

IART 7503  
**PERFORMANCE STUDIES – SOUND**  
Spring 2013  
Wednesday 9-12  
Putnam 227

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OH: M 9-12 and by appt.

“Sound” explores the meaning and nature of sound in the world, understood through theorization and practice. This course will initiate a collaborative field recording project entitled “Energy Soundscapes of Appalachian Ohio.” “Energy Soundscapes of Appalachian Ohio” is a project of *listening* to energy and associated dimensions of labor, infrastructure, and the environment. Through listening and making field recordings, the project aurally traces the region’s long-standing relationship with mineral extraction (including coal, oil, clay, and natural gas) and energy production (electricity, nuclear, solar, wind) with special emphasis on its transnational dimensions. Soundscapes for this project include (but are not limited to) energy as it is extracted, generated, transported, consumed; labor, past and present, through interviews, oral histories, and field recordings; community meetings in which shifts in energy production are discussed and diverse stakeholders articulate their positions; and music about energy, labor, and related infrastructure.

Readings are drawn from the emergent field of Sound Studies to explore sound in social life, listening practices, sound in and as art, and the making and use of field recordings. We will approach field recordings as both process and object, interrogating their import for listening and soundscape work, and as artifacts used for sound art, composition, and ethnography. We will take several field recording trips as a class to regional sites. We will also listen to sound art work that uses field recordings of energy and labor.

After an introduction to technical and conceptual dimensions of listening, field recording, and transnational dimensions of energy, the semester is organized into two parts. The first part will focus on listening to the past, while the second emphasizes listening to the present.

The class is running in tandem with Experimental Composition in the School of Art and Transnational and Global Theories in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts. Select sessions will be combined with one or both of these courses.

### **Course objectives**

- learn techniques of listening to soundscapes past and present
- explore transnational dimensions of energy in Appalachian Ohio through sound
- make field recordings of energy and related dynamics
- use field recordings for sound pieces and research

## Readings

### Required:

Sterne, Jonathan. 2012. *The Sound Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Additional readings are on Blackboard

### Recommended:

Kelly, Caleb. 2011. *Sound*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

<http://soundstudiesblog.com> (“like” on Facebook for updates)

## Requirements

### *Participation* [20%]

The course is a seminar and depends on the participation of all. Be versant with the assigned readings, and prepared to engage in productive discussion. Much of the class focuses on listening, making, and recording, for which active participation is expected. You should plan on attending all class sessions. Any missed classes must be discussed with the professor.

### *Field trips* [20%]

We will take listening/field recording trips during select class sessions. Some fieldtrips will be scheduled outside of class time. There will be 5 events total outside of our scheduled class session. You are required to attend 2 of these. A full list will be provided.

### *Soundscape essays* [20%]

During the semester you will write a 3-5 page historic soundscape reconstruction and a soundscape ethnography.

Historic soundscape reconstruction, due February 27

Soundscape ethnography, due April 3

### *Final project* [40%]

The final project may take the form of (1) a sound project + paper *or* (2) research paper.

(1) A sound piece should use field recordings from class. The accompanying paper (6-8 pp.) should be a critical analysis of your piece.

(2) A research paper related to energy in Appalachian Ohio can be on historic soundscapes or consist of a sonic ethnography. The paper (12-15 pp.) should explore themes discussed in class, drawing on relevant texts outside of those read in class in order to develop your analysis more fully.

Your grade will be based on your abstract [10%] and final paper/project [30%]

Abstract, due March 13

Final paper/project, due April 24

## SCHEDULE

[tentative dates and fieldtrip locations – schedule subject to change]

### Week 1      January 16    Introduction to the course

Microphone building (with Art 5116)

### Week 2      January 23    Soundscapes and audio technology

Soundwalk and/or field recording workshop

#### Readings:

Schafer

Chion

Kittler

Meintjes

Kahn

Berland

Brenneis, Donald with Steve Feld. 2004. "Doing Anthropology in Sound." *American Ethnologist* 31(4):461-474.

