

Noise Machines: The Rhetoric of Sound and Technology



Instructor: Vanessa Chang

PWR 1 GVN (Spring 2015)
160-322 (Wallenberg)
T/Th 2.15pm-4.05pm

Office Hours: T 11am-12pm (or by appointment)
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Syllabus

Course Description

Inundated by images and associated with the meteoric rise of such media as film and photography, the past century has long been considered a predominantly visual era. Yet, sonic media offer alternative sensory platforms for understanding and making arguments about culture. “Sound history,” as Jonathan Sterne writes, “indexes changes in human nature and the human body – in life and in death.” In this course, we will explore the intertwined histories of sound and society, asking how developments in sound technologies have engaged with broader culture. At the same time, we will study how such media employ rhetorical tools to parse these shifts. From radio to podcasts, turntables to mp3 players, the relationship between aural media and culture reveals much about the relationship between society and technology writ large. For example, electronic musician Brian Eno’s reflections on composing in the studio raise wider questions about how machines transform concepts of creativity and authenticity. Through a study of history, film, literature, music, and other media, we will look at the ways in which sound technologies have both provoked and reflected cultural change, as well as evolving attitudes towards human bodies – bodies that sing, dance, perform, create, love, live and die.

Course Readings

Andrea A. Lunsford, *EasyWriter* (5th edition)

All other readings available on Coursework site in “Materials” Folder

All assigned music can be streamed from online sources such as Spotify.

Attendance

Because PWR courses make extensive use of writing activities, in-class workshops, and small group discussions, your consistent attendance is crucial to your success. If you must miss a class for religious holidays, medical reasons, or valid University-related activities, you must let your instructor know as far in advance as possible of the absence and obtain information about the work you must

do to keep up in class. If you miss a class for any other reason (sudden illness, family emergency, etc.), you should get in touch with your instructor as soon as possible and arrange to make up the work missed. If you do not take responsibility for communicating with your instructor about absences, your instructor will contact you by phone or email and issue a warning about your standing in the course. Should you miss a second unexcused class, your work in the class will be seriously compromised, and a continued pattern of absences may jeopardize your enrollment in the class. The best policy, therefore, is to be in class, on time, every day!

HOWEVER, if you have flu-like symptoms, please stay at home and rest. Contact me *before* class to alert me of your absence.

Conferences and Office Hours

We will meet for at least three conferences at various stages of the writing process. Conferences will last approximately 30 minutes. Conferences are mandatory and will not be rescheduled—don't forget your conference time! Students should come to conferences with an agenda: What specifically would you like to address in your writing? What are the particular elements in your work which are troubling you? Students are also encouraged to make use of office hours. I will be available to discuss your writing and any other questions or concerns you might have during my scheduled office hours and by appointment.

Course Requirements

Class Activities & Peer Review	10%
Rhetorical Analysis	20%
Texts in Conversation Essay	25%
Research-Based Argument	40%
Oral Presentation	5%

Rhetorical Analysis (1500-1800 words; 5-6 pages): For your first assignment, you will write a rhetorical analysis of a sonic artifact: a song, a radio show, an advertisement, a film, or other text which represents a sound technology in an interesting way. You will pay close attention to the material's vocabulary and imagery (whether aural, verbal, lyrical, textual or visual) and other rhetorical elements of significance.

Texts in Conversation (1800-2400 words; 6-8 pages): This assignment will function as an inquiry into the subject of your research-based argument. You will have a lot of freedom in choosing your research focus. For instance, one project might focus on the relationship of disability and technology, investigating how scholars view the implications of cochlear implants on the deaf community. The purpose of this essay is to get a sense of the critical conversation that you as a writer and researcher are entering, and to begin to position yourself within this conversation.

Research-Based Argument (3600-4500 words; 12-15 pages): Having familiarized yourself with the academic debate surrounding your issue, you will devise your own informed thesis, developing it in a researched essay which incorporates the range of positions your topic has generated. Extending their work on the TiC, one writer in the class might contribute to the debate surrounding the use of sound and music as devices of torture, while another writer might trace how the emergence of sound technologies in film (i.e. in “talkies”) affected styles of performance.

