**FAU, SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND MULTIMEDIA**

# FIL4866: Sound in the Cinema

**Semester I (Fall 2016), Wed. 3.00-6.20 p.m., DW108**

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**Office: DW303p; Office Hours: Wed. 1-3.00 p.m.; Thursday 1-3.00 p.m.**

## Course Description: Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes

In 1927 film irreversibly entered the era of synchronized dialogue, and became not only a different technology but also a different art form. Nevertheless, the study of the way sound effects, film music, and spoken dialogue transform the moving image has received far less attention than it deserves. It is only in 2007 that for the first time a lifetime achievement award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was proposed for contributions by a film composer: some of the most influential composers of the 20th century, the period when film was the world’s dominant form of entertainment, have never received one for their film scores. Likewise, the deeper potentials of sound editing to the structure of films was fully appreciated only in the 1970s and 80s and culminates in the figure of Walter Murch (sound designer, editor, and filmmaker) to whom we will devote considerable attention during the course of the semester.

This course aims to impart an appreciation of the way films tell stories with both sound and images, redressing the emphasis so far given to the image in discussions of film studies. Beginning with a brief historical introduction to sound and sound theory, it proceeds to the study of the way sound has been used by individual film directors. Although there will be a wealth of examples presented in class, students will also be expected to watch films outside class and to apply the critical approaches we study to them. This semester we will pay special attention to the carefully integrated way in which movement and film acting works with the soundtrack in the films of the very best directors.

**Teaching Format and Grading Policies**

This will be a rigorous course, with students required to provide short writing samples consisting of in-class and take-home assignments, as well as in-class quizzes. The total of this portion of the grade will constitute 30% of the course grade. In addition, students will be expected to make an oral presentation (based on a short paper) that will together constitute the mid-term project (20% of the course grade); and they must complete final intensive research project based on data pertaining to a particular film that will be selected in consultation with the courses instructor (30% of the course grade). Students will be expected to attend all the classes and to participate actively, and together with responses to questions asked in class this grade will account for the remaining 20% of the total grade assigned: note that a substantial part of this grade (up to 10%) will involve a final presentation of the findings for the final research projects at the time of the scheduled exam.

From time to time the order of the lectures and the readings may have to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances, and we will often have to see only short excerpts of films; however, unless notified otherwise in class, students will be responsible for completing the readings indicated for each week. All late work on major assignments will be graded on the basis of -10% per day after the due date. Except in exceptional, documented circumstances of illness, there will be no make up exams and if the illness is persistent students may be allowed to withdraw from the class for medical reasons. Students will be permitted one unauthorized absence from class before having points deducted from the participation grade.

**Final Research Project**

In each semester this course is taught, students will be required to compile sound-related data about specific film texts. Students will be required to obtain optimal DVD copies of individual films and to time individual shots (and the sound values associated with each shot) with precision. Cellular phones and many personal computers now have programs with precise stop watches to facilitate the compilation of such data.

The data should be compiled in the form of a table (Supplement 2; also available electronically), and students may make as many copies as necessary of the second sheet to allow all the necessary shots to be included. In addition to counting the duration of all the shots in the film, the primary data will consist of the following two categories: (I) is the sound in each shot diegetic, off-screen diegetic, or non-diegetic; (II) does the sound in a shot represent the human voice, is it a sound effect, or is it a musical or instrumental sound? Since some films contain an extraordinary number of shots, this final assignment may require complete data on part of a film rather than an entire film.

The total number of films analyzed using this methodology will be determined by the number of participants in the class (if there are sufficient numbers the work of up to 9 film directors will be analyzed this semester, or the work of one director may be analyzed in detail). Directors of different generations and varying perspectives who are noted for their elaborate use of sound, and whose films are often accessible on digital media, are Alfred Hitchcock (after 1928), Orson Welles, Luis Buñuel, Akira Kurosawa, Stanley Kubrick, Ingmar Bergman, Satyajit Ray, Francis Coppola, and Martin Scorsese. In subsequent semesters, other approaches and themes beyond the study of directors’ styles will also be explored. Potentially, more than one student could be assigned to a film, and thus group participation and mutual co-operation are encouraged.

