

SOUND FOR THE THEATRE

Drama 20

INSTRUCTOR: Rychard Curtiss

OFFICE: Lowe 215

OFFICE HOURS: M/W 11:20am-12:45pm. TU/TH by appointment only

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LOWE #201 – MW 9:40-11:05am

Course Objective:

Sources, processes and procedures used in creating sound effects and integrating sound and music into performance. To develop skills within the area of Theatrical Sound Design, including script analysis, thematic development, soundboard operator, sound engineer and sound designer.

Required Texts:

Sound and Music for the Theatre: The Art and Technique of Design, Kaye & LeBrecht 4th edition.

Audio Made Easy, Ira White 5th edition

Additional Required Materials:

Portable device to record sound

USB Storage Device (Recommended)

Various software as detailed in class

Attendance:

Attendance is required. Students are granted a maximum of four (4) absences without any impact on their grade. A fifth (5th) absence will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.

There are no excused absences, except for absences due to recognized religious holidays and official department functions.

Lateness: Students will be considered late if they arrive after the class has started but within ten minutes of the official class start time. Each instance of lateness will count as ½ an absence. Any arrival beyond 10 minutes will be regarded as an absence. The instructor may choose not to admit students into the class after 10 minutes have elapsed.

Information about Campus Closures/Snow Day; Class Attendance; Academic Integrity, including AI policies; Disability Accommodations; Resources for Students who are Pregnant; Temporary Adjustments/Academic Leave of Absence; Absences for Religious Observance; University Deadlines; Grading Policy and Deadlines; and Discriminatory, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct is available on the provost's webpage at the link below:

<https://www.hofstra.edu/provost/policies-syllabi-students.html>

MIDTERM EXAM (3/12-3/15/2026) note: weekend before spring break

FINAL EXAM (completed by 10am 5/13/2026)

Exams will be given on Canvas

Grading:

Class Participation – 8% / Quizzes – 12% / Exams – 20% **Quizzes/Exams will be taken on Canvas (see drama20.info for schedule)** / Projects – 10% each.

(Note - Due dates are noted on drama20.info or assigned in class. Work will NOT be accepted late. These projects involve various uses of technology, you are responsible for making sure that the technology you use will not be a barrier to complete or turn in projects on time.)

Projects:

- 1) The Sound Around Us Sound Journal – keep a weekly journal of sound you notice in the world around you; with descriptions of the actual sound and what the sound does subjectively or how it can be used theatrically. The journal will be reinforced with 30 sec recordings of sound moments, with written explanation. Specific format will be presented in class. The journal will contain one of each type on alternating weeks.
- 2) “Hear & Tell” - Present to the class a significant sound with written research and explanation (typically 1-2 pages). Due on Wednesdays of the semester on assigned schedule (3 times each semester), further explanation in class.
- 3) Find and list Internet resources for right and royalty free sound effects, samples, loops and music. Create a 3 min song using these resources and editing together.
- 4) “Soundtrack”. You’ll be given a 30 to 60 sec video clip without sound. You will have 4 separate titles for the clip. You must create a soundtrack for each title that reflects the implied mood/meaning of that title.
- 5) Sound Through the Ages – You’ll be assigned an intersection in Manhattan and provide a 30 sec soundscape to indicate that intersection for the following years, 1600, 1700, 1800, 1900, 1970 and present day. You will provide written research to support your choices for each year. Mandatory research: visit Museum of the City of New York. Details provided in class.
- 6) Create a sound analysis, plot and cue sequence for one scene of a play (play choice by instructor approval).

Course Topics:

(This is a general course outline of what we will attempt to cover during the semester. This outline is not exclusive and is subject to change.)

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| 1) Evolution & foundation of sound in theatre | 6) Sound acquisition |
| 2) Use of sound in Theatre | a) copyright |
| a) music and sound effects | b) royalties and permissions |
| b) sound reinforcement | 7) Sound Operations - editing |
| c) equipment | a) sound plots & cue sheets |
| 3) Acoustics theory | b) mixing |
| 4) Equipment and systems | 8) Sound operations - performance |
| a) microphones | a) cue sheets |
| b) sound boards | b) levels & monitoring |
| c) sound processing | c) timing & organization |
| d) speakers | 9) Design |
| 5) Recording | a) script analysis |
| a) Live recording | b) research |
| 1) setup | c) developing the sound plot |
| 2) mixing and processing | |
| b) studio recording | |
| 1) editing techniques and equipment | |
| 2) digital and software editing | |
| 3) output and formats | |

The criteria for grading will follow the standards set forth in the academic bulletin published by the University.