

Sonic Writing

PREPARE TO CHANGE HOW YOU THINK ABOUT WRITING

as we spend time in this course thinking and talking about writing as a sonic action. While writing in many educational contexts comes to us as a mind-driven task separated from all of its connections to our sonic lives, we will listen for ways that writing takes shape from our physical experiences with sound and the values of hearing and listening we derive from these experiences. To this end, we will study traditional academic writing and listen for its overtones—ways that this form of writing resonates beyond its form and function. We will also strain to hear what new and surprising aspects of writing become audible when we study sound through sonic subjects such as listening, acoustics, music, and ethics. Through the experiences of the course, we will have a chance to develop new habits and strategies of writing that reflect an altered understanding of our responsibilities and opportunities as humans in an interesting, mysterious, and complex sonic world.

How does writing listen?

KEY QUESTIONS for the course sound something like this:

WHAT are our values and expectations for writing? What do we want writing to do for us? What limitations do we give to it?

HOW are our habits of writing connected to our habits of hearing, listening to, and perceiving sounds? How does writing affix sounds to words?

WHAT happens to writing when we alter our sense of responsibility to the sounds and noises around us? How does writing listen? How can writing become an act of listening better to the elusive sounds of others?

CENTRAL ACTIONS for the course will include:

WRITING successfully for audiences that expect cohesion, clarity, conciseness, and strong arguments

STUDYING writing in relation to sonic topics such as sound, noise, acoustics, music, voice, and listening

DEFINING alternative strategies of writing in response to studies of sonic topics

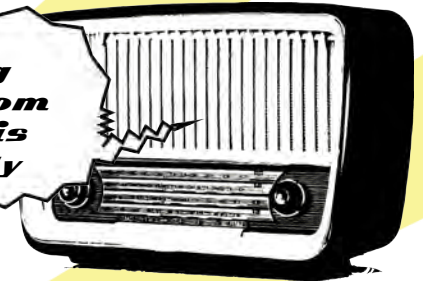
EXPERIMENTING with alternative writing styles, strategies, and habits that put the writer in a different ethical orientation to other writers / audiences

COURSE POLICIES

ENVIRONMENT

ABSENCE: You have six free absences. Upon missing seven classes, you will be dropped from the course. Coming late to class or not participating in class may result in you being counted as absent.

What writing omits from speech is the body



IN-CLASS

WORK: Quizzes

and in-class assignments will often take place at the beginning of class and cannot be made-up if missed. Frequent tardiness or disruptions will affect your quiz/assignment grades.

DISRUPTIONS: Excessive disruptions of our class time—including talking, sleeping, texting, cell phone usage, and doing work for other classes—hurt the class atmosphere and will hurt your grade should you engage in them. Please respect the class environment by giving your classmates and me your full attention at all appropriate times.

SONIC WRITING

English 4160.003: Advanced Expository Writing

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Heard

Spring 2014, University of North Texas

TuTh 11:00AM - 12:20PM | Lang 317

Office: LANG 409H | Hours: TuTh 1:00PM - 2:00PM

ADVANCED EXPOSITORY WRITING | ENGL 4160 | SPRING 2014

COURSE MATERIALS will need to be brought to class everyday. The required course materials are:

Sound Studies Reader (Sterne; 978-0-415-77131-3)

Quiet: the power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking (Cain; 9780307352156)



ASSESSMENT POLICIES

You will be assessed not simply for your ability to store and recite knowledge about writing, but more broadly for your ability to understand your own writing habits, as demonstrated through actions such as:

READING all course assignments thoroughly

PARTICIPATING in class discussions and assignments actively

THINKING self-reflectively about your choices and strategies as a writer

CREATING thoughtful written responses that show evidence of slow and careful attention to complex questions

EXPERIMENTING with different writing strategies

LISTENING to ideas, opinions, issues, and perspectives brought to class discussions by others

DEMONSTRATING awareness of personal limitations, prejudices, and values

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

The UNT Policy Manual defines plagiarism as: “(a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement and (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” (18.1.11). I expect your writing in this course to be original and every use of someone else’s work in your writing to be marked clearly. The consequences for plagiarism both at UNT and in this course are severe, and may include automatic failure and in some cases dismissal from the university. Don’t risk it—come and talk to me about any questionable material before turning in your assignment.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All written work needs to be typed and submitted online to our Blackboard site, with a paper copy brought to class. For all essays, include your name and the page number on the top right of each page (i.e. : Heard 1). Please also include a date and the course number (ENGL 3200). Use a text font for all essays (Times Roman or Garamond for example) at 12 points, with all one-inch (1”) margins, and double-spacing. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated by the assignment prompt.

What does writing want from us?

RUBRICS AND SCORING SYSTEMS:

For the purposes of this course,

“A” work will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly-situated in time and context

“B” work will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original

“C” work will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places, but ultimately insufficient in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness

“D” work will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates

“F” work will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is unacceptable.

