

# Introduction to Audio Production

## Spring 2020 - COMM130.203

Instructor: Chris Batte

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Office Hours: by appointment

### Course Information

Room: 51 E Pearson, Lower Level, Room 003

Time: Mondays at 4:15PM to 6:45PM

Materials: 5 GB or larger USB3.0 external hard drive (formatted MacOS), 6 AA batteries & quality headphones (Sony MDR7506 or equivalent, no Bluetooth, no noise cancelling).

### Course Description

This is an introduction to the world of audio production. It is meant for undergraduate students with an interest in audio and its applications in modern media and art. Students will learn to employ audio as a creative tool for documentary storytelling, fiction filmmaking, news media, radio production, comedy sketches, commercials and internet production. Creativity and careful execution are major factors in the grading of ALL projects.

### Course Goals

- Understand basic audio concepts and terminology.
- Develop critical listening skills, learn how to effectively discuss sound.
- Gain a working knowledge of signal flow and basic audio technology including microphones, recorders, mixers, and DAWs.
- Conceptualize, plan, and execute effective sound designs.
- Familiarity with audio editing, mixing, and design processes and methods.
- Practice the art of storytelling using sound.
- Develop directing and writing skills in regards to audio production.
- Understand audio workflows, practices, and standards.
- Develop interviewing and field recording skills.
- Learn basic music editing and concepts.
- Learn how sound and image work in tandem to tell stories.
- Provide and incorporate constructive criticism to and from your colleagues.

# Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates

## Production Assignments (75 Points)

**Audio Story Part 1:** Record, log, and edit a short (2 minute) audio interview with a subject of your choosing, using a recording ratio of at least 10:1. (5 Points) Due Week 4

**Object Profiles:** Create a library of at least 100 sound effects profiling no fewer than 10 different objects and/or places. (5 Points) Due Week 6

**Soundscape:** Plan and produce a short (3 minute) audio soundscape using only sound effects, no voices or music! (5 Points) Due Week 8

**Audio Story Part 2:** Edit a (3 minute) interview into a fully produced, radio-ready audio project incorporating music and SFX. Apply standards learned in previous assignments. (10 Points) Due Week 10

**Video Sound Design Project:** Students will spot, design and build the soundtrack for a short video. (20 Points) Due Week 13, Rough Cuts will be critiqued Week 12.

**Final Project:** Plan, record, edit and mix a short (5-7 minute) creative audio project of your choosing. It could be a short story, poem, comedy sketch show, abstract, drama – you name it. Projects should be a demonstration of your fluency in the concepts and techniques taught throughout the course. (30 Points) Due Week 15, Rough Cuts will be critiqued Week 14.

## Writing Assignment (5 Points)

**Analysis Paper:** Critical analysis of sound design of a film - (5 Points) Due week 9

**Written Proposal for Final Project:** Including a script, a pitch, and a design analysis for final project - (incorporated into Final Project grade) Due Week 10

## Tests and Participation (20 Points)

**Peer feedback:** Ongoing – especially critical during group critiques. (8 Points)

**Midterm Exam:** (12 Points) Week 7

## Grading Scale

93-100%	A=4.0
90-92%	A- = 3.67
87-89%	B+= 3.33
83-86%	B=3.00
80-82%	B-= 2.67
77-79%	C+= 2.33
73-76%	C=2.00
70-72%	C-=1.67
67-69%	D+=1.33
60-66%	D=1.00
0-59%	F =0

## Session Schedule

### Week 1 (Jan 13) – Class Overview & Introductory Concepts

Syllabus review and expectations

Introductions

Fundamentals of Audio

How to conduct an effective interview

**ASSIGN:** Audio Story 1

### Week 2 (Jan 20, NO CLASS) – Basics of Audio & Field Recording

Gear – Microphone basics and recording in a nutshell

Proper recording techniques and concepts – how to capture good audio

Signal Flow – how stereo works

**ASSIGN:** Object Profiles

**---Week 2 Lecture will happen during week 1 due to MLK Holiday.---**

## Week 3 (Jan 27) – Basics of Digital Audio Workstations

Audition Lecture – Editing and DAWs

Presence and layering

Basic transitions and techniques

Mono vs stereo, how to separate them

**ASSIGN:** Soundscape Plan

## Week 4 (Feb 3) – Storytelling & Dramatic Structure, Basics of Copyright Law, Group Critique

Telling stories using sound.

