Acoustic Ecology
IALL:3034:0EX2 (UI), IA LL 302 (ISU), IA LL 2034 (UNI)
Syllabus: Summer 2016

About the Instructor

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Academic Course Home
University College—Iowa Lakeside Laboratory
http://www.lakesidelab.org
Director: Chet Rzonca
E-mail: chet-rzonca@uiowa.edu
Phone: 319.335.2575

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to acoustic ecology. Field studies, lectures and assignments will work to build a strong understanding of the role sound plays in the environment.

Acoustic Ecology studies the relationship between living things and their surrounding soundscape. Throughout this course, students will explore a variety of tactics for exploring, documenting and analyzing the soundscape at a various locations surrounding Lake Okoboji and beyond.

Studying the soundscape crosses into a variety of disciplines and topics. There are issues relating to biology, audio engineering, acoustics, community development, social engagement, design, art, health and many, many more. While some portion of this course will discuss art and design as it relates to the study of acoustic ecology, no previous art or design knowledge is required to successfully complete this course.

PRE-REQUISITES: None

ASSIGNMENTS

Before each assignment, there will be a discussion of what is expected, examples will be shared and any technology you are expected to use will be demonstrated. You are not expected to know what these formats are or have any experience using them in the past.

Course assignments will include:
Development of listening maps.
Creation of a location-specific audio postcard.
Keeping a field journal to document field activity.
Exercises and assignments to reinforce topics discussed and demonstrations given.
Reading responses in both written and sonic form.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The goal of this course is to:

- Help students develop an appreciation for sound and listening.
- Introduce students to recording equipment used to collect sound and data and allow them to use it in the field.
- Introduce students to the basics of analyzing and editing digital sound.
- Explore sound as a means for communication and expression when engaging an audience.
- Expose students to a variety of topics and tactics related to experiencing and understanding the role of sound in the natural environment.

**TEXTBOOK TO PURCHASE**

**Required**

These text books need to be purchased before arriving at Iowa Lakeside Lab. Any edition can be ordered from any reseller. They are not available for checkout or purchase on Lakeside Lab’s campus.

*The Soundscape: Our Environment and the Tuning of the World.*
By R. Murry Schafer. ISBN: 0892814551

By Bernie Krause. ISBN: 031608686X

**Optional**

for anyone interested in these related subjects.

*Deep Listening: A Composer’s Sound Practice.*
By Pauline Oliver’s. ISBN: 0595343651

*Noise/Music: A History.*
By Paul Hegarty. ISBN: 0826417272

*Silence: Lectures and Writings.*
By John Cage. ISBN: 0819573655
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to successfully complete this course, students will need to bring:

Laptop
Day pack
Water bottle
Pair of headphones (preferably not earbuds)
Notebook or sketchbook (with blank pages, no lines).

Clothing to bring to be prepared for field work:

Stocking cap
Knit gloves
Quiet material upper body layers
Quiet material lower body layers
Boots capable of hiking in a variety of environments

Optional items include:
Camera
Tripod
Binoculars
Mobile devices (preferable w/ GPS)
Flashlight or headlamp (for predawn field recording hikes)
sleeping bag

Depending on conditions, some of the locations may also be populated with mosquitos. A simple mosquito head net can also be useful.

Headphone recommendations:
YOU DO NOT NEED TO BUY NEW HEADPHONES SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS CLASS. If you are interested in getting a good pair of headphones, here are 2 options at 2 different price points. If you want to purchase one of these, you will need to purchase them before arriving at Lakeside Lab.

$22.00 - Sennheiser HD 201
Good introductory over-the-ear headphones.

$99.00 - Sony MDR-7506
**COURSE GRADE**

Graded assignments will include the following:

You will develop a series of listening maps throughout the course. These will be worth 25 points each. They will be graded for relevance, craft and level of engagement of content.

During the course, you will keep a field journal of all your activity out in the field. This will be assigned a 100 point grade at the end of the first week and a 100 point grade at the end of the second week. These will be graded on consistency of data entry, level of engagement with the content and creativity in the representation of the experiences being documented.