Students must begin this project early in the semester as it is extremely research-intensive and time-consuming, and will involve obtaining a **complete copy** of the film of choice: failure to complete the project will result in a lower grade. Higher grades will be assigned to projects that contain the most accurate and complete data.

Note that the data obtained will be used by other researchers who will: (I) check the data for accuracy, making necessary corrections and additions; (II) reuse the data in other forms: note that the data release form (Supplement 1) yields all rights to the use or reuse of the data to the instructor of record for this course.

**Course Pre-requisites**

FIL2000 Film Appreciation, or an equivalent course (emphasizing music or visual arts).

**Required Texts**

Chion, Michel. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Translated and edited by Claudia Gorbman.

New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. (Henceforth AV).

Sider, Larry, Diane Freeman, and Jerry Sider. *Soundscape: The School of Sound Lectures,*

*1998-2001*. London: Wallflower Press, 2003. (Henceforth SS).

*Supplementary Readings* (henceforth SR) to be kept on reserve in the BCC campus library.

*A high-quality DVD or Blu-Ray copy of the film chosen for the final project.*

**Recommended General Readings:**

Film sound technique and theory:

Chion, Michel. *Film, A Sound Art*. Tr. Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University

Press, 2009 (orig. 2003).

Beck, Jay, and Tony Grajeda, eds. *Lowering the Boom: Critical Studies in Film Sound*. Urbana: University

of Illinois Press, 2008.

Ondaatje, Michael. *The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film*. New York: A.

Knopf, 2004.

Murch, Walter. *In the Blink of an Eye. 2nd Edition.* Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2001.

Kassabian, Anahid. *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film*

*Music*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Altman, Rick. *Sound Theory / Sound Practice*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Weis, Elizabeth, and John Belton. *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. New York: Columbia

University Press, 1985.

Film sound technology:

Yewdall, David L. *Practical Art of Motion Picture Sound. 3rd Ed.* London: Elsevier, 2007.

LoBrutto, Vincent. *Sound-on-Film: Interviews with the Creators of Film Sound*. Westport, CT:

Praeger, 1994.

Film sound history:

Abel, Richard and Rick Altman, eds. *The Sounds of Early Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana

University Press, 2001.

Altman, Rick. *Silent Film Sound*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

O’Brien, Vincent. *Cinema’s Conversion to Sound: Film Style in France and the U.S.* Bloomington:

Indiana University Press, 2005.

Geduld, Harry M. *The Birth of the Talkies: From Edison to Jolson*. Bloomington: Indiana

University Press, 1975.

Crafton, Donald. *The Talkies: American Cinema’s Transition to Sound, 1926-1931.* Berkeley:

University of California Press, 1997.

Film music:

Gorbman, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. Bloomington: Indiana University

Press, 1987.

Marks, Martin. *Music and the Silent Film: Contexts and Case Studies, 1895-1924*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 1997.

Brown, Royal S. *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music.* Berkeley: University of

California Press, 1994.

Buhler, James, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer, eds. *Music and Cinema*. Hanover, NH:

Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

Mera, Miguel, and David Burnand, eds. *European Film Music*. London: Ashgate, 2006.

Wojcik, Pamela, and Arthur Knight, eds. *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular*

*Music*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

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| NOTE THAT THE READINGS MUST BE DONE **IN TIME FOR THE LECTURES OR DISCUSSIONS OF THE INDICATED WEEK**. COME EARLY TO ALL OF THE CLASSES TO AVOID FALLING BEHIND, MISSING QUIZZES, OR BEING LATE FOR FILMS (WHICH WILL BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO AVAILABILITY AND TIME CONSTRAINTS). |

**Official Requirements, University Regulations, and Class Policies:**

**Policy regarding academic integrity**: FAU students are expected to maintain high ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these standards because it interferes with the University’s mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded on a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. For more information see: <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf>

**Policy regarding students with disabilities**: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability must register with and follow all procedures explained by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) located in Boca Raton (SU 122, tel. 5612973880), in Davie (Mod I, tel. 9542361222), in Jupiter (SR117, tel. 5617998585), or in the Treasure Coast (CO128, tel. 7728733305). If a student has a temporary disability, please consult with the instructor at the start of the semester.