ADVANCED EXPOSITORY WRITING | ENGL 4160 | SPRING 2014

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

WRITING PROJECT 1: *Writing in Overtones* (5%; Due Week 5 – 500 words)

Our first writing project in the course will require you to learn and use advanced persuasive techniques to make your writing clear, coherent, cohesive and powerful. Your focus for this assignment will be on a particular sonic technology, value or cultural trend that you believe you can successfully justify in a formal writing assignment. Your job in this first project is to use the tools of persuasion to craft a persuasive and compelling argument.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVE: Write your project in the appropriate tone, language, and style of your chosen academic “field.” (Bonus: up to +10% total score)

WRITING PROJECT 2: *Writing in Undertones* (15%; Due Week 8 – 750 words)

In contradistinction to Project 1, Project 2 will require you to write while paying careful, keen attention to how your writing listens to the undertones of your topic (including the people, ideas, and values that are involved). Your focus for this second project will be on one of the “Underlying Questions” that we identify in our class discussions. More specifically, your goal will be to listen for how this Underlying Question is answered in our society in the ways that people act, talk, and/or create. As part of listening, you will need to reference specific objects, persons, places, or things.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVE: Write your project about the same topic you chose in Project 1. (Bonus: up to +10pts in a grading category)

PROJECT PROPOSAL: PROJECT 3 (5%; Due Week 13 – 250 words)

A one-page summary/preview of your proposed idea and basic argument for Project 3

WRITING PROJECT 3: Sonic Writing (35%; Due Week 15)

The final project for the course involves creating a long, sustained, and extended example of what we have been calling “sonic” writing. The goal of this final project will be to draw together your knowledge of “overtones” and “undertones” in writing to create a set of final documents that showcase your ability to write with sensitivity, responsibility, and attunement.

OPTION 1: Create an “academic” paper that draws in one or more of the Sonic Questions we have been asking in the course.

OPTION 2: Create an essay for a popular magazine, website, or journal that addresses one of the “Underlying Questions” we have been discussing in this course”

CRITICAL REFLECTION:

Additionally, the final project requires a 1-page Critical Reflection analyzing your writing choices in specific detail.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (20%)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (must complete 5): Write short (200-word) responses to 5 discussion questions during weeks 2-13

READING ANALYSIS (must complete 5): Write short (300-word) analyses of 5 selected readings

GRADING BREAKDOWN

5% - WRITING PROJECT 1: Writing in Overtones

15% - WRITING PROJECT 2: Writing in Undertones

5% - PROJECT PROPOSAL: Project 3

35% - WRITING PROJECT 3: Sonic Writing

20% - DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

20% - IN-CLASS QUIZZES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND PARTICIPATION



The voice is sound, not speech.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE ENGL 4160.003 SPRING 2014

WK	T	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT	TH	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
1	14-Jan	COURSE INTRO		16-Jan	COURSE INTRO	<i>Dolar</i> , "Linguistics of the Voice" (SSR 539-554)
2	21-Jan	DEFINING SONIC WRITING	<i>Barthes</i> , "The Grain of the Voice" (SSR 504-510)	23-Jan	DEFINING SONIC WRITING	<i>Cavarero</i> , "Multiple Voices" (SSR 520-532)
3	28-Jan	WRITING IN OVERTONES	Tonality in Writing Handbooks (online) <i>Gautier</i> , "Social Transculturation" (SSR 388-404)	30-Jan	WRITING IN OVERTONES	Online: <i>Thank You For Arguing</i> 15-26 (Audience)
4	4-Feb	WRITING IN OVERTONES	Online: <i>Thank You For Arguing</i> 108-120 (Stance)	6-Feb	WRITING IN OVERTONES	Online: <i>Thank You For Arguing</i> 121-133 (Logos)
5	11-Feb	SONIC SUBJECT: LISTENING	WRITING PROJECT 1 DUE <i>Chion</i> , "The Three Listening Modes" (SSR 520-532)	13-Feb	SONIC OBJECT: THE TELEPHONE	<i>Martin</i> , "Gender and Early Telephone Culture" (SSR 336-350)
6	18-Feb	SONIC SUBJECT: LISTENING	<i>Schafer</i> , "The Soundscape" (SSR 95-103)	20-Feb	SONIC OBJECT: DIGITAL MUSIC	<i>Bull</i> , "The Audio-Visual Ipod" (SSR 197-208)
7	25-Feb	SONIC SUBJECT: ACOUSTICS	<i>Goodman</i> , "The Ontology of Vibrational Force" (SSR 70-72)	27-Feb	SONIC OBJECT: ARCHITECTURE	<i>Rath</i> , "No Corner for the Devil to Hide" (SSR 130-140)
8	4-Mar	SONIC SUBJECT: ACOUSTICS	<i>Born</i> , "Music Research and Psychoacoustics" (SSR 419-426)	6-Mar	SONIC OBJECT: ANTHROPOLOGY	<i>Helmreich</i> , "An Anthropologist Underwater" (SSR 168-185) WRITING PROJECT 2 DUE
BRK	11-Mar	SPRING BREAK		13-Mar	SPRING BREAK	
9	18-Mar	SONIC SUBJECT: ETHICS	<i>Stanyek and Piekut</i> , "Deadness" (SSR 304-324)	20-Mar	NO CLASS	
10	25-Mar	SONIC SUBJECT: ETHICS	<i>LaBelle</i> , "Auditory Relations" (SSR 468-474)	27-Mar	SONIC OBJECT: DUB MUSIC	<i>Veal</i> , "Starship Africa" (SSR 454-467)
11	1-Apr	SONIC OBJECT: DUB MUSIC	<i>Crawford</i> , "Following You" (SSR 79-90)	3-Apr	NO CLASS	
12	8-Apr	WRITING AND QUIET	<i>Cain, Quiet</i> pp. 1-15	10-Apr	WRITING AND QUIET	Readings to be announced
13	15-Apr	WRITING AND QUIET	<i>Cain, Quiet</i> pp. 19-70 Project 3 PROSPECTUS Due	17-Apr	WRITING AND QUIET	<i>Cain, Quiet</i> pp. 71-154
14	22-Apr	WRITING AND QUIET	<i>Cain, Quiet</i> pp. 155-223	24-Apr	WRITING AND QUIET	<i>Cain, Quiet</i> pp. 224-271
15	29-Apr	REFLECTING	Readings to be announced	1-May	REFLECTING	WRITING PROJECT 3 DUE
F	6-May	FINALS WEEK		8-May	FINALS WEEK	