Each of you will develop a narrated audio piece that connects your findings at Lakeside Lab to larger issues of acoustic ecology. This will be worth 100 points and graded for content, clarity and craft of recording and editing using technical skills learned in the class.

Additional graded exercises & assignments associated with the themes and topics covered in the lectures, demonstrations and field trips will be included throughout the course. There will be approximately 4 of these worth 25 points each.

The final course grade will be based on approximately 500 points total.

The following grading scale will be used for all assignments, the midterm grade (when applicable) and the final grade:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59 or lower</td>
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COURSE SCHEDULE

The course will meet for 2 consecutive weeks, Monday-Friday. Generally speaking, the course will meet from 8am-5pm each day, including a lunch break. Due to the nature of recording audio in the field, there will be days when the class will be out in the field to record audio before dawn and after dusk, weather permitting. This is often when wildlife is the most sonically active. On these days, the meeting times will be adjusted so that each day, the amount of contact hours remains the same.

The course will be a mix of lectures, outdoor activities, and making. Iowa Lakeside Lab offers the ability to be immersed in nature and since this course includes being outdoors, the schedule will vary depending on weather and conditions of the various areas being explored.

Topics explored in the class will include:

Audio field recording & analysis
Recording technology & equipment
Documentation and preservation
Archive management and meta data
Composition & performance
Composition & performance technology
Creation and use of listening maps
Niche Hypothesis
Active listening
Biophony
Geophony
Anthrophony
Naturesound and music
Naturesound and sound art
Naturesound and design

There will be times during this course when we will be out in the field to record audio as the sun rises and as the sunsets. The recording equipment is sensitive to heavy rains but it handles light rain and low temperatures just fine. You will need to bring rain gear along with warm layers for these times because it can be quite chilly. You also need to consider how noisy the clothing is that you bring for days recording in the field. For warm clothing, try to bring things made from materials that don’t make a great deal of sound when you move. Think fleece and Merino wool instead of nylon or rubber.

Policies and Instructions:

As a registered student in a Distance Education course through The University of Iowa, you are responsible for the policies and instructions posted below.

Special Modifications: If you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation in order to participate in University of Iowa Continuing Education courses or programs, please contact Student Disability Services: 3015 Burge Hall, (319) 335.1462, or sds-information@uiowa.edu, or fax: (319) 335.3973. Reasonable
accommodations for students with physical, mental, or learning disabilities will be made. The Division of Continuing Education is committed to both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 508 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

**Academic Misconduct:** All forms of plagiarism and any other activities that result in a student presenting work that is not his or her own are academic fraud. All academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and the Associate Dean of Continuing Education. All incidents of academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating) will be subject to the rules and regulations of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as defined and stated in the Academic Policies Handbook (http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

In this class, students are not allowed to collaborate with others on assignments. Do not share your work with others or ask others to see their completed assignments since both are considered academic misconduct. If you need help, please contact the instructor by email. Students are responsible for understanding this policy; if you have questions, ask for clarification.

**Understanding Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the University. It subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit this site (http://www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu/) for definitions, assistance, and the full University policy.

**Complaint Procedures:** If at any time you have concerns about this class or your performance in it, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you do not feel that your concern has been resolved satisfactorily, you may contact the Department Chair (contact information provided at the top of page one of this syllabus). If you still do not feel that your concern has been resolved satisfactorily, you may contact University College, 310 Calvin Hall, (319) 335-1497, uc-academics@uiowa.edu. All complaints must be made within six months of the incident.

**Administrative Home of the Course:** The administrative home of this course is the University College (UC), which governs academic matters relating to the course such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, issues concerning academic fraud or academic probation, and how credits are applied for various graduation requirements. Different colleges might have different policies. If you have questions about these or other UC policies, contact your academic advisor or the Division of Continuing Education, 250 Continuing Education Facility, (319) 335-2575, dce-registration@uiowa.edu. As a registered student in a Distance Education course through The University of Iowa, you are responsible for the policies and instructions as posted online: http://uc.uiowa.edu/students/admitted-university-college-programs/academic-standards.