

Instructor: Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier
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Lectures: Mondays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:20AM
Room: MacLaurin Building D114
Office hours: Thursdays 1:30-2:30PM, Cornet Building B330, on [Zoom](#) or any other time by appointment.

*We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəḡən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands
and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples
whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.*

Course Description and Objectives:

I have designed this course to sensitize students to the often-forgotten presence of sounds in everyday life. More than just a phenomenological account of sound, the course proposes to consider all sound-related dimensions (noise, music, voice, silence, etc.) as significant elements of research and analysis. It further takes sound as something to seriously reflect upon from an anthropological perspective. Throughout this course, students will have the opportunity (1) to map out and reflect upon ethnographies of sound, theories of sound, sound art works and recent writings in Sound Studies—a thriving field in the humanities and social sciences—and (2) to experiment directly with sound production for an exhibition in a museum. In being involved in the production of soundscapes, students will be encouraged to think about how sound can be considered a significant element of research and theory-making and how this knowledge can be applied to an exhibition setting.

Learning outcomes:

As a result of taking this course, you should be able to:

- Recognize the existence of multiple ways of knowing. More specifically, think creatively and relationally about how sound can become an element of research and analysis in anthropology, and in other disciplines.
- Listen effectively and respectfully to sounds that surround you in different contexts.
- Challenge assumptions and preconceptions in reflecting critically about sounds in your everyday life and in relation to society, politics and culture.
- Discuss recent and historical research, works and projects constructed on an analysis of sound from various perspectives and approaches: anthropology, sociology, visual and media arts, music, sound studies, communication, etc.
- Determine how sounds can enhance the visual dimension of films, exhibitions and research.
- Master research technologies for purposes of inquiry and representation. More specifically, record and process sound clips for the purpose of a museum exhibit.

- Use a sound software (e.g. Audacity, Reaper, etc.) to produce simple to more complex sound clips and/or soundscapes in order to reflect on questions of positionality, reflexivity and relationality.
- Communicate digitally and design an original soundscape to enhance the visitor's experience of an object, a scene or an architectural feature present in a museum.
- Understand and employ ethical principles, relationships, and practices.

Course content:

The main strategy of this course is to provide a balanced mix of theoretical, methodological and practical inputs for studying sound. For this reason, we will have lectures and discussions of readings as well as sound laboratories and workshops. You will be invited to listen to sound recordings and explore directly using sound editing. The aim of these practical exercises is not to train professional sound designers but to generate reflections based on the concrete experiences with sound processing. Practical exercises will allow us to think in complex, relational and critical ways about how sounds can become a tool for analysis, knowledge transmission and creation in anthropology (and not just a tool for 'keeping track of'). We will discuss and experiment with the potential of sounds as learning assets in museum exhibits.

Please note that:

- On Monday October 4 and Thursday October 7, we are planning a visit at the Royal BC Museum from 10:00-11:30AM. During this visit, you will select an object / diorama / architectural feature for your final soundscape project. More information about this will be provided in class.
- You will present your final soundscape project at the Royal BC Museum during the week of November 22nd in the evening (exact date and time to be confirmed).
- Unexpected changes of plan may happen! I will readjust accordingly and keep you informed.

Required textbook:

No required textbook. Weekly readings and podcasts are listed in this syllabus and in BrightSpace.

Sound technology matters:

For the purpose of this course, you may record sound with good quality recording devices. The Department owns Zoom H1 recording machines that you can borrow at the main office of the Anthropology Department (email Jindra for more information). The library also owns 12 professional recording machines (with memory cards) that you can borrow for a one-day period (renewable 1 other day). If you have problems accessing a sound recording device, please let me know.

For sound editing, you might want to download a free open-source program available online called Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>), compatible with Windows, Mac and GNU/Linux. You are welcome to use any other sound programs you might have access to (Reaper, Garage Band, Soundtrack Pro, FL, etc.).

Evaluation:

	Percentage of your final grade	Deadline
1. Report on the soundwalk article (Westerkamp) and activity	20%	Oct. 1
2. Report on the Introduction by Dylan Robinson (Week 7)	20%	Oct. 28
3. Report on a podcast of your choice listed under Week 10	10%	Nov. 8
4. Soundscape composition exercise and final essay	40%	Soundscape: Nov. 18 Final essay: Dec. 8
5. Participation	10%	N/A

For reasons of fairness, late work will be penalized: 4% each day, after the due date, will be deducted from the final grade of the late work. Works should be submitted directly on BrightSpace.

