



COURSE OUTLINE

New Course Title

CMN 255

Sound Design for the Entertainment Industry

3

Course Number

Course Title

Credits

1

Class or
Lecture Hours

4

Laboratory or
Work Hours

0

Clinical or
Studio Hours

0

Practicum, Co-op,
Internship

15 week

Course Length
(15 week, 10 week)

Performance on an Examination/Demonstration

(Placement Score (if applicable); minimum CLEP score)

Alternate Delivery Methods

(Online, Telecourse [give title of videos])

Catalog Description:

Examines audio production techniques, technologies, and aesthetics related to the development of a compelling soundtrack for theatre, television, radio or WEB. Training in all phases of digital sound recording, editing, and mixing. Students work with location and field recording equipment, advanced editing and mixing techniques associated with digital audio workstations.

Prerequisites:

Co requisites:

CMN153and CMN 253 or CMN 254, or permission of the coordinator

Last Revised: 2/17/17

Course Coordinator: Scott Hornick, Assistant Professor of Music-CM149
(609) 570-3716; hornicks@mccc.edu

Required Materials:

Kaye, Deena, James LeBrecht.Sound and Music for the Theatre: The Art and Technique of Design (2nd edition).Elsevier Science & Technology Books, September 1999.

Stage Research (2008).*Theatrical Design Interactive - Sound Design*[DVD]: Northfield, Ohio:
Stage Research, Inc. Interactive Multimedia.

Important Health and Safety Information

As an entertainment technology student you are involved in an industry that is dependent upon good hearing. Please protect yours! Tests have indicated that if you are rehearsing, recording, performing, listening to recorded music (especially through portable equipment) and/or attending gigs, concerts and nightclubs, it is very likely that you are experiencing daily sound levels well above those recommended for good aural health.

Damage to your hearing is not reversible. Avoid noisy environments as much as possible. Wear earplugs for your protection. Disposable earplugs are readily available or you can see an audiologist to have specialized hearing protection devices designed specifically for you.

Students with Disabilities

Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson's office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525.

Academic Integrity

As per the student handbook, "A student will be guilty of violating academic integrity if he/she (a) knowingly represents the work of others as his/her own, (b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of academic work, or (c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student." Students should read the Academic Integrity policy in the MCCC Rights and Responsibilities Student Handbook. ***Academic Dishonesty will result in failure of this course.***

Equal Opportunity Policy

Mercer County Community College is committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action. Discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, nationality, political views, religion, disability unrelated to job or program requirements or any other characteristic protected by law is prohibited.

Questions regarding the equal opportunity policy and compliance statement may be directed to the Affirmative Action Officer, West Windsor Campus, (609) 586-4800, ext. 3270.

Available Resources:

Books

Deny, Roger. *PC Audio Editing*, Focal Press, March 2000.

Johnston, Ian. *Measured Tones*, Adam Hilger/IOP Publishing 1989

McLeish, Robert. *Radio Production*, 2nd Edition, Focal Press 1994
Moore, Brian C. J. *An Introduction to the Psychology of Hearing*,
Academic Press, 1989.
Nisbett, Alee. *The Use of Microphones*, 3rd Edition, Focal Press, 1989.
Rumsey, Francis. *Digital Audio Operations*, Focal Press, 1991.
Rumsey, Francis. *MIDI Systems and Control*, Focal Press, 1990.
Talbot-Smith, Michael (ed.). *Sound Engineer's Pocket Book*, Focal Press, 2001.

THEATRE-RELATED BOOKS

Carter, Paul, *The Backstage Handbook*; Shelter Island, NY: Broadway Press, 1988.
Huntington, John, *Control Systems for Live Entertainment*, Boston: Focal Press, 1994.
Huber, David Miles and Robert A. Runstein, *Modern Recording Techniques*, Third Edition,
Indianapolis: Howard W. Sams & Company, 1989.
Huber, David Miles, *Microphone Manual— Design and Application*, Indianapolis: Howard W.
Sams & Company, 1998.
Walne, Graham, *Sound for the Theatre*, NY: Theatre Arts Books / Routledge, 1990.
Woram, John M., *Sound Recording Handbook*, Indianapolis: Howard W. Sams and Company,
1989.

ACOUSTICS AND MUSIC BOOKS

Davis, Gary and Ralph Jones, *Sound Reinforcement Handbook*; Second Edition, Milwaukee, WI:
Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation, 1989.
Giddings, Philip, *Audio Systems— Design and Installation*; Carmel, IN: MacMillan Computer
Printing, 1990.
Huber, David Miles and Robert A. Runstein, *Modern Recording Techniques*, Third Edition,
Indianapolis: Howard W. Sams & Company, 1989.
Huber, David Miles, *Microphone*

SUGGESTED PERIODICALS

[Electronic Musician](#), Intertec Publishing, 6400 Hollis Street, Ste. 12, Emeryville, CA 94608
[Entertainment Design](#), formerly *TCI* and *Theatre Crafts*, Intertec Publishing, 32 West 18th
Street, New York, NY 10011-4612
[EQ!](#), Miller-Freeman PSN, Inc., 460 Park Avenue South, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10016
[Lighting Dimensions](#), Intertec Publishing, 32 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011-4612
[Live Sound International](#), HUGE Press, P.O. Box 577, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201
[Mix](#), Intertec Publishing, 6400 Hollis Street, Ste. 12, Emeryville, CA 94608
[Pro Sound News](#), Miller-Freeman PSN, Inc., 460 Park Avenue South, 9th Floor, New York, NY
10016

Websites

Handout for students.

