

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Photography Department

Exploratory media: Tracking images and sounds
Instructor: Sergio Messina (email: smessi@saic.edu)

"The term soundtrack refers to three related concepts: recorded music accompanying and synchronized to the images of a motion picture, television program or video game; a commercially released soundtrack album of music as featured in the soundtrack of a film or TV show; and the physical area of a film that contains the synchronized recorded sound." (from Wikipedia, Soundtrack)

The focus of this class is on the relationship between sound and images. The class will move along two parallel lines: on one hand we will review and discuss the differences between sound and vision, hearing and listening, time based and space based arts, music and pure sound, functional and artistic sound production and the relationship between sound and other forms such as architecture and interior design. We will familiarize with sound based concepts such as "field recording", "loop", "groove", "ambient sound and soundscape", "sampling" (some of which are also widely used today in visual arts). We will listen to music, soundtracks, various recordings (both aesthetic and functional) and we will watch films and videos where the relationship with sound is relevant.

On the other hand we will introduce the main concepts of sound production: recording, editing, overdubbing/ multitrack production, sound effects, mixing and mastering. This part of the course will be "hands on", and the students will be required to produce sound pieces, both with and without images. Please note that we will not use a sound studio, but each student will have their own software and will work on their personal laptop (see Software section below). This approach reflects contemporary production methods, and will enable the students to produce audio material by themselves in the future.

Throughout the semester there will be assignments to complete, and the works produced will be critiqued in class.

At the end of the semester each student will have to produce an original sound and video piece.

Audio Software:

Wavepad (Mac, PC, Linux) - <http://www.nch.com.au/wavepad/> (free, open source software)

And:

Traverso (Mac, PC, Linux) - <http://traverso-daw.org/> (free, open source software)

Audacity (Mac, PC, Linux) - <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> (free, open source software)

Or: Any commercial multitrack sound software, such as Garage band (Mac), Logic (Mac), Cubase (Mac/PC).

Video Software: Final Cut

Bibliography: J. F. Augoyard, H. Torque: Sonic Experience: A Guide To Everyday Sounds - McGill-Queen's University Press

You are expected to be present at all classes, to arrive on time, to produce the requested material and participate in the discussion. If you miss more than 6 sessions (considering morning and afternoon separate sessions) you will fail. Should someone not be able to attend a class, please contact me by email to let me know in advance.