Active participation in class is expected of all students. You should contribute positively to in-class activities, including class discussion and peer review workshops. In order to achieve a passing grade, you are required to hand in every assignment. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade. Our last week of class will be devoted to oral discussions of our research. Each student is responsible for articulating his or her research argument, fielding research questions and participating in the roundtable discussion. This will help you refine your argument and address potential questions it might bring up.

Memos to Me (<1 page): With each draft of an assignment that you submit to me you will attach a memo regarding your writing process addressing the following questions:

- When did I start the assignment and how long did I spend on it?
- What I am I most proud of?
- What am I still worried about?
- What is my favorite passage or sentence? Why?
- If I were to start over, what would I do differently?

Assignment Submission Policy: All final drafts must be submitted to me in your Coursework Dropbox. You must submit every assignment on time, NO EXCEPTIONS. Should you turn in an assignment late, I will deduct one third of a letter grade per day it is late. I will not entertain requests for extensions less than 24 hours before an assignment is due, unless it is due to a legitimate emergency.

DEADLINES

April 12	Rhetorical Analysis Draft
April 19	Rhetorical Analysis Final Revision
April 30	Texts in Conversation Annotated Sources (First 5)
May 3	Texts in Conversation Draft
May 10	Texts in Conversation Final Revision
May 14	Research-Based Argument Proposal
May 15	Research-Based Argument Annotated Bibliography
May 19	Detailed Research-Based Argument Outline
May 26	Research-Based Argument Draft
June 8	Research-Based Argument Final Paper

Formatting Requirements for Submitted Work

All papers should be typed in size 12 font and double-spaced. At the top left hand corner of each paper, you should include your name, the name of the class, and the date of submission. After this, skip one line and include the title of your paper, in bold, centered. Margins should be 1 inch on every side. Don't forget your bibliographical information – its absence will result in a failing grade. The majority of your work will be submitted digitally, via the Coursework website.

Guidelines to Electronic Submission

Save your document as a Word file, with a *.doc extension. Use your last name, an underscore, and the acronym of the assignment as the file name. For example, my Rhetorical Analysis would be saved as Chang_RA.doc. For drafts, append the word “draft” to the file name: Chang_RA draft.doc.

Laptop Use in Class

Personal electronic devices, such as cell phones, laptops, iPods/MP3 players, iPads, etc., are not to be used during class time unless specified for a particular class activity, such as accessing assigned reading, or working on your writing. In particular, cell phones should be turned off (not on vibrate) during class. At such times, please respect your fellow classmates and the classroom as an intellectual community, and do not check your email or social media.

The Hume Writing Center (HWC) works with all Stanford writers to help them develop rich and varied abilities in every aspect of writing and communication. In free one-on-one sessions, HWC writing consultants help students get started on assignments; address and overcome writer's block; learn strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading; and understand academic conventions in their fields. Whether students are working on a PWR or Thinking Matters essay, a writing project in the major or minor, an Honors thesis, a creative project, or fellowship or job applications, the HWC can help them develop effective strategies to improve both the current piece of writing and future writing. Students can make an appointment or visit a drop-in consultant in the Center. The HWC is located in **Building 250 (Lasuen Mall)**. For further information, to see hours and locations, or to schedule an appointment with a consultant, visit the HWC website at: hwc.stanford.edu.

PROGRAM IN WRITING AND RHETORIC POLICIES

Refer to this information, located in a link from the “Materials” folder on Coursework, to familiarize yourself with Stanford and PWR's policies regarding:

- Honor Code, intellectual property, disability resources
- PWR program policies on attendance, promptness, conferences, submission of work, dual submissions, grade disputes
- Student resources

Class Schedule

*Note: Like all good writing this schedule will be revised over time to reflect necessary changes. As we make changes and add more detailed information, please always check Coursework and email for important updates.

Week 1

Tuesday, March 31

Introduction to Course: What is Rhetoric? Why Sound & Technology?

Activities: Discussion. In-class reading & writing.

Thursday, April 2

* Tour of the Archive of Recorded Sound – *Meet just outside the entrance to the Music Library* (East entrance of Braun Music Center, 541 Lasuen Mall) at 2.10pm.

Reading due: Edward Bellamy, “With the Eyes Shut”
Thomas Edison, “The Phonograph and its Future”

Week 2

Tuesday, April 7

Due: Assignment #0 – Show & Tell

Reading due: Langdon Winner, “Technologies as Forms of Life”

Discussion of reading. Introduction to rhetorical analysis and terms.