Course Goals.

Upon Successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate conceptual and working knowledge of the basic principles of the behavior of sound in various environments through classroom discussion, written assignments, and audio laboratory exercises, and use appropriate technical and musical terminology in articulating these concepts; (GE Goals 1, 3 and 4, MCCC Goals 1.1, 1.2, 10.2, 10.3, 11.1-4)
2. Apply production techniques, technologies, and aesthetics related to the development of a compelling soundtrack for theatre, television, or WEB. (GE Goals 1, 4, MCCC Goals 1.1-3, 4.1, 11.3, 11.4)
3. Use and apply advanced editing and mixing techniques associated with digital audio workstations. (GE Goal 4, MCCC Goals 4.1, 11.4)
4. Work on teams, teach others, serve customers, negotiate and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds. (GE Goal 8, MCCC Goals 1.1-3)

General Education Knowledge Goals

- **Goal 1. Communication.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
- **Goal 2. Mathematics.** Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems.
- **Goal 3. Science.** Students will use the scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.
- **Goal 4. Technology.** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
- **Goal 8. Diversity.** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Skills

Institutional Learning Goal 1.

Written and Oral Communication in English: Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

- 1.1. Students will read, write, and/or speak critically in formal American English.
- 1.2. Students will generate messages suitable to the appropriate setting and purpose.
- 1.3. Students will analyze and assess nonverbal, cultural, and gender communication in both small group and public communication settings.

Institutional Learning Goal 4.

Technology: Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

- 4.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency with technological devices and applications in academic and professional settings.
- 4.2. Students will analyze the impact of emerging technologies on modern society.

Institutional Learning Goal 10.

Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

- 10.1. Students will identify resources needed and develop appropriate search strategies.
- 10.2. Students will recognize factors that affect credibility, quality, and relevance of information.
- 10.3. Students will use information in order to communicate it to the appropriate audience.
- 10.4. Students will use information ethically regarding privacy, security, and ownership with a focus on how on preventing plagiarism.

Institutional Learning Goal 11.

Critical Thinking: Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

- 11.1. Students will distinguish among opinions, facts, values, and inferences.
- 11.2. Students will identify and evaluate diverse perspectives and underlying considerations.
- 11.3. Students will make informed judgments by focusing on relevant logical and empirical issues.
- 11.4. Students will assess and solve problems by applying general and discipline-appropriate methods and standards.

Unit Objectives

Unit I: The Evolution and Foundation of Sound Design

The student will be able to:

- Explain in his/her own words the evolution of sound design by writing a short essay. (CG1, GA, MCCC A)
- Describe the function and intent of sound. (GG1)
- Explain in writing the theatrical forms/styles of Sound design. (CG1)
- List and describe the conventions of music and effects. (CG1)
- Identify and describe the characteristics of the sound cue. (CG1, CG2)

Unit II The Physics of Sound and Hearing

The student will be able to:

- Explain in his/her own words the following terms; sound waves, cycle, reverberation, amplitude, frequency, wavelength, the sine wave, resonance, sound spectra, phase and interference, and other related terms. (CG1)
- Explain and analyze the relationship between the fundamental frequency, harmonics, wave form, and phase and how it relates to the musical note and what we hear. (GB, CG1)
- Describe the physical structure of the ear including attributes of the ear such as frequency response, loudness compensation, the time line of hearing, perception of intensity and direction.
- Explain the concepts of the missing fundamental, frequency loudness warp, the precedence effect. Analyze the impact on what one hears given these characteristics. (GB, CG1)

Unit III: Developing the Concept and Design

The student will be able to:

- Interpret and analyze a script written for stage, television, radio or film. (CG 1 and 2)
- Collaborate with the director to ascertain the director's interpretation of the script. (GG 1,2,4, MCCC F)
- Choose sound effects and or music. (CG2)
- Identify the various design elements that impact on creating the sound environment. (CG1,2,3)
- Identify and use music and sound effects resources. (CG 1,2,3)
- Obtain right clearances on any music or sound effects. (CG 4)

Unit IV: Microphones

The student will be able to:

- Identify the different design types of microphone and describe the major characteristics of each type including their structure. (CG1 &2)
- Identify and describe the basic directional patterns of microphones and choose which type is best for different types of music, room acoustics and applications. (GB; CG 1,2, 3 and 4)

- Interpret pickup pattern variations by frequency using various charts and graphs published by the manufacturer. (GB; CG 1,2, 3 and 4)
- Write clear instructions on the effective use of microphones for talent. (GA, GB; CG 1,2, 3 & 4)
- Describe the differences between balanced and unbalanced microphone circuits and choose the proper type for various applications. (GB; CG 1,2, 3 and 4)
- Identify and describe all issues of microphone impedance, sensitivity and distortion. Choose the appropriate microphone for a given application and level match it to the correct input. (GB; CG 1,2, 3 and 4)
- Write a one page paper of wireless microphones, their types, uses and applications. (GA, GB; CG 1,2, 3 and 4)

