



“Let us wander through a great modern city with our ears more attentive than our eyes, and distinguish the sounds of water, air, or gas in metal pipes, the purring of motors (which breathe and pulsate with an indubitable animalism), the throbbing of valves, the pounding of pistons, the screeching of gears, the clatter of streetcars on their rails, the cracking of whips, the flapping of awnings and flags. We shall amuse ourselves by orchestrating in our minds the noise of the metal shutters of store windows, the slamming of doors, the bustle and shuffle of crowds, the multitudinous uproar of railway stations, forges, mills, printing presses, power stations, and underground railways.”

-Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, page 180

HL3043 Modernist Soundscapes

While the Western world may not have gotten noisier in the early twentieth century, there is evidence that people perceived the world as noisier. Emily Thompson explains that in the Victorian period the “sounds that so bothered Carlyle and Goethe were almost identical to those that had been identified by the Buddha centuries earlier: organic sounds created by humans and animals at work and at play” (*Soundscape* 116). It is not until the early twentieth century, according to Thompson, that machine-generated noises started to impinge upon the everyday lives of people. Called the “Age of Noise,” the turn of twentieth century was filled with the sounds of auditory technologies (the microphone, radio, telephone, and phonograph), public transportation (the elevated train and subway), World War I, construction, factories, steam locomotives, industrial whistles and bells, machine shops, cash registers, washing machines, sewing machines, vacuum cleaners, typewriters, printing machines, automobiles, trucks, and motorcycles.

This course explores how modernist writers represented this soundscape. How did they make their narratives sound out? How did the changing soundscape influence and shape their representations of sound and listening?

Learning Objectives

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

1. Analyse and write critically about the representation of sound and listening in literature.
2. Apply theories from sound studies to literary texts and your personal experiences to generate claims.
3. Draft, workshop, and revise argumentative essays that closely analyse a primary text, draw on sources, and thoughtfully develop an argument.

Primary Texts

Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* online: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200991h.html>

Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight* (student purchase)

Millen Brand's *Outward Room* (student purchase)

Dorothy Richardson's *Pointed Roofs* online: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3019>

Samuel Beckett's short prose, excerpts (provided by teacher)

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
1 14 Aug	The Reading Voice	Introduction
2 21 Aug	The Soundscape	Virginia Woolf's <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> and excerpts from R. Murray Schafer's <i>Tuning of the World</i> ; Woolf's "Oxford Street Tide."
3 28 Aug	Acts of Listening	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> ; Melba Cuddy-Keane's "Modernist Soundscapes and the Intelligent Ear: An Approach to Narrative through Auditory Perception"
4 4 Sept	Listening to Interior Monologue	Jean Rhys's <i>Good Morning, Midnight</i> and Steven Connor "The Modern Auditory I"
5 11 Sept	The Gramophone Peer Workshop	<i>Good Morning, Midnight</i> ; Adorno's "The Form of the Phonograph Record" Draft of First Essay Due
6 18 Sept	Urban Noise and	Millen Brand's <i>Outward Room</i> ;
7	Factory Noise	<i>Outward Room</i> ; William Griffith, "New York Noisiest City on Earth" (<i>The New York Times</i> , July 2, 1905)

25 Sept	What is a Video Essay?	Brainstorming on video essay First Essay Due
8 9 Oct	The Voice and the Talkie; Music	Dorothy Richardson's <i>Pointed Roofs</i>
9 16 Oct	The Voice and the Talkie Intro to Beckett	Richardson's <i>Pointed Roofs</i> ; Barthes's "The Grain of the Voice" Samuel Beckett's short prose; excerpts from Pierre Schaeffer
10 23 Oct	The Sound of Words, the tape recorder, and <i>Musique Concrète</i>	Beckett's short prose; excerpts from Pierre Schaeffer
11 Oct 30	Peer Workshop WWI	Draft of Second Essay Due F. T. Marinetti, <i>Zang Tumb Tumb</i> ; Luigi Russolo, "The Noises of War"
12 6 Nov	Viewing	Video Essay Due
13 13 Nov	Viewing	Video Essay Viewing
14 20 Nov		Final Essay 2 Due

Assessment

Essay 1 (35%): 1800 words

Your first essay can focus on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* or Jean Rhys's *Good Morning, Midnight*. Your goal is to pose a question about how soundscape, listening, voice, or music are represented in one of these novels, and then do the needed research to present an argument that responds to your question. You should cite from 2 to 3 literary critics. A draft of your essay will be due in class for a peer workshop before the final essay is due.