Distribution of Rhetorical Analysis assignment.

Sign up for individual conferences (week 3)

Thursday, April 9

Due: Object you have chosen for rhetorical analysis

Reading due: Tricia Rose. “Soul Sonic Forces: Technology, Orality, and Black Cultural Practice in Rap Music.”

Listening due: Eric B. & Rakim, *Paid in Full* (1987)

Public Enemy, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988)

📌 RHETORICAL ANALYSIS DRAFT DUE SUNDAY April 12, 4pm in CW Dropbox

Week 3 Conferences

Tuesday, April 14

Writing: Rhetorical analysis Draft (bring hard copy)

Reading due: Marshall McLuhan, “Radio: The Tribal Drum”

Listening due: Orson Welles, “War of the Worlds”:

NPR, “The Infinite Whiteness of Public Radio”

This American Life, “Freedom Fries”

Activities: Peer Review of RA

Thursday, April 16

Guest Lecturer: Lindsey Dolich Felt (Ph.D. Candidate, English)

Reading due: Mara Mills, “Do Signals Have Politics?: Inscribing Abilities in Cochlear

Implants”

Michael Chorost, "My Quest for Bolero," Wired Mag (2005)

Discussion: Beginning your Research Project

🌟 REVISED RHETORICAL ANALYSIS DRAFT DUE Sunday, April 19, 4pm in CW Dropbox

Week 4

Tuesday, April 21

Listening due: M.I.A., *Matangi* (2013)

Reading due: *Matangi* album reviews (links on CW)

EasyWriter, “Conducting Research” (176-185)

Activities: Discussion. Introduction to Research.

Writing: RBA PROPOSAL (to be revised and handed in wk 7)

Bring: One source for your proposed research project

Distribution of Texts in Conversation Assignment

Thursday, April 23

Watch: *Copyright Criminals* (2009)

Bring: Your copy of *EasyWriter*

Activity: Formulating Research Questions, Placing Texts in Conversation

Week 5

Tuesday, April 28

* Library Tour – Meet in Green Library near Information Center

Thursday, April 30

Reading: Your own Research Sources

EasyWriter “Evaluating Sources and Taking Notes” (187-197)

Writing: First five annotated sources due in class

Activities: Discussion. Placing Texts in Conversation.

Sign up for individual conferences (Week 6)

🌟 TEXTS IN CONVERSATION DRAFT DUE Sunday, May 3 by 4pm in CW Dropbox

Week 6 Conferences

Tuesday, May 5

Watch: Bernie Krause, “The Voice of the Natural World”

Activities: Texts in Conversation Peer Review → Bring hard copy of TiC draft to class

Informal Presentation of Research Topics

Thursday, May 7

Reading: Your Sources

EasyWriter “Integrating Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism” (198-203)

Activities: In-class work on identifying, locating and using sources.

✪ REVISED TEXTS IN CONVERSATION DUE Sunday, May 10 by 4pm in CW Dropbox

Week 7

Tuesday, May 12

Reading: Boothe Essay (choose one) at <http://bootheprize.stanford.edu/essays.html>

Activities: Refining your Research Proposal. Creating an annotated bibliography.

Distribution of RBA assignment

Thursday, May 14

Writing: Revised RBA Proposal

Activities: Discussion of Topic Proposals, Workshop on outlining the long essay

✪ WORKING ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (10 sources minimum) due by 7pm on
May 15, Friday in CW Dropbox

Week 8

Tuesday, May 19

DETAILED RBA OUTLINE DUE IN CLASS

Activities: Workshop on Titles, Introductions, Conclusions

Thursday, May 21

Writing: RESEARCH-BASED ARGUMENT DRAFT DUE

→ *Bring hard copy of RBA and upload to CW Dropbox*

Activities: Peer-Review exercises, revision workshop

Sign up for individual conferences (Week 9)

Week 9 Conferences

Tuesday, May 26

Elevator Pitches and PWR Mini-conference

Thursday, May 28

Oral presentations and Discussions.

Week 10

Tuesday, June 2

Oral Presentations and Discussions, continued. Assessment of Course.

✪ RESEARCH-BASED ARGUMENT FINAL PAPER Due June 8, Monday by 5pm in CW
Dropbox