Unit V: Equalizers and Signal Processing

The student will be able to:

- Identify and describe the basic equalizer design types. (Fixed, cut-only, fixed frequency, sweep able, parametric, etc.) (CG1&2)
- Interpret frequency response curves to assist in setting up house and channel equalization. (GB, CG1,2,3&4)
- Describe each of the characteristics of compressors and limiters and identify scenarios that require their use. (CG1&2)
- Connect and properly adjust built-in and external compressors and limiters. . (GB, CG1,2,3&4)
- Describe the characteristics of delay/echo and reverb units and identify each of the parameters required for adjustment.
- Connect set-up and use delay/echo and reverb units. . (GB, CG1,2,3&4)
- Compare and contrast analog and digital reverb and echo units. (CG1&2)
- Use equalizers and signal processing units during live performances. (GB, CG1,2,3&4)

Unit VI: Developing the Sound Plot and Building Cues

The student will be able to:

- Create and use a sound plot. (CG 1,2,3)
- Use and apply the correct terminology when creating a sound Plot. (CG 1,2,3)
- Organize the work flow when preparing to build the cues. (CG 2)
- Identify and gather effects and music for the cues. (CG2)
- Record your own cues. (CG3)
- Assess performance conditions. (CG 2,3)
- Identify the hardware and software for recoding the cues. (CG2)

Unit VII: Mixing and Recording

The student will be able to:

- Choose the correct microphones and equipment to record a live performance. (CG 3)
- Mix a live performance of a band, orchestra or other musical group. (CG 2,3)

- Record a live performance of a band, orchestra or other musical group to hard disk, CD, DVD, tape, etc. (CG 2,3)
- Use field and studio recording equipment and mixers. (CG 2,3)
- Use signal processing to enhance mixing and recording. (CG2,3)
- Re-mix and re-record previously captured audio. (CG 2,3)

Unit VIII: Using the Software and Hardware to Create the Sound Track or Recording

- Write an essay on the overview of digital editing. (CG 1,2,3,4, G1)
- Identify the various digital audio formats and explain the pro and cons of each format. (CG 2,3)
- Choose the correct quality digital audio file format for the target media. (CG 2,3)
- Use digital editing software to create cues, soundtracks and recordings. (CG 2, 3)
- Record to hard drives, Digital Audio Workstations, DVD, CD, mini disc, iPod and other digital recording devices. (CG 2,3)
- Manage the hard drive. (CG 2.3)
- Used various industry standard digital editing suites such as ProTools, Adobe Audition and SFX. (CG 2,3)

UNIT IX: Music Underscoring

The student will be able to:

- Describe music characteristics in detail including melody, harmony, tempo, and dynamic range. (CG 1, 2, 3, G1)
- Explain the uses of music in a production and list and explain the functions of music underscoring. (CG 1, 2, 3)
- Create music underscoring for a theatre, television, and radio or web media production using music libraries or original compositions. (CG 1, 2, 3)
- Choose the appropriate file formats to maintain sound quality. (CG 2)
- Rip audio from CD or analogue sources. (CG 3)
- Obtain copyright clearance for music not in the public domain. (CG 2)

Evaluation of Student Learning.

Students' achievement of the course objectives will be evaluated through the use of the following

- Active participation in class
- A series of Unit tests assessing students' comprehension of basic terminology and practices. (CG1&2)
- A series of essays and short papers assessing students' comprehension of basic concepts and practices. (GA&B, CG1&2)
- The midterm project will require that students mix and edit a live performance and record it to CD. (Course Goals 1, 2, 3 and 4)
- The final project will be the creation of a compelling soundtrack for a theatre, television, radio or WEB production. (Course Goals 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Evaluation Tools	Percentage Of Grade
Unit Tests	30%
Unit essays and papers	10%
Mid-term Recording Project	25%
Final design project	30%
Class Participation	5%
Total	100%

Class Assignments

The assignments on the flowing pages may be varied by class and semester but they shall make of the bulk of the course assignments.

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #1: 30-SECOND SOUND STORY

General Instructions:

- Read through and take notes on this entire handout. Get a good sense of everything you need to accomplish.
 - Plan to spend several hours on this assignment in the CM160 computer lab.
 - Don't forget about your journal entry! You won't receive credit for this project unless you submit BOTH the completed sound assignment AND your journal entry on the final draft deadline.
-

The Task: Create a 30-second "sound story" in Pro Tools 9 using pre-recorded sounds from the sound effects library. (If you know how to record your own audio, feel free to use your own sounds as well.) A "sound story" is a story told only in sound. To be successful, your work needs to convey a clear and coherent narrative to the listener.

The Purpose: The purpose of this first assignment is to help you:

- Get acquainted with Pro Tools.
- Begin telling stories with sound. In film and theatre, designers frequently use sound to *support* a story that is being told in images and words. This assignment places the entire burden of storytelling on sound. Before you begin using sound to *reinforce* a story being told in another medium, first you need to gain experience by becoming your own storyteller.

Guidelines: Your sound story SHOULD

- D Be 25-30 seconds long.
- D Focus on an action or series of actions that could reasonably take place in real time in 30 seconds.
- D Have a beginning (an "inciting" sound or action), a middle (climax), and an end (resolution).
- D Use at least 4 different pre-recorded sounds (or sounds that you recorded yourself).
- D Be dramatic, funny, or both!
- D Communicate a clear story. Your listeners (your peers, Professor _____, and Professor _____) shouldn't have to struggle to understand what's happening in your design. The actions should be clear based on the sounds you chose/recorded and how you edited them together.

