

[THEA 222Z] Neo-Futurist Radio: Experiments in Audio

Instructor: Anthony Sertel Dean

Email: asdean@wesleyan.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Class Zoom: <https://wesleyan.zoom.us/j/99785351889>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will immerse students in the unique form of performance-making called Neo-Futurism as well as teach them how to create their own Neo-Futuristic work for radio. The four key principles of Neo-Futurism are (1) You are who you are (2) You are doing what you're doing (3) You are where you are (4) The time is now. These guiding principles shape honest, personal, timely, relatable stories that are crafted with compelling framing and presented in audio and on stage.

During the intensive, students will learn how to express their voice through the Neo-Futurist lens in writing exercises, study of specific works, and visits from members of the Neo-Futurist ensembles. Students will also be introduced to techniques of sound recording and editing (working primarily with the software Adobe Audition), in addition to expansive methods of developing sonic perspectives for their work. This will all be contextualized within the the historical and contemporary landscape of experimental transmission arts.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Write and perform impactful, short Neo-Futuristic plays
- Become comfortable with software, equipment, and tools for sound design.
- Generate collaborative pieces of audio about contemporary issues
- Develop language for poignant critique and feedback on experimental audio
- Effectively sound design in a variety of styles for radio

Sound can sometimes seem daunting to work with because you can't hold onto it, but you successfully make sounds every day! Through this course, you will hopefully develop a way of working with sound that enhances performance and the worlds you strive to make.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING*

All assignments will be listed in detail on the course Moodle. They are expected to be completed before relevant class meetings. Many of these assignments will be discussed in class, so their timely completion is essential.

- Reading/Listening Responses (10%)
 - We will read and listen to many Neo-Futurist plays and audio experiments throughout the course along with other relevant sound art

pieces and short academic writings. In order to start discussion about the material and use it as inspiration for your own work, you must write and submit reflections (250 words max) on the content and how it fits together.

- Class Participation & Constructive Critique 25%
 - This course will include many days of workshopping material, generating scripts/sounds collectively, and discussion. Remaining engaged and attentive will make all other aspects of the course more beneficial for you and your fellow classmates. Your feedback will directly influence fellow students' work, so be considerate and constructive with your critique.
- Writing/Audio Exercises 25%
 - These assignments are at the core of the course. It will show us how you are making, how you are making the Neo-Futurist lens your own, and how you are able to work with sound. These exercises should not be polished end-products; they are designed to be works in progress. We will use class time to analyze what is there and where they can go.
- Pitch Packet 15%
 - This document will set forth the proposal for your final pieces in the course. It should be reflective of your artistic intentions and the steps you will take toward realizing your design.
- Final Audio Experiments 25%
 - The course will culminate with you writing, performing, recording, and designing a small collection of Neo-Futurist audio plays. We will listen to them all and as a group decide which ones will be featured in a special episode of the show [*Hit Play*](#).

*Grading personal, creative work is by nature subjective. Students will not be penalized for taking artistic risks or making aesthetic choices. Assessment is made on the student's ability to communicate and execute ideas, as well as commitment and growth throughout the class.

CRITIQUE

There will be several opportunities in this class to share work with fellow students. These critique sessions are important and integral to learning. Students are expected to present work at all group critiques, which will be followed by discussion and peer review. This class will follow formal analysis critique guidelines reviewed in the first class session, and all students are expected to be respectful. As we will be dealing with deeply personal narratives, there will be safety and consent measures taken to ensure that this remains a safe and generative space where risk can be encouraged.

Students with Disabilities

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact Accessibility Services in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021 or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

Religious/Spiritual Observance Resources

If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at dleipziger@wesleyan.edu or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>.

Title IX Resources

If trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Title IX Coordinator, at dcolucci@wesleyan.edu, or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements.

PREPARATORY PERIOD

Before the first class meets, please do the following things:

- Read this syllabus
- Listen to at least five episodes of [Hit Play](#). Feel free to choose any from the catalog.
- Read the *Brief History of Neo-Futurism* document on the Moodle.
- Download [Reaper](#) and watch [this introductory video](#)
- Introduce yourself! Please send an email to asdean@wesleyan.edu with:
 - your name & personal pronouns
 - why you are interested in taking this course
 - your experience with audio editing
 - one audio experiment from [Hit Play](#) that stuck out to you & why
 - a piece of art that has recently made an impact on you

CLASS SCHEDULE

We will meet online at the same Zoom link throughout the course:

<https://wesleyan.zoom.us/j/99785351889>

For a graphic calendar of the course schedule, follow this link:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1m0F9zoHP2VrWv_XkWW1SMWJKk3qD5-mAYy00Vq7v5Us/edit?usp=sharing

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

10am-12pm

Individual introductions, Introduction to Neo-Futurist Radio

Writing Exercise inspired by Rob Neill

Listening Exercise inspired by Pauline Oliveros

1pm-3pm

What is Transmission Art?