Lecture Schedule:

Week I. Introduction: “Film adds a track, 1927”. Expectations of the class; how film came about and the early history of the medium; technical innovations (narrative, sound, color, cinematography, digital computer processing).

**Films**: *Discovering Cinema: Learning to Talk* (Eric Lange, 2003) and *Visions of Light* (Todd McCarthy, Stuart Samuels, and Arnold Glassman, 2000).

**Readings**: AV “Foreward” by Murch, vii-xxiv.

PURCHASE THE TEXTBOOKS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: note on “Reading Lightly.”

**Week II**. **“Sound and Image are not equivalent”:** **How the dimensions and tracks of cinema work; the semiotic properties of sound and image; Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov and counterpoint: the sound film vs. the dialogue film; the classical Hollywood style – invisible editing, inaudible sound, passive identification.**

**Films**: *Las Hurdes* (Luis Buñuel, 1932); *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (Walter Ruttmann, 1928); *Koyaanisquatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1982); *Another Woman* (Woody Allen, 1988).

**Readings**: SR Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov “Statement on Sound” 83-85; SR Pudovkin “Asynchronism as a Principle in sound Film” 86-91; SS Christie “Asynchrony” (161-169); SS Wollen “Mismatches of Sound and Image” (221-230)

**Week III. “Sound has dimensions and qualities exploited by images”: sound cues, pushing up and pulling down sound; sound hooks and sound bridges; timbre and pitch; the meaning and nature of silence.**

**Films**: *Dreamchild* (Gavin Millar, 1985); *Alice* (Jan Svankmajer, 1988).

**Readings**: SS Figgis, “Silence: The Absence of Sound” (1-14); SS Murch, “Touch of Silence” (83-102); AV “Lines and Points” (selection, 35-40).

**COMPLETE SELECTION OF THE SOUNDTRACK TO A “SILENT” OR EARLY SYNC-SOUND FILM (pre-1930) FOR THE MID-TERM PRESENTATION AND DETERMINE THE FILM(S) THAT WILL BE PART OF THE TEAM EFFORT AS A FINAL PROJECT.**

**Week IV. “The soundtrack has a specific historical relation to the image”: the evolution of sound technologies and the synchronization of speech.**

**Films**: *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927); *Steamboat Willie* (Ub Iwerks, 1930*)*; *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931); *Radio Dynamics* and *Motion Painting No. 1* (Oskar Fischinger, 1942 and 1947); *The Notebooks of Anna Magdalena Bach* (Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, 1967); *Singing in the Rain* (Gene Kelley and Stanley Donen, 1951).

**Readings**: SR Crafton “The Uncertainty of Sound” (1-18); SR O’Brien “Shooting and Recording in Paris and Hollywood” (107-135); SR “Direct Sound: An interview with Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet” (150-153); SR Chion “Faces and Speech” (353-376).

**Week V. “There is a special relationship between sound and movement in the cinema”: the question of motion, or, why were so many of the great silent film actors dancers?**

**Films**: *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927); extract “We’re in the Money” from *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Busby Berkeley sequence, 1933); two versions [cinematic vs. televisual] of *Scheherazade* (Ross MacGibbon, 2002; Andris Liepa, 2002); the *Red Shoes* ballet (Michael Powell, 1948); *Sylvie Guillem* in *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated* (André Labarthe, 1987).

**Readings**: SR Loughney “[*Dickson Experimental Sound Film*] (215-219); AV “Lines and Points” selection 41-65).

**Week VI**. **“Meaningful theme music can be non-diegetic”: sensation/emotion.**

**Films**: *A* *Room with a View* (James Ivory, 1985); *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (Sergio Leone, 1966); *The Godfather II* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974); *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967); *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, 1980); *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (Philip Kaufman, 1988)*.*

**Readings**: AV “The Audiovisual Scene . . . “ (66-94) and “Sound Films” (141-156).

**Week VII. “How diegetic music functions in film”: space, sound, and character.**

**Films**: *Once Upon a Time in America* (Sergio Leone, 1969); *La Strada* (Federico Fellini, 1954); *Bird* (Clint Eastwood, 1988); *Blue* (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1996).