Your sound story should NOT

- D Contain ANY human speech (sounds and noises are acceptable, but please NO WORDS or PIECES OF WORDS).

References

Jane Siberry. *A Day in the Life*. CD. Writ., dir. and prod. Jane Siberry. Sheeba Records, 1997. (MP3s can be found at <http://www.elixirproductions.org/mccc/sounddesign/> in a zipped folder called, "Siberry - A Day in the Life.")

NOTE: This recording contains lots of human speech. Listen to the sounds, not the voices, for some ideas about how to approach this assignment.

Journal Entry: In 1 ½ - 2 pages, please answer the following two questions in your own words.

First, what is this sound design assignment asking you to accomplish? For this question, you might want to write about how you approached the assignment, what questions (if any) you had, and what you did to overcome your confusion.

Second, how does your finished design fulfill the assignment? Reflect on your completed design: How does it “measure up” to the task, purpose, and guidelines described on the other side of this sheet? Be SPECIFIC. If you had trouble with the assignment, what kind of trouble? How did you work to overcome it?

Your journal entry should be typed in a 12-point Times font, double-spaced, and formatted with 1 inch margins. Please staple your pages together and be sure to put your name, the date the assignment is DUE, and the title of the assignment (“Sound Assignment #1: Journal Entry”) in a three-line heading in the upper- left corner of the first page.

Deadlines: You are responsible for submitting TWO drafts of this assignment.

- **ROUGH DRAFTS** of your 30-second sound story AND journal entry are due Monday, 2/7 (for students in section 9647) and Tuesday, 2/8 (for students in 92749).
 - Please burn your design to an audio CD (if you don’t know how to do this, see me during office hours for help) and submit the CD in a paper, plastic, or PVC sleeve.
 - Bring in at least FOUR copies of your journal entry.
- **FINAL DRAFTS** are due Monday, 2/14 (for students in section 9647) and Tuesday, 2/15 (for students in 92749). I will collect your 30-second sound story AND your journal entry.
 - Hand in rough drafts of your design AND journal entry along with your final drafts of both.
 - Clearly label your CDs/tracks to indicate which is the rough and which is the final draft of your design.
 - Clearly label your journal entries to indicate which is the rough and which is the final draft.
 - Submit CD(s) in paper, plastic, or PVC sleeve(s).

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #2: 60-SECOND SOUND POEM

General Instructions:

- Read through and take notes on this entire handout. Get a good sense of everything you need to accomplish.
- Plan to spend several hours on this assignment over the weekend in the computer lab.
- Don't forget about your journal entry! You won't receive credit for this project unless you submit BOTH the completed sound assignment AND your journal entry on the due date.

The Task: Create a 60-second "sound poem" in Pro Tools using a combination of pre-recorded sounds from the sound effects library and pre-recorded music from your own music collection. (As with Sound Assignment #1, feel free to record your own sounds if you know how. Also, if you're a musician, Professor _____ and I encourage you to record your own music for this assignment.)

For the purposes of this assignment, a "sound poem" is an aural collage or sculpture that reflects the emotional state of a character. At any given moment, we all have hundreds of impulses, doubts, hopes, and desires cross-firing inside us. Whereas the previous assignment asked you to communicate real-world actions through sound, this project asks you to enter the mind of a fictional character who is faced with a difficult choice and to communicate what is happening emotionally inside him/her using sound.

The Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to help you:

- Continue to get acquainted with Pro Tools.
- Experiment with combining music and sound effects.
- Analyze a text (more on this below).
- Explore the emotional power of sound to reflect states of being – internal phenomena – as suggested by text.

Guidelines: Your sound poem SHOULD

- D Be 50-60 seconds long.
- D Be firmly grounded in the circumstances and emotional dilemma of a fictional character. In class, each of you will write a brief narrative describing a fictional character who is faced with a difficult choice. You will then trade narratives with a classmate; each of you will be designing for a classmate's character.
- D Chart an emotional journey from indecision to certainty. By the end of your 50-60 seconds, your character must make a choice. What choice does s/he make? What is taking place inside your character, physically and emotionally, that leads him/her to this choice? Your listeners should be able to hear the journey as well as your character's moment of choice.
- D Contain a mixture of pre-recorded and/or original sounds and pre-recorded and/or original music.
- D Unlike your previous assignment, you MAY use human language and speech for this project. HOWEVER, your sound poem should NOT *rely* on human speech to communicate the emotional journey of your character. The human voice (or human voices) can be one of many sonic elements you use to tell the story of your character's decision; it should not, however, be the primary element.

References:

Kate Bush. "All the Love." *The Dreaming*. Writ., dir. and prod. Kate Bush. 1982.

Journal Entry: In NO FEWER THAN 2 pages, create a short essay that addresses the following two questions in your own words.

First, what is this sound design assignment asking you to accomplish? For this question, you might want to write about how you approached the assignment, what questions (if any) you had, and what you did to overcome your confusion.