#### Recommended:

"Concepts of the Sonic" in *Sound*

#### Field recording resources:

<http://audio.tutsplus.com/tutorials/recording/a-beginners-guide-to-field-recording-pt-2/>

[http://www.trubitt.com/field\\_1.html](http://www.trubitt.com/field_1.html)

### \*Week 3      Friday, February 1, with IART 7407      Transnational energy

#### Readings:

Buckley, G.L. 2004. History of Coal Mining in Appalachia. In: *Encyclopedia of Energy*, Volume 1, eds. Cutler J. Cleveland et al., 495-505. San Diego: Elsevier, Inc.

Morris, Rosalind C. 2008. The Miner's Ear. *Transitions* 98:96-115.

Demos, T. J. 2005. The Art of Darkness: Steve McQueen. *October* 114: 61-89.

#### Recommended:

"Artists and Sound" in *Sound*

## LISTENING TO THE PAST

### Week 4      February 6      Sonic pasts

Readings:

Thompson  
Blessner and Salter  
Leppert  
Rath  
Picker

Recommended:

“Noise and Silence” in *Sound*

### Week 5      February 13      Listening historically

Fieldtrip: Athens Historical Society and Alden archives

Meet at Athens Historical Society at 9 a.m.

### Week 6      February 20      Listening to/in archives

Fieldtrip: Robinson’s Cave (New Straitsville)

### Week 7      February 27      Music of coal

Reading/listening:

Wright, Jack. 2007. *Music of Coal: Mining Songs from the Appalachian Coalfields*. Big Stone Gap, VA: Lonesome Records & Publishing.

10:30-11:30 Richard Greenlee

Due: Historic soundscape reconstruction (3-5 pp.)

Reconstruct a soundscape from the past from primary textual and/or visual material (adapted from Emily Thompson)

### **March 6: Spring break**

## LISTENING TO & IN THE PRESENT

### Week 8      March 13      Ethnographic listening

Readings:

Helmreich  
Ihde  
Bijsterveld

Recommended:

“The Listener and Acoustic Space” in *Sound*

Due: Final paper/project abstract

**Week 9      March 20      Materiality of sound and energy**

“The mechanical vibrations that can be interpreted as sound are able to travel through all forms of matter: gases, liquids, solids, and plasmas. The matter that supports the sound is called the medium. Sound cannot travel through a vacuum.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound>)

Field trip: TBA (possibilities: engineering lab, acid mine drainage sites, power plant, mine...)

Readings:

Goodman

Barthes

Recommended:

“Bandwaves” in *Sound*

**\*March 22, 2-5 p.m.: Coal Mine Museum (Buchtel) field trip, with IART 7407**

**Week 10      March 27      Listening workshop**

Workshop with Robert Sember (Ultra-Red)

**Week 11      April 3      Music and labor**

**\*Screening: *Follow Me Down* (April 1)**

Reading:

LaBelle

Shipley, Jesse Weaver and Marina Peterson. 2012. Audio Work: Labor, Value, and the Making of Musical Aesthetics. A Special Issue of *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 24(4).

[Available through the library website. Read introduction and articles of your choice]

Due: Soundscape ethnography (3-5 pp.)

Listening is a way of paying attention and being present, both by people in the world and in conducting research. Start by listening, and listening to how people listen. Your soundscape ethnography might include social and environmental sounds, ways in which people orient themselves via the aural, how expertise is enacted through listening, or how attachments of kinship and friendship cohere around an attunement to sounds. (adapted from *JPMS* intro)

**FINAL PROJECTS**

**Week 12      April 10**

Draft presentation of project

**Week 13     April 17**

Work day/individual meetings

**Week 14     April 24**

Final presentations

\*Dee Heddon residency and walking workshops

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Additional resources/cases for investigation

Gavin Power Plant

Piketon Nuclear Plant

Solar panel production

Fracking (pro and con)

Relevant sound art/field recordings

<https://soundcloud.com/sensoryethnographylab/sound-safari-bath-maine>

...more here, for my sake, and incorporate into class!

Archiving – uploading files to server – @Lab

Eddie Ashworth??