Video Essay (15%): 8 minutes, groups of 3

As a group of 3, you are expected to produce a short video essay that considers a specific aspect of your soundscape in the present day. You should present this specific aspect of the soundscape to your audience and make use of a theory within sound studies to analyse and develop an argument about the significance of this element of the soundscape. Everyone in the group will share the same grade.

Essay 2 (40%): 2000 words

For this essay, you can choose Millen Brand's *Outward Room*, Dorothy Richardson's *Pointed Roofs*, or one of Samuel Beckett's prose pieces as your primary text. Your goal is to use one of the theoretical texts we have read from sound studies as a lens to present a compelling argument about the primary text.

Class Participation (10%)

This entails coming to each class ready to discuss the readings for the day and actively participating in the two peer workshops (bringing in a draft of your essay and doing a peer review with it).

ESSAY GUIDELINES AND AI/PLAGIARISM POLICIES

*Please put a word count at the end of your essay.

First Draft: Hard or soft copy due in class for work-shopping. This is a required part of the essay grade.

Final Essay: Upload to NTULearn

A half a letter grade will be deducted for each day that your paper is late.

AI Generative Writing Policy

AI writing tools are not to be used for any of the writing for your essays (drafts and final) and video essay script/content. The entire point of this course is to practice reading and writing. If you use an AI tool to write for you, you are robbing yourself of learning these essential skills. Moreover, AI writing tends to be too general and is not reliable in its references.

Plagiarism

It is usually very easy to tell the difference between a student's language and thinking, and that of another writer. I am not interested in what another person thinks of this text; I am interested in what YOU think of it. Do not cut and paste or paraphrase another person's words without using quotation marks or page references. REWORDING EXCEPRTS OR POINTS IS STILL PLAGIARISM IF YOU DO NOT REFERENCE THE SOURCE. This is a serious crime in the world of academia; it not only insults your reader but compromises your intellectual integrity.

MLA citations and Works Cited

1. **Parenthetical citations** go within your essay when you cite a text. When the quotation is less than 4 lines, you put the page or line number *only* at the end of the sentence. Do not write "page" or "lines." Do not indent or block off these

quotations. Integrate them into your sentences and use a "/" between lines of poetry.

For example:

Coleridge sees the "new-moon winter bright" with the "old Moon in her lap, foretelling / The coming on of rain and squally blast" (13-14).

- Note that the period is after the parenthesis and the numbers refer to the line numbers.

2. Titles of poems and essays get "quotation marks"; longer poems and works are *Italicized*.
3. Basic information about your cited works should go at the end of your essay in the **Works Cited** page.

Author. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

For instance:

Browning, Robert. "Porphyria's Lover." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. 8th ed. Vol. 2. New York: Norton, 2006.

For more details on using MLA, see Purdue Owl's great website:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

Some General Guidelines for your Essays

Argument

Focus your eye on a particular aspect of the text that fascinates you and examine it in close detail. Keep in mind that an essay that presents an argument that no one in their right mind would dispute is not such an interesting essay. Why bother arguing an idea that is obvious and widely accepted? Begin with a sincere question, one for which you don't have an answer. Show the development of your idea: begin with a question, premise, or position, but then complicate it throughout your essay. End your essay in a different place than where it began. Revise your initial position by the end of your essay and show your reader how you got to this new point.

Most importantly, be sure to:

1. Demonstrate your claims with textual evidence. Quote from your texts using MLA.
2. Interpret the textual evidence that you present to your reader. (Don't summarize, analyze!)
3. Let your reader know why you have presented this textual evidence and have done the work of interpreting it. In other words, explain the significance of this evidence in relation to your larger argument.

