

# Music 190r: Technomusicology

Fall 2012  
Thurs 3pm-5pm  
Music Building 4

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Office Hours: Tues & Fri, 11am-12pm

## INTRODUCTION

If in a previous moment “bi-musicality” represented cutting-edge musicological literacy, today’s technology suffused world may call for the development of something akin to “technomusicology.” This course concentrates on the longstanding and increasing interplay between music and technology while exploring new modes of technologically assisted research and publication.

Beginning by reading across the growing literature that attends to music in the age of its technological reproducibility, we will then turn to a series of exercises or etudes, alongside germane readings, to explore some technologically-mediated forms and practices as potential openings for new directions in music scholarship.

In addition to developing an historical grasp on the imbrication of music and tech, students will cultivate competencies in audio and video editing, sampling and arranging, mixing and remixing, producing mashups and composing soundscapes. Occasional evening tutorials will be available over the course of the semester to assist with ongoing projects and to help get familiar with the software we will be using: Ableton Live.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Taylor, Timothy D., Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, eds. *Music, Sound, and Technology in America: A Documentary History of Early Phonograph, Cinema, and Radio*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

This book is available via various online or local retailers. All other readings will be accessible via the course website.

## ASSIGNMENTS / GRADING

1) Attendance & class participation	30%
2) Études (6 in all)	60%
3) Final Portfolio	10%

In general, études should be between 2-5 minutes, and will be due, along with a brief prose gloss and/or other forms of annotation, on the Monday of the week after each has been assigned.

## WEEKLY TOPICS & READINGS

**Week 1 / Sept 6**      **Introduction**  
Guiding questions, syllabus review, preliminary discussion

**Week 2 / Sept 13**    **Pre-History & Early Histories of Sound Reproduction**

Sterne, Jonathan. "Hello!" In *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, 1-31. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Suisman, David. "The Musical Soundscape of Modernity." In *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music*, 240-72. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Taylor, Timothy D. 2007. "The Commodification of Music at the Dawn of the Era of 'Mechanical Music.'" *Ethnomusicology* 51(2): 281-305.

**Week 3 / Sept 20**    **Music in the Age of its Technological Mediation**

Taylor, Timothy D. "Music Technologies in Everyday Life." In *Music, Sound, and Technology in America*, ed. Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, 1-8. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Katz, Mark. "Sound Recording: Introduction." In *Music, Sound, and Technology in America*, ed. Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, 11-28. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Sousa, John Philip. "The Menace of Mechanical Music." In *Music, Sound, and Technology in America*, ed. Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, 113-21. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Cromelin, Paul H. "The Menace of Mechanical Music: Some of the Replies Evoked by Mr. Sousa's Article." In *Music, Sound, and Technology in America*, ed. Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, 126-29. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Gould, Glenn. "The Prospects of Recording." In *Audio Culture*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, 115-26. New York and London: Continuum, 2004.

Keil, Charles. "Music Mediated and Live in Japan."  
*Ethnomusicology* 26:1 (Jan 1984): 91-6.

**Week 4 / Sept 27      Music in the Age of its Technological Remediation**

Novak, David. "Cosmopolitanism, Remediation, and the Ghost World of Bollywood." *Cultural Anthropology* 25:1 (2010): 40-72.

Marshall, Wayne & Jayson Beaster-Jones. "It Takes a Little Lawsuit: The Flowering Garden of Bollywood Exoticism in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility." *South Asian Popular Culture* 10:3 (2012): 1-12.

Taylor, Timothy D. "A Riddle Wrapped in a Mystery: Transnational Music Sampling and Enigma's 'Return to Innocence.'" In *Music and Technoculture*, ed. René Lysloff and Leslie C. Gay, 64-92. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

**Week 5 / Oct 4      Soundscapes**

Schafer, R. Murray. "The Music of the Environment." In *Audio Culture*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, 29-39. New York and London: Continuum, 2004.

Feld, Steven. "A Rainforest Acoustemology." In *The Audio Culture Reader*, ed. Michael Bull and Les Back, 223-240. Oxford and New York: Berg 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Rainforest Soundwalks* (liner notes). EarthEar 1062. 2001.

Samuels, David W., Louise Meintjes, Ana Maria Ochoa, and Thomas Porcello. "Soundscapes: Toward a Sounded Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39 (June 2010): 329-45.

*Étude #1*: Compose a soundscape collage from your own local recordings. Include brief description of subject, methods, and poetics.

**Week 6 / Oct 11      Radio**

Taylor, Timothy. "Part III. Radio. Introduction." In *Music*,

*Sound, and Technology in America*, ed. Timothy D. Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda, 239-54. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012.

Wu, Tim. "Radio Dreams." In *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires*, 33-44. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.

