### Sound

IART 778: Performance Studies  
Winter 2011  
Wednesday 3:30-6:30 p.m.

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OH: TH 10-1 and by appointment

Sounding is at once sonic, spatial, and temporal. Used to refer to technologies of measurement – whether of the depth of water or atmospheric conditions – the ephemerality of these radio technologies is made visible in depth markings on maps and weather reports. Sounding is also a mode of prognosis, sounding out sentiments or attitudes, of a person or a crowd. Both noun and verb, sounding measures and forecasts, reflecting the spatial and temporal nature of sound. This course turns to the full meaning and matter of “sounding” in order to take up an exploration of sound in relation to materiality, space, and temporality. These themes run throughout the quarter, and are conceived of broadly. Materiality encompasses ephemerality and immaterialities as well as the matter of audio technologies and other sounding devices and bodies. Space is produced in and through sound and vice versa, in multiscalar formations of mobility and immobility, underground and above. And temporality includes past, present and future, along with circulations and rhythms. The course draws on philosophies of sound and music, the anthropology of music, and sound art (works and artist writings) to explore the meaning and nature of sound in the world, understood through theorization and practice. Overlapping concerns about music as formalized sound, soundscapes as blurring lines between sound and music, and sound’s relation to social formations emerge in the intersections between these literatures. We will examine these concerns through regional exploration, listening to the sounds of the deep history of labor, energy resources, and community in the Athens area.

### Books

We will read most extensively from the following books, warranting their acquisition:


(http://www.arteleku.net/noise_capitalism/?page_id=3)

Other readings are available on Blackboard
Requirements

*Presentation:* Each student is responsible for leading discussion during one of the following sessions: 2, 3, 5, 6, 9. You should be prepared to prompt initial responses, raise key themes in the readings, and relate to listening material of your choice. This is not a formal presentation, but rather the responsibility of guiding discussion.

*Final project:* The final project may take the form of a sound project + paper or research paper. The form of the sound piece or research subject is your choice. The paper (8-15 pp.) should explore themes discussed in class, or related ones, drawing on relevant texts outside of those read in class in order to develop your analysis more fully.

*Listening:* Some of the things we will listen to (or perform) are structured by the class (Lucier, Cage, field recording work, improvisation). As a group, we have a rich range of knowledge of material that is pertinent to the subjects discussed. Along with the selections of that session’s presenter, we will use the blog tool on Blackboard to present and discuss material before each class session, and to select what to listen to each week we are in the classroom.

Schedule

1. **Introductions**

2. **Listening**
   *Audio Culture*, Part II: Modes of Listening  
   Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, Chs. 1, 2, 3  
   Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, Chapter 1: Listening

3. **Space**  
   Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, Chapter 4: Time and Space

Sonic material:  

4. **Robinson’s Cave**  
   Echoes, histories, hauntings

5. **Silence**  
   Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, Chapter 3: Silence

Sonic material:  
Cage, *Silence* (excerpts TBD)  
Kyle Gann, “John Cage’s 4’33’’”  
6. Worlding


Sonic material:
Luc Ferrari, Steve Feld, UltraRed, Dan Peterman, acoustic ecology...

7. Coal fire

What are the sounds of the 117-year old coal fire?

8. Guest lecture

Adel Wang, Chinese sound artists

9. Circulation and exchange

Audio Culture, Part VI: Improvised Musics
Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, Chs. 7, 8
Noise and Capitalism

Sonic material:
Group improvisation: Bring anything you’d like to make sound (with)

10. Final project presentations