Description:

I. Report on the soundwalk article (Westerkamp) and activity (20%)

Essay of 3-5 pages 1.5 spacing. Detailed structure of essay will be provided on Week #2. Read article by Hildegard Westerkamp (Week #3) and participate to soundwalk organized during class time. Structure of the essay: (1) Summary of Westerkamp's article; (2) Description of the soundwalk (where, when, how long, etc.); (3) Reflect on the experience (feelings, impressions, sounds you heard, etc.); (4) Draw a sound map; (5) Conclusion: Connect your experience with key elements developed by Westerkamp in her article.

2. Reading report of Dylan Robinson's introduction (20%):

Read the introduction by Dylan Robinson (week 7). We will talk about his work, and our guest speaker Adi Laflamme will also reflect on some topics developed in the introduction such as the concept of positionality. You will have to write a summary and a critic of some aspects of the authors' argument. Essay should be 2-3 page(s) 1.5 spacing between the lines. More details will be provided during Week 6.

3. Podcast report (10%)

Listen to one of the podcasts under Week #10 and write a summary and critic of the selected podcast.

****** At the end of your reading report and the podcast report, you must list a series of questions and points of discussion (approximately 2 to 4), which you would like to explore further during our class discussions.

4. Soundscape exercise at the Royal BC Museum and written report (40%)

The aims of this exercise are to:

- (1) Think reflexively about sound;
- (2) Develop complex reflections about sound, everyday life and sound design;
- (3) Experiment with sound recording and manipulation;
- (4) Explore the relationship between visual, materiality and sound dimensions;
- (5) Consider the different dimensions involved in the sound experience (architecture, noise, sound constraints, location, etc.);
- (6) Imagine new possibilities for museum exhibits and the innovative use of sounds.

You will be invited to produce a 1 to 3 minute(s) soundscape (individually or in team of 2-3 max) inspired by one object, diorama, architectural feature present in one of the permanent galleries of the Royal BC Museum. Your soundscape and a short explanation of your work will be posted on a SoundCloud page and on the Royal BC Museum Learning portal. Your soundscape will also be played on the CFUV radio station at the end of November.

You will write a final paper (individually only) about the object / diorama / architectural feature selected, its location in the museum and **how do you envision the future of this object as part of a new museum exhibit** (more sensorial and direct form of engagement with objects and space) and in consideration of decolonial approaches. You will comment on the process of producing the soundscape and will provide personal reflections about the overall experience.

Detailed structure of the final paper will be provided in class. You will create links with the course content, including the readings (at least 5), class discussions, guest speakers and lectures. The paper should be no longer than 7-8 pages long (and not shorter than 5 pages) 1.5 spacing. Remember to always provide a complete bibliography and follow the rules in line with referencing and plagiarism.

**I encourage you to contact me about ideas you have.
I'll be happy to help you develop your sound project.**

5. Participation (10%)

Participation is crucial for this course because you will engage directly throughout the semester with the material discussed in class. The visit to the museum is key for the main exercises (sound assessment and final soundscape project) that you will be working on during the semester. The final report is based on discussion that will take place during the class and during the visits at the museum. For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to come prepared to class to engage with the readings, exercises and presentations by your instructor. Please read all assigned readings before the relevant class. I will also look at your participation on the Soundcloud group page (more information on this will be provided).

Course Schedule

Week 1: Sept. 9

Introduction – The Anthropology of/in Sound

Week 2: Sept. 13 and 16

What is sound? What is soundscape?

Reading:

Helmreich, Stefan. 2007. "An Anthropologist Underwater: Immersive Soundscapes, Submarine Cyborgs, and Transductive Ethnography." *American Ethnologist* 34(4):621-641.

Week 3: Sept. 20 and 23

Listening and soundwalk

Reading:

Westerkamp, Hildegard. 2017. "The Natural Complexities of Environmental Listening: One Soundwalk – Multiple Responses." *BC Studies*, 2017, no. 194, p. 149-162.

Soundwalk exercise: This week, the class is divided in half. Half of class meets on Sept. 20 in class for a walk and the other half watches the documentary *Alive Inside* (link provided under Week 2 in BrightSpace). The reverse on Sept. 23 – the other half meets in class and the other half watches the documentary film.

Week 4: Sept. 27

Soundscape design and museology

Readings:

- Bubaris, Nikos. 2014. "Sound in museums – museums in sound." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 1-12.

- Zisiou, Michael. 2011. "Towards a Theory of Museological Soundscape Design: Museology as a Listening Path." *Soundscape* 11(1):36-38.