Marshall, Wayne. "Love That Muddy Ether: Pirate Multiculturalism and Boston's Secret Soundscape." *Cluster Mag*. December 2011.  
<<http://theclustermag.com/blog/2011/12/love-that-muddy-ether-pirate-multi-culturalism-and-bostons-secret-soundscape/>>

*Étude #2*: Compose a radio collage, focusing on a particular dimension/station/time of the Boston/Cambridge airwaves. Include brief description of subject and methods.

## **Week 7 / Oct 18**

### **Sample-based Aesthetics**

McLeod, Kembrew and Peter DiCola. "A Legal and Cultural History of Sound Collage." In *Creative License: The Law and Culture of Digital Sampling*, 36-74. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011.

Katz, Mark. "Music in 1s and 0s: The Art and Politics of Digital Sampling." In *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, 137-56. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Schloss, Joseph G. "Elements of Style: Aesthetics of Hip-hop Composition." In *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-Based Hip-hop*, 135-168. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.

Théberge, Paul. "Ethnic Sounds: The Economy and Discourse of World Music Sampling." In *Music and Technoculture*, ed. René Lysloff and Leslie C. Gay, 93-108. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

*Étude #3*: Create a sample-based beat using one of the classic breakbeats provided, along with other samples of your choice (limited to 2 additional sources). Include notes.

**Week 8 / Oct 25      Mashup Poetics**

Sterne, Jonathan. "The MP3 as Cultural Artifact." *New Media & Society* 8:5 (2006): 825-842.

Katz, Mark. "Listening in Cyberspace." In *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, 158-87. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Marshall, Wayne. "Mashup Poetics as Pedagogical Practice." In *Pop-Culture Pedagogy in the Music Classroom Teaching Tools from American Idol to YouTube*, ed. Nicole Biamonte, 307-15. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010.

McGranahan, Liam. "It Goes Beyond Having a Good Beat and I Can Dance to It': Mashup Aesthetics and Creative Process." In *Mashnography: Creativity, Consumption, and Copyright in the Mashup Community*, 35-70. Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 2010.

*Étude #4*: Make a mashup using 2 (or more) related recordings. Include notes discussing thematic and/or musical linkages (i.e., poetics).

**Week 9 / Nov 1      Video Montage**

Gillespie, Tarleton. "The Politics of 'Platforms.'" *New Media & Society*. *New Media & Society* 12:3 (May 2010): 347-364.

Andrejevic, Mark. "Exploiting YouTube: Contradictions of User-Generated Labor." In *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, 406-23. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009.

Tagg, Philip. "The Milksap Montage"  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzYqBcUipok>>,  
"Harvest Song from Bulgaria"  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34ZHJj0IW0I>>,  
"Scotch Snaps: The Big Picture"  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BQAD5uZsLY>>.

Marshall, Wayne. "Gasodoble"  
<<http://wayneandwax.com/?p=5019>>,  
"Bump Con Choque"  
<<http://theclustermag.com/blog/2011/06/wayne-marshall-bump-con-choque/>>.

*Étude #5:* Create a video montage that illustrates a particular story of musical circulation and/or relationship.

**Week 10 / Nov 8      DJ-style Mixing**

Katz, Mark. "Mix and Scratch—The Turntable Becomes a Musical Instrument: 1975-1978." In *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-hop DJ*, 43-69. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Fikentscher, Kai. "'There's Not a Problem I Can't Fix, 'Cause I Can Do It in the Mix': On the Performative Technology of 12-Inch Vinyl." In *Music and Technoculture*, ed. René Lysloff and Leslie C. Gay, 290-315. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

*Étude #6:* Produce a DJ-style mix guided by some logic of musical, cultural, and/or historical connection between the recordings involved. Make efforts to use blends, cuts, and other edits strategically. Include notes explaining aesthetic choices and narrative (i.e., poetics).

**Week 11 / Nov 15      Video Game Design, Musicality, & Interactivity**  
with special guest: Matt Boch (Harmonix)

Miller, Kiri. "How Musical is *Guitar Hero*?" and "Just Add Performance: Staging Schizophonia." In *Playing Along: Music, Video Games, and Networked Amateurs*, 85-154. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

**Week 12 / Nov 29      Sufi Plug-ins**  
with special guest: Jace Clayton (aka DJ /Rupture)

Clayton, Jace. "Feedback Loops." *NYFA Quarterly*. 2005.  
<[http://www.nyfa.org/nyfa\\_quarterly.asp?type=3&qid=191&id=109&fid=1&sid=16](http://www.nyfa.org/nyfa_quarterly.asp?type=3&qid=191&id=109&fid=1&sid=16)>

<<http://www.beyond-digital.org/sufiplugins/>>

<<https://www.npr.org/blogs/therecord/2012/08/01/157725659/translation-software-for-music-makers>>

**December 6      Final Portfolio Due**