. Spectral Analysis, FFTs

Week 5

~Listening: Lasal's *Hexagrama*

Tue, Feb 14. Sonic Visualizer workshop

Thu, Feb 16. Big Data, Music information Retrieval

Week 6

~Listening: György Ligeti's *Artikulation*

~YouTube tutorials by instructor on vector editing

Tue, Feb 21 **BLOG 2 DUE**; Inkscape Workshop

Thu, Feb 23. Standard vs Non-standard notation

Week 7

~Listening: Marina Khorkova's *INSTALLATIONEN*; Henrique Vaz's *Black MIDI*

Tue, Feb 27. Inkscape Workshop

March

Thu, Mar 2. Project 2 DUE; the Digital Audio Workstation

Week 8

~Listening: J. Cole, *GOMD*; Venetian Snares, *öngyilkos Vasárnap*

Tue, Mar 7. Samples vs. Samples

Thu, Mar 9. Reaper Workshop

Week 9

~Listening: Luc Ferrari, *Presque Rien No. 1*; Natasha Barrett's *Animalcules*

~Twitch Tutorial by instructor on REAPER

Tue, Mar 14. Digital Signal Processing

Thu, Mar 16. BLOG 3 DUE; Reaper Workshop; Appropriation Ethics

Week 10 No School; SPRING RECESS

Tue, Mar 21

Thu, Mar 23

Week 11

~Ake Parmerud, *Grain of Voices*; solaristprojects, *Yes to Life: Call Me Maybe*

Tue, Mar 28. Fixed media Copyright / Fair Use

Thu, Mar 30. Project 3 DUE; Interactivity in Music

April

Week 12

~Listening: Beyonce's *Formation*; Elainie Lillios's *Among Fire flies*

~Twitch tutorial by instructor on MaxMSP

Tue, April 4. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mediums & instruments

Thu, April 6. Visual Albums; Streaming Distributions

Week 13

~Listening: Holly Herndon, *Home*; Jennifer Walshe's *All the Many Peoples*

~Reading: Jennifer Walshe essays on "The New Discipline"

Tue, April 11. BLOG 4 DUE; A/V interactivity; Gaming

Thur, April 13. The Grain and the Frame

Week 14

~Listening: Kendrick Lamar's *King Kunta*; Dan Tramte, *degradative interference*;  
ASMR

Tue, April 18. Web 2.0; YouTube, Soundcloud; ASMR

Thu, April 20. Social Media; Internet Culture in Music; square videos, &  
Instagram Filters

Week 15

~Listening: Johannes Kreidler *Kinect Studies*, Robert Henke *installations*

~Twitch tutorial by instructor on Video editing

~Reading: Part II of Kiri Miller's *Playing Along...* on games, Guitar Hero and Rock Band

Tue, April 25. Work on final projects

Thu, April 27. Final Projects Due

**Finals**

Presentation of Projects