Second, how does your finished design fulfill the assignment? Reflect on your completed design: How does it "measure up" to the task, purpose, and guidelines described on the other side of this sheet? Be SPECIFIC. If you had trouble with the assignment, what kind of trouble? How did you work to overcome it?

Your journal entry should be typed in a 12-point Times font, double-spaced, and formatted with 1 inch margins. Please staple your pages together, and be sure to put your name, the date the assignment is DUE, and the title of the assignment ("Sound Assignment #2: Journal Entry") in a three-line heading in the upper- left corner of the first page.

Deadlines: You are responsible for submitting TWO drafts of this assignment.

- **ROUGH DRAFTS** of your 60-second sound poem AND journal entry are due _____
 - Please burn your design to an audio CD (if you don't know how to do this, see me during office hours for help) and submit the CD in a paper, plastic, or PVC sleeve.
 - Bring in at least FOUR copies of your journal entry.
- **FINAL DRAFTS** are due _____
 - Hand in rough drafts of your design AND journal entry along with your final drafts of both.
 - Clearly label your CDs/tracks to indicate which is the rough and which is the final draft of your design.
 - Clearly label your journal entries to indicate which is the rough and which is the final draft.
 - Submit CD(s) in paper, plastic, or PVC sleeve(s).

**SOUND ASSIGNMENT #3:
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND SOUND DESIGN FOR THEATRE**

The Tasks: This is the first of two collaborative research and design projects we will be tackling this semester. Each project focuses on sound design for a different medium – theatre, film/television, and live events.

For our first collaborative design project, we will be working in the medium of theatre to design sound for Sophie Treadwell's American expressionist play, *Machinal*, first produced on Broadway in 1928. Like the next two projects for film/television and live events, this project consists of three parts:

- I. **Research:** Together as a class, we will identify aspects of the play which we need to know more about before we can capably design sound for it. These might include the history of the play, past productions, and technologies of the time period in which the play takes place. The class will then divide into groups of 3 or 4. Each group is responsible for researching one topic using the MCCC academic databases, the campus library, and local libraries. A limited amount of class time will be set aside for this, but you will need to plan your own group trips to the library and arrange to meet and discuss your findings as a group outside of class.
- II. **Oral Presentations and Annotated Bibliographies:** Each group is ultimately responsible for sharing their research with the class by creating an annotated bibliography, selecting and distributing an excerpt of a research text to the class, delivering a formal presentation to the class (10 minutes), and leading a discussion about their research text (10 minutes). The "research text" is a source your group discovered during your research and would like the entire class to read in preparation for your presentation. Each group is responsible for selecting and distributing a 4-5 page excerpt of one research text.

See the next page for more about Parts I and II.

- III. **Individual Designs, Sound Plots, and Essays:** Following the presentations, each of you will work individually to design and build cues for a sound-heavy scene in *Machinal*, create a "sound plot" for the scene, and write a 4-page essay/expanded journal entry about your work. (If you're a musician, you will also have the option to score as well as design sound for a scene.)

In your essay, EXPLAIN and SUPPORT each of your choices as a designer. WHY did you make a particular set of choices for the scene? HOW are your choices supported by the research generated collaboratively by the class? What is your concept or interpretation of the play, and HOW do your choices work together to support it?

The Purpose: Good sound designers must be good researchers – it's as simple as that. For every play that takes place in the present and features familiar characters and settings, there are hundreds (if not thousands) that contain unfamiliar people, places, and time periods.

Sound designers must also be able to interpret a script. Provided the play isn't brand new, one of the most effective ways of testing and strengthening your own interpretations is to research other productions and interpretations of the play. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to both kinds of research – factual and historical (to ensure your sounds are accurate) and dramaturgical (to ensure they serve a clear concept or interpretation of the play).

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #3:

RESEARCH AND ORAL PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

Oral Presentations at a Glance: Each group presentation should consist of two parts:

- Part I: In a 10-minute presentation, share the key findings of your group's research with the class. Here are some questions to think about as your group prepares its presentation:
 - What questions about your topic did your group begin with?
 - What challenges did your research topic present?
 - Which of your sources were the most valuable in helping you answer your questions? What did these sources teach you?
 - What did you learn that will help you and the rest of the class design sound for the play?
 - What did you learn that added to or changed your understanding of the play itself? How will this new knowledge affect your choices as designers?
- Part II: Lead a 10-minute discussion about your research text excerpt. The discussion might stick to the research text or encompass other areas of your group's research as well. In either case, your group is responsible for keeping the discussion focused and making it as useful as possible to your peers.

You may want to begin the discussion by engaging the class in some kind of activity. The activity could consist of small group work, a game, a mini-performance, a listening exercise. The more creative, unexpected, and interactive, the more likely you will be to engage us.

As you plan your discussion and/or activity, think about WHY you chose this particular research text for the entire class to read and WHAT you want us to get out of it.

Presentation Requirements and Procedures:

- **Group Consultation with Instructor:** Each group must meet with Professor _____ to discuss its presentation, research text excerpt, and discussion. We will be doing this in class on Thursday, February 25. The purpose of these consultations is to help your group organize and plan your presentation. You do not need to have thought through all the details of your presentation before the conference, but the more work you do in advance, the more productive the consultation will be.
- **Research Text Excerpt:** The research text excerpt is a 4-5 page selection from a larger source that your group wants to share with the entire class. Think of it as the reading assignment for the day. Your group will be leading the discussion of whatever you give us to read, so please pick a 4-5 page excerpt that is interesting enough for us to talk about for 10 minutes.