**Readings:** SR Doane “The Voice in the Cinema” 162-176.

**Week VIII**. **Mid-term presentations on a pre-1930 film**.

**Films**: **None -- mid-term presentations.**

**Readings**: **None**.

**Week IX. NO CLASSES DUE TO MID-SEMESTER BREAKS (this might occur in an earlier or later week)**

Week X. “Sound can modify the image by simulating synchronous recording”: dubbing, looping in, and playback synchronization.

**Films**: *Jesus of Montreal* (Denys Arcand, 1989); discussion of S.D. Burman and A.R. Rahman; *Khal Nayak* excerpt Subhash Gai, 1993); excerpt of *Bombay* (Mani Ratnam, 1995 and 1998); *Moulin Rouge* (2001); excerpts of *Aria* by Bill Bryden, Jean-Luc Godard, Julien Temple and Franc Roddam (1987).

**Readings**: SS Kaul “The Rambling Figure” (209-220).

**Week XI**. **“Sound can dominate the image or be completely subservient to the image”: hyper-realism in such genres as documentary vs. meta-realism in such genres as animation.**

**Films**: *Listen to Britain* (Humphrey Jennings, 1942) vs. *Duck Amuck* (Chuck Jones, 1953); Speaking, tone, pitch, accent: *My Fair Lady* (George Cukor, 1964); *Pennies From Heaven* (Herbert Ross, 1981).

**Readings**: SR Ruoff “Conventions of Sound in Documentary” (217-234); AV “Toward an Audiologovisual Poetics” (169-184) and “The Real and the Rendered” (95-122).

WeekXII. “Sound can create a love-hate relationship with the audience”: Walter Murch/Orson Welles/Francis Ford Coppola, or François Girard.

**Films**: *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958); *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974); *The Red Violin* (François Girard, 1998).

**Readings**: SR Interview with “Walter Murch” (83-99); AV “The Three Listening Modes” (25-34).

**Week XIII. “Walter Murch’s Use of the Acousmetre”: Symbolic sound and the potentials of non-alignment of tracks**

**Films**: 3 versions of *Ballet Méchanique* (Fernand Léger, 1924); *Rosemary’s Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968); *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996).

**Readings**: AV “Phantom Audio-Vison” (123-137).

## Week XIV. “The philosophy of sound: Tarkovsky and Kubrick.”

**Films**: *Andrei Rublev* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968).

**Readings**: SS Svensson “On Tarkovsky’s *The Sacrifice*” (112-117); SS Burnand “Tarkovsky’s Gift” (118-120); SR Chion “Language and the World” (3789-383).

**FINAL PROJECTS (TYPED) DUE AT THE START OF THIS LECTURE**

**Week XV.** **“The poetics of sound: Bresson and Mizoguchi.”**

**Films**: *Mouchette* (Robert Bresson, 1967) and *Ugetsu Monogatari* (Kenji Mizoguchi, 1953).

**Readings**: SR Bresson “Notes on Sound” (149); SR Hanlon “Sound in Bresson’s *Mouchette*” (323-331); SR Burch “On the Structural Use of Sound” (200-209).

**Week XVI.** **“Soundscapes: Hithcock’s montage and Forman’s cinematography”**

**[Note that this lecture may be combined with the lecture of Week XV if necessitated by the schedule]**

**Films:** *The Man Who Knew Too Much*;*Psycho*; *The Birds* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1956, 1960, 1963); *Amadeus* (Milosz Forman, 1984).

Readings: SR Weis “The Evolution of Hitchcock’s Aural Style” (298-311).

**Each student will be required to make a 10-minute oral and/or visual**

**Final Presentation of research findings at the time of the scheduled final exam.**