

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
COMM 5305.001 SOUND ENGINEERING
GRADUATE SECTION**

SPRING 2015

Time/Date: Schedule with instructor
Fab 208 / BAB 303

Bret Scott, Asst. Professor

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Regular Office Hours:

TBD, walk-in basis

All others by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is really two classes: the title, Sound Engineering, requires that we first understand SOUND. The ENGINEERING part requires that we first master sound fundamentals. And in this case, we are studying the process by which disparate sounds are assembled in an order and pattern to create stories, environments, emotions, and perceptual illusions. For most people, sound is the unheralded secret sauce that makes theater, movies, TV, and games work...or makes them incredibly tiresome.

In this class, we will explore the basics of sound physics, elements of audio editing, and we'll study the use of live sound production and playback equipment. We'll use Avid's *Pro Tools 11* as our learning platform for editing and the sound system in Marshall Auditorium as our playback, and the whole shebang will be applied to the theater department's production of *Sweeney Todd*. While *Pro Tools* is (as of this writing) the industry standard tool for audio recording and editing, this software package should be regarded simply as a tool. The art and skill of editing is in the hands and mind of the editor, transferrable to any tool, and the software merely brings about what's in the imagination of the artist. Everything else is just marketing. Sometimes you need a tack hammer, and sometimes you need a jackhammer.

This is an introductory course. We'll cover the basics of recording and editing sound. While we'll touch on advanced topics like surround mixing and multiple recording inputs, in-depth exploration of these topics are beyond the scope of this study. If you are interested, I encourage to explore, but understand, given the goals of the course, that this is outside the expected course of work.

Editing is a time-intensive activity. This will require hours in front of the computer well beyond "regular" study time. Labs are available seven days a week, plus some nights. Plan your schedule accordingly.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
Program Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors.

The graduating student will demonstrate:

- 1) competency for appropriate oral communication in public presentations.
- 2) competency for appropriate use of presentation software – specifically power point.
- 3) the ability to analyze arguments including identification of the major elements of the argument such as claims, warrants, data and backing
- 4) competency in appropriate discipline specific written communication.
- 5) the ability to apply communication theory to the analysis of communication situations.
- 6) competency in the use of media technology including video, audio and web technologies.
- 7) general knowledge of communication concepts and terminology

PREREQUISITES

None.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of audio-related terminology
- Analyze and identify the major elements of a sound design, and explain their function and importance
- Demonstrate editing proficiency and beginner-level mastery of Avid’s *Pro Tools* by designing projects
- Articulate the functions of audio as a storytelling and environment-creation tool.
- Evaluate live, motion picture and video game sound design according to elements used and aesthetic/functional success

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Terminology / Definitions Quiz
- 2) Mid-Term Paper – sound design analysis of a show, film or game
- 3) Live Sound Editing Project
- 4) Scene analysis presentation
- 5) Live sound board operation – *Sweeney Todd*

Required Textbooks for this class:

SOUND FOR TELEVISION and FILM, Tomlinson Holman

Materials Required:

Minimum 8gb flash drive, formatted for Macintosh

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments
1	Jan 20	Syllabus, Class expectations, and Reading Assignment
2	Jan 26	Review Holman chapters 1+2, assign design concepts
3	Feb 2	Review Holman chapters 3+4, review design concepts
4	Feb 9	Review Holman chapters 5+6, begin pulling sounds
5	Feb 16	Pro Tools introduction
6	Feb 23	Edit sound FX for <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
7	Mar 2	Edit sound FX for <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
8	Mar 9	Test sound FX during rehearsal – <i>Sweeney Todd</i> Sound Design Analysis paper due
9	Mar 16	SPRING BREAK
10	Mar 23	Fundamentals of Live Sound/ Run <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
11	Mar 30	Fundamentals of Live Sound / Run <i>Sweeney Todd</i>
12	Apr 6	Research Week for Scene Analysis
13	Apr 13	Review draft sound design – scene analysis
14	Apr 20	Scene analysis presentation due
15	Apr 27	Prep for additional projects / building a sound library
16	May 4	Contingency / TBD

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1) Quizzes | 10% |
| 2) Mid-term sound-design analysis paper | 20% |
| 3) Live Sound Editing Project | 20% |
| 4) Scene Analysis presentation | 20% |
| 5) Live Board Operation | 30% |

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

LATE PAPERS

Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

If you discover, *a week or more in advance*, that you have multiple deadlines converging on the same day, you may request a change in deadline. Such a change may be granted at the instructor’s discretion. Once the deadline has passed, it’s too late to ask for exceptions. Manage your time and deadlines wisely.

TARDINESS / ABSENCE POLICY

Attendance is 5% of your grade. That can mean the difference between an “A” and a “B”...or an “F” and a “D.”

TARDINESS

Class **BEGINS EXACTLY AT THE APPOINTED TIME**. It is your responsibility to be prepared to begin **BEFORE** the class starts.

Three instances of tardiness is equivalent to one absence. See below for the class absence policy.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PRESENT AT THE START OF CLASS* – ON THE HOUR. PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ON-TIME is EARLY!

*Exceptions will be made only for those with classes located in RAS whose end time makes on-time arrival impossible.

Punctuality is essential in this business. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three hour class will constitute three absences. An

absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Grace Petty in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.