Groups must make their research text excerpts available to the rest of the class by the end of class on Thursday, February 25. Everyone is responsible for reading ALL the research texts excerpts.

- **Presentation and Discussion Plan:** On the day of its presentation, each group must submit a 1-2 page outline of its presentation and discussion activity. This is for Professor _____ and _____'s reference, to help us follow the structure and content of your presentation and give us something in writing to respond to

- **Annotated Bibliography:** We will be talking about this on Thursday, February 25. Two important things to note:
 - Each group member is responsible for finding and annotating at least TWO sources for your group's bibliography. This means, for a group of four, your bibliography should contain no fewer than EIGHT annotated sources.
 - Of the two sources contributed by each group member, at least ONE must come from an actual book or the MCCC library databases. This means, for a group of four, your bibliography should consist of no fewer than FOUR library articles or book chapters.

NOTE: All of your group's sources must be written by qualified authors. If the source is anonymous (like a Wikipedia entry) or written by an author whose qualifications you cannot confirm, you CANNOT use it as part of your annotated bibliography or oral presentation.

- **Grading:** Groups will be graded according to the quality and organization of their presentation as well as the success of their discussion. Barring extreme circumstances, every member of the group will receive the same grade.

Oral Presentation Checklist: Each INDIVIDUAL GROUP MEMBER is responsible for:

- D Conducting research in and out of class
- D Contributing and annotating no fewer than two sources to the group's annotated bibliography, at least one of which must come from a book or the MCCC library databases
- D Ensuring the overall success of the group by participating in group meetings on and off campus, making meaningful and thoughtful contributions to all group work, completing group assignments, and performing delegated tasks

Each GROUP is responsible for:

- D Delivering a 10-minute oral presentation and assembling any accompanying materials (posters, diagrams, video/audio recordings, etc.)
- D Leading a 10-minute discussion of a research text excerpt
- D Submitting a presentation and discussion plan
- D Assembling and distributing an annotated bibliography
- D Selecting and ensuring the timely distribution of a research text excerpt

Group Deadlines:

Thursday, February 25 – in class:

- D Meet with Professor _____ as a group to discuss your presentation, research text excerpt, and discussion plan
- D Distribute your group's research text excerpt to the class (Professor _____ can take care of the photocopying during class)

Before your presentation:

- D Do a "dry run" of your group's presentation. Brainstorm ideas to make it more fluid, informative, and engaging, and make certain it does not exceed 10 minutes (12 minutes tops).

The day of your group's presentation:

- D Hand in your group's presentation and discussion plan
- D Distribute your group's annotated bibliography to the class
- D IMPORTANT: On the day of your group's presentation, bring in enough copies of the annotated bibliography for the entire class. If you get it to Professor _____ before class, he/I can take care of the photocopying.

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #4: SOUND DESIGN FOR FILM

General Instructions:

- Read through this entire page before you begin; get a good sense of everything you need to accomplish.
 - Don't forget about your journal entry! You won't receive credit for this project unless you submit rough AND final drafts of BOTH your design AND journal entry on the above due dates.
-

The Task: Design sound for two segments of EITHER “Meshes of the Afternoon” (1943) by American experimental filmmakers Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid OR “Un Chien Andalou” (1929) by French surrealist artist Salvador Dalí and Spanish director Luis Buñuel. Each of you must select BOTH an “A” AND a “B” segment from either film (see the “Time Segments” section of this handout). Furthermore, your design for each segment must include a MINIMUM of the following the elements:

- No fewer than 5 different practical, *diegetic* sounds meant to communicate or reinforce different physical actions in the film. (For example, the sound of shattering glass to accompany the physical action of a breaking mirror.)
- No fewer than 1 diegetic ambient sound or “tone” – “room tone” for interiors or site-specific “ambiance” for exteriors.
- No fewer than 1 *extra-diegetic* sound or piece of music that underscores, heightens, or reinforces an emotional beat in the story. (For example, the sound of a breaking string to signal that a character has reached his/her emotional breaking point.)

NOTE: The above are the absolute MINIMUM elements required for each segment. Depending on which segments you choose, you may need MORE elements to successfully address all the practical and emotional complexities of the segment of film.

The Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to help you:

- Develop new knowledge and skills for designing sound for film.
- Edit and assemble a soundtrack for film using Pro Tools.
- Build on the understanding you have developed so far about the informational and emotional vectors of sound as you work to design for a new medium.

Guidelines: To successfully complete this project, you must:

- D Choose TWO segments from EITHER film to design – one “A” segment and one “B” segment.
- D For each segment, use no fewer than 5 different practical, *diegetic* sounds to communicate or reinforce different physical actions in the film. This means you will be using at least 10 SOUNDS TOTAL for BOTH segments in this category.
- D For each segment, use no fewer than 1 diegetic ambient sound or “tone” – “room tone” for interiors or site-specific “ambiance” for exteriors. This means you will be using at least 2 AMBIENT SOUNDS OR TONES for BOTH segments in this category.
- D For each segment, use no fewer than 1 *extra-diegetic* sound or piece of music that underscores, heightens, or reinforces an emotional beat in the story. This means you will be using at least 2 EXTRA- DIEGETIC SOUNDS OR PIECES OF MUSIC for BOTH segments in this category.