Workshop: Listening and sound recording.

**** Report on soundwalk due Friday October 1st on BrightSpace ****

**** Sept. 30: No class. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. ****

Week 5: Oct. 4 and 7

Visit to the RBCM during class hours – Class divided in half for each visit. More information will be provided in class.

Week 6: Oct. 14

Sonic ethnographies; culture and sound

Reading: Feld, Steven. 2015. "Acoustemology." In *Keywords in Sound*, edited by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 12-21.

****No class on Oct. 11. Thanksgiving. ****

Week 7: Oct. 18 and 21

Positionality and listening

Reading:

- "Introduction" from the book *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Studies*, by Dylan Robinson (2020). London: Minnesota Press.

Guest speaker: Adi Laflamme, Monday October 18.

Week 8: Oct. 25 and 28

Space, Place and Mobility

Readings:

Sterne, Jonathan. 1997. "Sounds Like the Mall of America: Programmed Music and the Architectonics of Commercial Space." *Ethnomusicology* 41(1):22-50.

Ouzounian, Gascia. 2020. "Chapter 2: The Rise of the Binaural Listener: Spatial Hearing in the Nineteenth Century." In the book *Stereophonica: Sound and Space in Science, Technology and the Arts*. London: The MIT Press.

**** Reading report on the "Introduction" by Dylan Robinson due on October 28 ****

Week 9: Nov. 1 and 4

Architecture, auditory history and archaeology Sound archives and the technology of memory

Readings:

- Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter, Chapter 17: "Ancient Acoustic Spaces." In *The Sound Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 2012, p. 186-196.

- Reznikoff, Iegor. 2006. "Chapter 8: The Evidence of the Use of Sound Resonance from Palaeolithic to Medieval Times." In *Archaeoacoustics*, edited by Chris Scarre & Grame Lawson. MacDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, p. 77-84.

Week 10: Nov. 8

Noise and politics

Reading:

Peterson, Marina. 2021. "Chapter 2: Noise Annoys." From the book *Atmospheric Noise: The Indefinite Urbanism of Los Angeles*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Listening:

"Noise Pollution," Twenty Thousand Hertz
<https://www.20k.org/episodes/noisepollution>

"The Good, the Bad & the Irritating," Twenty Thousand Hertz
<https://www.20k.org/episodes/good-bad-and-irritating>

"Combat Hearing Loss," 99% Invisible
<http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/combat-hearing-loss/>

**** Report on one podcast listed under Week 8 due on November 8****

****No class on Thursday November 11. Reading Break. ****

Week 11: Nov. 15 and 18

Sound in film, sound and visual

Reading:

- Henley, Paul. 2007. "Seeing, Hearing, Feeling: Sound and the Despotism of the Eye in "Visual" Anthropology." *Visual Anthropology Review* 23(1):54-63.

Listening: "What Makes up a Movie Soundtrack?," Twenty Thousand Hertz
<https://www.20k.org/episodes/movie>

**** Final soundscape clips due on November 18****

Week 12: Nov. 22 and 25
Royal BC Museum Presentations
More information on this will be provided in class.

Week 13: November 29 and Dec. 2
Conclusion. How can we learn from sound?

Reading:
- Brandon Labelle, Chapter 38: "Auditory Relations", in Sterne 2012, p. 468-474.

****Final essay due on December 8 before midnight on BrightSpace ****

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD). The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://recsd.uvic.ca/>.

Please note: Students found guilty of plagiarism (see below) will be given a 0 for the course and a note will be placed in their academic file. Turnitin.com may be used in this class.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

“Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. Students who are found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described below, are subject to penalty by the University. In this regulation, "work" is defined as including the following: written material, laboratory and computer work, musical or art works, oral reports, audiovisual or taped presentations, lesson plans, and material in any medium submitted to an instructor for grading purposes.

Plagiarism

A student commits plagiarism when he or she:

- submits the work of another person as original work
 - gives inadequate attribution to an author or creator whose work is incorporated into the student's work, including failing to indicate clearly (through accepted practices within the discipline such as footnotes, internal references, and the crediting of all verbatim passages through indentations of longer passages or the use of quotation marks) the inclusion of another individual's work
 - paraphrases material from a source without sufficient acknowledgement as described above.
- Students who are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism in a particular instance should consult their course instructor.

For undergraduate grading standard at UVic, please visit:
<https://www.uvic.ca/registrar/assets/docs/ot-legend.pdf>