Technical Reminders

- Avoid ending a paragraph with a quotation. End a paragraph with your own claim.
- Avoid using the word "seems," unless you really mean "seems." Otherwise, it just weakens your voice.
- You can use "I," though remember that in general you do not need phrases such as "I think..." or "I believe..." – since the form of the essay itself assumes that it consists of your thoughts and opinions.
- Make sure that you provide ample textual evidence, though avoid block quotations (more than four lines of quoted text). Since this essay is short, you will need to make use of **short quotations** and work them into your writing.
- Be sure to title your essay.
- If you reference a literary critic who has also written about your primary text, you must first sum up this writer's argument in a sentence or so. This way, it is clear what the literary critic has argued, and how you are using and adding to her argument.
- Avoid beginning paragraphs with "Another example of" or "In addition..." If you find yourself doing this, it could indicate that you are merely listing points rather than building an argument.
- And please do not start the last paragraph of your essay with, "In conclusion..." This most likely means that you are about to repeat your thesis statement to me, and I can't bear to think that after all that I have read in your essay, we really are just circling back to the beginning! In your ending, try to pull out to think about the writer or larger cultural and historical contexts.

When we workshop your draft in class, you will be asked to do a **reverse outline** to check for clarity and the logical flow of your argument. You may want to do one sooner, however, as you compose your essay. Here is what you do:

1. Number each paragraph of your essay draft.
2. On a separate piece of paper, write, in a sentence or so, why that paragraph exists. What is that paragraph doing and how is it moving your argument along? Don't be lazy and just write "intro." Force yourself to state briefly what the reader should get out of that paragraph.
3. Now, take a step back from your essay and make sure that paragraphs do not repeat claims. (Perhaps two paragraphs need to be merged?) Make sure you are not trying to do too much in one paragraph (Perhaps a paragraph needs to be broken down into two?) Is each paragraph developing your idea? Remember, you want to leave your reader in a new place by the end of your essay. You want your argument to develop throughout your essay.

Supplemental Readings:

Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe, 1300-1918, 1-14. Edited by Kirsten Gibson and Ian Biddle. London: Routledge, 2016.
<http://doi.org.remotexs.ntu.edu.sg/10.4324/9781315575308>

Bijsterveld, Karin. "The Diabolical Symphony of the Mechanical Age: Technology and Symbolism of Sound in European and North American Noise Abatement Campaigns, 1900-40." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 165-189. Oxford: Berg, 2003.

Cuddy-Keane, Melba. "Modernist Soundscapes and the Intelligent Ear: An Approach to Narrative Through Auditory Perception." In *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, edited by James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.
<https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7137.001.0001>

Griffith, William. "New York Noisiest City on Earth." *The New York Times*, July 2, 1905. 1-3.
<http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/681856-new-york-noisiest-city-on-earth-the-new-york.html>

Hendy, David. *Noise: A Human History of Sound and Listening*. New York: HarperCollins, 2013.

Ihde, Don. *Listening and Voice: Phenomenologies of Sound*. Albany, New York: State University of NY Press, 2007.

Khan, Douglas. *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.

LaBelle, Brandon. *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*. New York: Continuum, 2010.

Mansell, James G. *The Age of Noise in Britain: Hearing Modernity*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016.

Marinetti, F. T. "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism." In *Futurism: An Anthology*, edited by Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi, and Laura Wittman, 49-53. 1909. Reprint, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009..

McKenzie, Dan. *The City of Din: A Tirade against Noise*. London: Adlard and Son, 1916. <https://archive.org/details/b2981070x>

Picker, John M. *Victorian Soundscapes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Pye, Patricia. *Sound and Modernity in the Literature of London, 1880-1918*

James G. Mansell, *The Age of Noise in Britain: Hearing Modernity*

Russolo, Luigi. "The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto." In *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources*, edited by Daniel Albright, 177-183. 1913. Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Schafer, R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1977.

Schwartz, Hillel. "The Indefensible Ear: A History." In *The Auditory Culture Reader*, edited by Michael Bull and Les Back, 487-501. Oxford: Berg, 2003.

Thompson, Emily. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in American, 1900-1933*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

Truax, Barry. *Acoustic Communication*, ABC-CLIO, 2000.

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ntusg/detail.action?docID=492436>.

Woolf, Virginia. "Oxford Street Tide." In *The London Scene*, 25-34. 1932. Reprint, UK: Snowbooks, 1975.

Wynne, Shirley W. "New York City's Noise Abatement Commission." *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 2, no. 12 (1930); doi: 10.1121/1.1915231