Additional Notes:

- For this project, you can use pre-recorded sound (for example, from the BBC Library) or record your own sounds in the lab or using field recorders. However, given the specificity of visual information in film – a key dropping down a staircase; a colony of ants crawling on a hand – you will most likely NEED to record some of your own sounds in order to successfully reinforce certain physical actions.
- Music can be pre-recorded or consist of original compositions recorded especially for this project.
- Do not use the music from either film in your design. Strip it out and build from silence.
- In “Un Chien Andalou,” do not record human voices and use them to “fill in” the missing dialogue. (Let the actors’ mouths move without producing speech.)
- Both films can be downloaded from <http://www.elixirproductions.org/mccc/sounddesign/movies.zip> for you to view and think about at home.
- Remember to consider both the informational AND emotional needs of the film as you make choices. Each sound should reflect the physical reality as well as the emotional possibilities of what’s on screen. If your design is all practical and informational, it will probably be boring. If it’s all emotional bells and whistles – for example, if you use the sound of human snoring to stand in for the sound of a character’s footsteps – then the viewer will most likely be confused. Great design must communicate information to a listener at the same time it climbs into their organs and reaches them emotionally, viscerally. Every choice you make should strive for this balance.

References: For an excellent example of the above, see *WALL-E* (2008, dir. Andrew Stanton, sound design by Ben Burtt).

Journal Entry: In 2-3 pages, please answer the following two questions in your own words.

First, what is this sound design assignment asking you to accomplish? For this question, you might want to write about how you approached the assignment, what questions (if any) you had, and what you did to overcome your confusion.

Second, how does your finished design fulfill the assignment? Reflect on your completed design: How does it “measure up” to the task, purpose, guidelines, and additional notes on this handout? Be SPECIFIC. If you had trouble with the assignment, what kind of trouble? How did you work to overcome it?

Your journal entry should be typed in a 12-point Times font, double-spaced, and formatted with 1 inch margins. Please staple your pages together, and be sure to put your name, the date the assignment is DUE, and the title of the assignment (“Sound Assignment #4: Journal Entry”) in a three-line heading in the upper- left corner of the first page.

Deadline: The rough draft of both your design AND journal entry is due Thursday, 4/8 at the beginning of class. The final draft of both components of the project is due Thursday, 4/15. On Tuesday, 4/13, Professor _____ will teach you how to export your audio.

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #4: TIME SEGMENTS
“MESHERS OF THE AFTERNOON”

Segment	Starting Cut	Description	Ending Cut	Description
1 A	00:00	Opening credits	01:17	The character picks up the key
2 A	01:17-8	The character climbs the stairs	02:30	The character sets the tonearm of the record player back on the tonearm rest, followed by a swift movement of the camera
3 A	02:30-1	Quick cut back to staircase	03:59	The figure in black disappear up the road
4 A	03:59-04:00	The character runs	05:24	The character hangs up the phone
5 A	05:24-5	The character sways in front of a window	06:47	The character turns right and disappear into the bushes along the side of the road
6 B	06:47-8	The character opens her mouth and takes the key from her tongue	08:12	The figure in black disappear from the side of the bed; the camera cuts to...
7 B	08:12-3	The character standing on the stairs	09:51	The key reappears on the table for the second time
8 B	09:51-2	The third version of the character in a head-and-shoulders shot	11:00	The man draws the character out of her chair
9 B	11:00-1	The man crosses in front of the phone on the stairs	12:25	The mirror shatters, revealing the reflection of the ocean
10 B	12:25-6	Shards of the mirror land in wet sand	END	End “title card” – e.g., “End.”

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #4: TIME SEGMENTS
“UN CHIEN ANDALOU”

Segment	Starting Image	Description	Ending Image	Description
1 A	00:52-3	Opening “title card” –	02:03	The sliced eye dissolves into...
2 A	02:03	Title card – “eight years later”	03:30	The woman tending to the fallen cyclist dissolves into...
3 A	03:30-1	The striped box; a hand turning the key	04:42	The ants dissolve into...
4 A	04:42-3	An armpit	06:03	A woman stands alone in the street
5 A	06:03-4	A woman stands alone in the street	07:32	The woman pushes the man away and races out of frame
6 B	07:32-3	The man chases the woman around a room	08:53	The woman races out of the room and closes the door on the man’s arm
7 B	08:53-4	The man howls in pain, his arm stuck in the door	10:18	A man throws clothing out the window; the clothing disappears out of frame as it falls to the ground
8 B	10:18-19	A man throws the box out the window	11:43	The books in the man’s hand turn into shotguns
9 B	11:43-4	The man holds the two shotguns	13:05	All men exit the frame, leaving us in a brief shot of the forest clearing
10 B	13:05-6	The men carry off the dead man	14:31	The woman looks at the man’s watch
11 B	14:31-2	The woman (right) looks at the watch (left) – closer shot	16:09	End “title card” – “Fin.”