Critical analysis and spotting.

Simple overview of copyright.

Group Critique of Audio Story Part 1

**DUE:** Audio Story Part 1 (The Interview)

## Week 5 (Feb 10)– The Elements of a Soundtrack Part 1: Dialogue & Sound Effects

What makes up a soundtrack?

Types and Aesthetics of Dialogue and Sound Effects

Shepard's Tone, EQ, SFX

**ASSIGN:** Audio Story 2

## Week 6 (Feb 17) – The Elements of the Soundtrack Part 2: Music

Types and Aesthetics of Music – emotion

Music editing workshop, ReVerb

Midterm Review

**ASSIGN:** Analysis Paper

**DUE:** Object Profiles

## Week 7 (Feb 24) – Midterm & Group Critique

**Due:** Soundscape

## Week 8 (Mar 2) – Spring Break, no class

## Week 9 (Mar 9) – Working with Video, Spotting

Video and time-code.

Spotting to sync.

Syncing & Editing dialogue, Automation & Keyframes

**Assign:** Sound Design project.

**DUE:** Analysis Paper

## Week 10 (Mar 16) – Advanced Audition: Bussing, EQ, SFX & COMPRESSION

Organization and flow of a session

Compression, EQ, SFX & bussing,

Foley & ADR on the cheap

**Assign:** Written Proposal for Final Project

**DUE:** Audio Story Part 2 (Sound Story)

## Week 11 (Mar 23) – Mixing and Mastering, Formats, Group Critique

Aesthetics and techniques for mixing.

Mastering: what the heck is it?

Formats and Media

Group Critique of Audio Story Pt2

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT Proposals

## Week 12 (Mar 30) – Additional Odds and Ends

Sound from preproduction through postproduction.

Sound for radio, podcasting, theater/live/etc.

Production sound with post in mind

**DUE:** Video Sound Design Project Rough Cuts, First minute

## Week 13 (Apr 6) – Group Critique

Video Sound Design Project critiques

**DUE:** Video Sound Design Project

## Week 14 (Apr 10) – Final Project Review & Rough Critique

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT Rough Cuts, First minute

## Week 15 (Apr 20) – Final Projects & Group Critique

**DUE:** FINAL PROJECT

## Policies and Expectations

**Policy on Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted. It will receive a zero. You are allowed to redo most projects if they are turned in on time. There will be no makeup exams.

**Policy on Absences:** Attendance is crucial. We will be covering a large amount of information and work each session. Since this is a production class that meets only once a week, if you are to miss more than two classes without a reasonable excuse (family emergency, etc.) you will receive one letter grade reduction on your final grade. Any further absences will equal a full grade reduction per missed class. It is the responsibility of the student to acquire notes or materials for any missed class.

**Rough Cuts:** The days we go over rough cuts are for you. They are meant to help you complete the best possible project with the peer feedback you receive. They are mandatory for the Sound Design and Final Project.

**Redoing Projects:** You are almost always allowed to redo any project for a better grade, barring the final project or the mid-term. Please check with me before you do this.

### School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments.

Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at [https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicintegrity.shtml](https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml).

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a

more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction.

The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

[http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicgrievance.shtml](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml).

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

### **Students with Learning Disabilities**

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

### **Managing Life Crises and Finding Support**

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – please email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites at LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa. Or you may contact them directly at 773-508-8840 and at deanofstudents@luc.edu.

This syllabus may be amended by the instructor at any time during the semester. Students will be informed of any changes.