

Syllabus: Sound and Music for Film and Video

Instructor: Matt Nolan

Assistant Professor of Game Sound and Composition

George Mason University College of Visual and Performing Arts

Computer Game Design

Mail Stop: 1c3

Office: Art & Design 2023

Classroom: AB 1018

Office Hours: Thursday 2- 4 PM or by appointment

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mnolan4@gmu.edu (NOT MASONLIVE) *Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.*

Course Description: Combined studio and lecture course that will focus on the creation, selection, editing, processing, and integration of sound and music (post-production) into film, video, and animations. Music composition, Foley, Voice Over Recording (ADR and Voice Acting), digital audio techniques, and MIDI control will be studied. Students will have the opportunity to work in groups to realize original creations.

Objectives: To build student awareness of the techniques, methods, and aesthetic choices used to ensure quality sound and music for film, video, and animation through the study of existing examples, peer critique in group work and discussions. To understand production/post production of sound and music for video, film, broadcast, and animation. To gain skills necessary for successful group work and leadership.

Requirements and Evaluation: At the beginning of each class meeting, students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, topic assignments, and sound/music examples. In addition, students should be prepared to discuss with the class the status and stage of their project(s), as well as any design, structural, technical, or theoretical and historical issues. A lecture will follow, and then students are expected to work during class on their assignments or project. A series of short projects will be assigned to compliment most lectures. Assigned readings will be available online. Any other required materials will be on reserve for you at the Johnson Center Library main desk. We will also be using Lynda.com to supplement class materials and reinforce your understanding of sound and music.

Portfolio: Students are expected to build and maintain a portfolio of original sound effects and music. This portfolio will be reviewed throughout the semester. Students are expected to have these sounds saved on a physical drive (USB) named with their first initial and last name. Files should be well organized into categories to facilitate easy review and access to files when working on projects. You should keep this with you every time you come to class, so you can share your work if you are asked to.

The Portfolio is due one week before your final exam.

NO LATE PORTFOLIOS WILL BE ACCEPTED!

An "Average" Portfolio has about:

30 Sound FX

10 Voice Recordings

5 Musical Compositions

4 Written Assignments

1 Midterm Video

1 Final Project

Class Notes

readme.txt - outlining the contents of your portfolio.

Midterm: At mid-term, students are required to present and submit a mixed and post-produced audio score to an existing 1- 3-minute Film, Animation, Cinematic, or Video Clip using a minimum of 8 original audio sources/tracks. Students may choose to use their own, or a pre-existing film/video to score the music and sound. In addition, students must use a combination of sound and music sources to score (playback to) the film or video. During the first two weeks of class, students will write a proposal detailing their mid-term project: the intended audience and purpose, the source of the film or video, and source(s) for the sound and music. During the 8th week of class, students will provide a presentation of the film, discussing the technical, structural and artistic content of their mid-term project.

Final Project: In the 9th week of class, students will write a proposal detailing their final project: the intended audience and purpose, the source of the video/animation, and source(s) for the sound and music. In the final week of class, students will provide a 20- minute presentation discussing the technical, structural and artistic content of their final project. Students will present their mixed and post-produced audio score, including MIDI controlled resources to an original 3-5 minute film or animation using a minimum of 20 original audio sources (music & sounds).

Grading will be based on:

Home work, mini-projects, Classroom Participation in activities and discussion 25%

Participation == Students Come to Class Every Week (See Attendance Policy for more Details)

Students prepare for and actively engage in class discussion (e.g., demonstrate active listening, not distracted by electronics or peers)

Students thoughtfully engage in in-class assignments and activities

Students constructively participate in group activities

Students participate in class discussion by

Raising informed discussion points;

Connecting discussion to reading material, news, and relevant experiences;

Asking questions;

Listening to other perspectives;

Sharing the floor with others; and

Posting thoughtfully to course discussion boards.

Sound Design Portfolio 20%
Mid-term presentation and project 20%
Final presentation and project 35%

To receive a grade of "A" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 90% on the course work requirements.

To receive a grade of "B" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 80% on the course work requirements.

To receive a grade of "C" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 70% on the course work requirements.

To receive a grade of "D" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 60% on the course work requirements.

Failure to receive a "D" grade will result in a grade of "F"

Course Outline:

Week 1-Intro/Syllabus/Digital Audio/DAWs/Film score examples/Musical Listening and Description Terms/Midterm proposal HW

Week 2-Mid-term Proposals/Form Groups/Microphones/Studio Technology/Recording/Sound Editing with Audacity/Cue Sheets/Chaos Edit HW Group Cue Sheet HW

Week 3-Sequencing/MIDI Controllers/Synthesizer Design/Quantization/Music HW

Week 4-Foley/Videos/Intro to Logic Pro X for recording Foley to Film/Foley Scavenger Hunt end of class, finish for HW

Week 5-Watch Foley Video HW
Signal Processing/Filters/EQ/Limiting/Compression/Reverb/Delay/Intro to Mixing Board/Sonopedia

Week 6-Mixing/Automation/Bouncing/Group Work/Logic Mixing HW/ MT Rough Draft HW

Week 7-Listen to Logic Mixing HW/ Mid-term Rough Draft review and feedback

Week 8-Mid Term Presentations/Final Project Concepts HW

Week 9-Final Project Concept Pitch and Team Forming

Week 10-Critical Viewing and Criticism Writing/Story Boards/Cue Sheets/Final Project Planning/Group Storyboard and Cue sheet HW

Week 11-Film Scoring Techniques and Tropes/Beat Making/Composition Tricks/Advanced Logic Sequencing/MIDI FX/MIDI Modulation/ Music Composition for Final Project HW

Week 12- HW Composition Listening/Peer Critique/

Week 13-ADR/ Voice Acting/Bad Overdub In-class activity/HW

Week 14-Watch Bad Overdub HW/Peer critique

Week 15-Group Work On Final Projects

Week 16-Portfolios DUE/Final Rough Draft DUE/Rough Draft Review and Feedback

Week 17-Final Project Presentation

Final Date:

Tues. 12/19 4:30 pm – 7:15 pm

*If you have a **documented learning disability** or other condition that may affect academic performance you should:*

- 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ds.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need;*
- 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.*

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success.

Attendance Policy: Please arrive to class on time. You are allowed ONE unexcused absence. Your second and following unexcused absences will lower your final grade by one letter grade. 5 unexcused absences will result in a final grade of “F”.

Honor Code Statement: *The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.*