SOUND ASSIGNMENT #5: REVISION

General Instructions:

- Read through this entire page before you begin; get a good sense of everything you need to accomplish.
 - Don't forget about your new journal entry! You won't receive credit for this project unless you submit a revised design AND a new journal entry on the above due date. Oh, and do NOT save your journal for the last minute!
-

The Task: Revise either of your first two sound projects for a higher grade using the instructions and guidelines on the original assignment sheets (attached) as well as the additional guidelines for revision explained on this page.

The Purpose:

- To help you do better in the course.
- To give you the real-world opportunity to revise your work in order to better meet the expectations of the person you are designing for – be s/he a client, a director, a music or radio producer, or, in this case, an instructor.

Guidelines: First, let's talk about what "revision" means. For this class, "revision" is the sum of its two linguistic parts – *re* on the one hand and *vision* on the other. Hence, to revise a project for this class is to fundamentally re-envision it. This might mean re-imagining the work you did for the original assignment and drastically altering it, or it could mean scrapping your original work entirely and starting over from scratch. In either case, revision is NOT simply taking your original project and journal entry, doing a few tweaks, correcting a few typos, and calling it a day. If this is all the work you do for this project, your original grade will remain unaltered.

In addition to the above, here are some more guidelines.

- Regardless of which project you choose to revise, you must write a NEW JOURNAL ENTRY (more on this below).
- Should you choose to revise your project for **Sound Assignment #1**(the "sound story"), your revision must meet the following criteria. (Changes from the original criteria are "highlighted" in grey.) The revision must:
 - D Be at least 60 seconds long.
 - D Focus on an action or series of actions that could reasonably take place in real time in 60 seconds.
 - D Have a beginning (an "inciting" sound or action), a middle (climax), and an end (resolution).
 - D Use at least 8 different pre-recorded sounds (or sounds that you recorded yourself).
 - D Be dramatic, funny, or both!
 - D Communicate a clear story. Your listeners (your peers, Professor _____, and Professor _____) shouldn't have to struggle to understand what's happening in your design. The actions should be clear based on the sounds you chose/recorded and how you edited them together.
 - D As with the first iteration of the assignment, your revision should NOT contain ANY human language (human sounds and noises are acceptable, but NO WORDS or PIECES OF WORDS).
- Should you choose to revise your project for **Sound Assignment #2**(the "sound poem"), your revision must meet the following criteria. (Changes from the original criteria are "highlighted" in grey.) The revision must:
 - D Be 90 seconds long.
 - D Be firmly grounded in the circumstances and emotional dilemma of a fictional character. (Please use the same character/narrative as in your original project.)
 - D Chart an emotional journey from indecision to certainty. By the end of 90 seconds, your character must make a choice. What choice does s/he make? What is taking place inside your character, physically and emotionally, that leads to this choice? Your listeners should be able to hear the journey as well as your character's moment of choice.

(con't)

- D Contain a mixture of pre-recorded sounds and pre-recorded or original music.
- D Unlike Sound Assignment #1, you MAY use human language and speech for this project. HOWEVER, your sound poem should NOT *rely* on human speech or voices to communicate the emotional journey of your character. In other words, the human voice (or human voices) can be one of many sonic elements you use to tell the story of your character's decision; it should not, however, be the primary element.

Journal Entry About Revision: In no fewer than 3 FULL pages, please answer the following two questions in your own words.

First, what is the original sound design assignment asking you to accomplish, and how has your understanding of the task, purposes, and guidelines of the project CHANGED from earlier in the semester? To earn the best possible grade on this assignment, please QUOTE from Professor _____'s and/or _____'s comments on your original project (our margin notes on your journal entry or comments on the rubric) and EXPLAIN how you used them in your revision. In addition, you may want to write about how you re-envisioned your approach, what questions (if any) you still have, and what *new* strategies you used to overcome your confusion (as opposed to the strategies you used the first time around).

Second, how does your revised design fulfill the assignment? Reflect on your revised project alongside the original: If you feel your revision is more successful than the original, *why?* How exactly does it "do a better job" of fulfilling the task, purposes, and guidelines of the assignment?

In your answers to both questions, be SPECIFIC. For example:

Level of Specificity

STUDENT WRITING: My understanding of the assignment is definitely better now than earlier in the semester. I learned a lot in this class about how to be a better designer, and I applied what I learned to my revision in order to make it more successful.

STUDENT WRITING: Now that I've revised my first sound project, I realize I didn't understand the guideline that said the story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The instruction might seem obvious, but originally I thought it meant [description of original meaning], whereas now I see [the designer's new understanding/approach].

_____ and _____'s Reaction

This might make Profs.

_____ and _____ feel all fuzzy inside, but it tells us nothing concrete about how you've changed as a designer or how you changed your approach to the assignment. The same goes for a student who says they didn't learn anything and became a *worse* designer: *How* and *why?*

Granted, this is only one sentence, but already it promises to convey much more specific information about how the designer has changed and what his/her new approach to the assignment will be.

Deadline: This assignment is due Tuesday, 5/11 at the beginning of class. Burn your finished design to an audio CD and STAPLE it in a PVC sleeve to:

- D Your new journal entry (on top).
- D Your original journal entry for the project with comments from Professors _____ and/or _____.
- D The grading rubric from the original project with comments and grade from Professors _____ and/or _____.

*If you don't have a PVC sleeve or blank CDs, be sure to leave time for a run to Staples before deadline.