For next class:

- Complete the “Re-Introduction” writing assignment
- Listen to:
 - *Hello My Name Is* by Sergio Maggiolo
 - *Rest Home* by Meg Bashwiner
 - *A review of a woman, written by the woman, read by a woman with the same birthday* by Kyra Sims
 - *The (anti)climax of lockdown Aries season* by Laura Killeen
 - *going back to that tree to record what i had been meaning to write because this time, it does feel a bit different* by Juli Melfi [CW: death]
- Read:
 - *The Great American Actor’s Great American Monologue* by Dylan Marron
 - *How to be Black in Five Steps (or less)* by Hilary Asare
 - *Hard Times Mix Tape circa 2012* by Katie Kay Chelena
- Watch:
 - *Gnome Sane* by Joey Rizzolo

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

10am-12pm

Soundcraft 1: Time to Play With Time

1pm-3pm

How to give effective critique for personal writing and sound
Re-Introductions

For next class:

- Read & Listen to collection of pieces selected by visiting Neo-Futurist guest lecturers

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12

1pm-5pm

Writing /Performing Your Authentic Self: Guest lecture, conversation, and workshop with New York Neo-Futurist Ensemble Members

For next class:

- Record workshopped piece from class
- Listen to:
 - *an incomplete list of everywhere I'm not* by Katie Kay Chelena
 - *Ode to 17 (after Anis)* by Katie Kay Chelena
 - *Six Questions of When for You Asked from Random Various Distances, at Random Various Volumes* by Julia Melfi
 - *alphabet sleep (part ii)* by Rob Neill
 - *Joy Space* by Anooj Bhandari
 - *Hot Leaf* by Anthony Sertel Dean
- Watch:
 - *Free Verse* by LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13

10am-12pm

Soundcraft 2: Finding and Developing Your Own Sound
Layering Exercise

1pm-3pm

What is Sound Poetry?

For next class:

- Create Two Contrasting Audio Experiments: Raw & Lush
- Listen to:
 - *Freedom* by Yvette Janine Jackson
 - *You're the expert* by Jeffrey Cranor
 - *Podcast Flashdance Interlude* by Anooj Bhandari

- *If You're Hearing This, I'm Doing Fine* by Lee LeBreton [CW: reference to antisemitism]
- *tall tale delirium in a big yellow car* by Yael Haskal
- *Yael's Big Ugly Play* by Yael Haskal
- *Audio Experiments Experiments: Experiment #4 (True Sport)* by Anthony Sertel Dean
- *Audio Crime* by Cecil Baldwin [CW: drug use]
- Hit Play 49. *One Lost, Many Found*
- Read:
 - Lars Bernaerts, Jarmila Mildorf, AUDIONARRATOLOGY: LESSONS FROM RADIO DRAMA pg

MONDAY, JANUARY 16

10am-12pm

Listening Session 1

1pm-3pm

What is The Radio Drama?

For next class:

- Write a Response Play for feedback
- Listen to:
 - *Behind The C-Word: The Haunted Saga* by Anthony Sertel Dean
 - *Put Your Lips Together* by Anthony Sertel Dean
 - *Nocturnal Transmissions* by Kyra Sims [CW: mention of death]
 - *So there's this song from 1969 called "It's Halloween"* by Kyra Sims
 - *Something I Want to Believe is True* by Annie Levin
 - *Record Breaking* by Anooj Bhandari
 - *A Winter Lenticular* by Anooj Bhandari and Yael Haskal
 - *The Quiet confidence of having a clean asshole* by Michael Jon Improtta and Siyu Song
 - *Spitting Distance* by Michaela Farrell
 - *blues.* by Julia Melfi
 - *greens.* by Julia Melfi
- Read:
 - *prompted* to robbleramble* by Rob Neill
 - *prompted† to robbleramble* by Kyra Sims
 - *Something I Want to Believe is True* by Annie Levin

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17

1pm-5pm

Collaborative Storytelling Lab

For next class:

- Record & design one of your group's plays
- Record & design your response play
- Listen to:
 - Selections from WaveFarm's *Transmission Art Archive*
 - *Yellow Power, Black Peril* by Topher Lin
 - *A not quite childrens tale about America* by Michael John Improt
 - *a tiny lullabye for my midnight mosquito enemies* by Colin Summers
 - *In response to the New York Times article that posed the question "How Do I Dress for My Pandemic Belly?"* by Annie Levin

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18

10am-12pm

Soundcraft 3: Scoring as Sound Design

1pm-3pm

Listening Session 2

For next class:

- Create a short electronic score
- Listen to:
 - *Found Sound pt. I&II* by Anooj Bhandari
 - *Synthesizing harmony though all the winter olympic events* by Rob Neill
 - *Voicemails from Rob* by Meg Bashwiner
 - *10 sentences read in a Mid-Atlantic accent, with Foley sounds* by Kyra Sims
 - *Speaking a past discovery while Picking up the old desk you gave me* by Michaela Farrell
 - *Recently* by The New York Neo-Futurists
- Watch:
 - *The Human Symphony*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

1pm-5pm

Tell it Now and Tell it Wrong!: Politics and Avant-Garde-ism

For next class:

- Write 5 anti-plays, record at least two of them
- Listen to:
 - *Quick Dinner Break* (recorded outside because the weather was nice) by Robin Virginie
 - Hit Play 45. *Four Days*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20

10am-12pm

Soundcraft 4: Sound and Environment

1pm-3pm

Listening Session 3

For next class:

- Build Pitch Packet
- Design Components and Materials
- Conduct Classmate Interviews
- Listen to:
 - *stranger bubbly* by Kyra Sims
 - *Autoboobographies* by Laura Killeen
 - *The Woman and the Popsicles* by Robin Virginie
 - *piano lesson(s)* by Kyra Sims
 - *Regressing to a childlike state, featuring the voice of my nephew Ben, who's at home in Texas, as the child ego* by Daniel Mirsky
 - *This is It* by Yael Haskal
 - Hit Play 90

MONDAY, JANUARY 23

1pm-5pm

Collective Oral History

Components & Materials Showing

For next class:

- Meet with Anthony to finalize audio experiments

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25

1pm-5pm

Final Pitch Session with Neo-Futurist Ensemble Members & Oberlin Winter Session Students