

Academy of Visual Arts
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Visual Arts Programme

VART 2136 Sound: The Basics

No. of units: 3

Pre-requisite: VART1006 Visual Arts Practice II or any GDCV courses offered by AVA or any Visual Arts courses

Duration: 52 hours

I.1. Course Description & Rationale:

This course aims to study sound beyond the common practice of audio as supplementary and secondary to visuals. Students will un-learn sense of sight as their primary sense, and thus re-learn multiple meanings and interpretations of sound and its relations with visuals. Students will learn to use microphones and recorders, and the skills of audio recording and editing techniques. On top of these technical craft, fundamentals of sound design form essential parts of the course. Principles of sound including physics of sound, auditory perception, awareness of acoustic environment and different types of listening practices will also be introduced.

As a foundation course, it aims to raise students' interests and doubts in rethinking audio-visual relations. By stressing sound as an artistic and expressive medium in its own right, rather than approached as secondary to visuals, students learn to discover immense creative potentials of sound. Hence, students will be both technically and intellectually ready to engage in further experimentations of sonic creations in advanced courses exploring novelty and possibilities of time-based media. Students will work on sonic creations or, sound design for moving image works (of their own or of their fellow classmates). This course also supports students further explore sound in various media such as video art, installation art, hypermedia, interactive media.

I.2. Course Content:

No.		Hours	%
1.	Basic principles of sound: - Principles of sound (amplitude, frequencies, timbre, sound envelop, acoustics, etc.); - Histories and core issues of soundscape studies and phonography; - Languages of sonic creations; - Ways of listening (e.g. focus listening); - Sound design for moving image works.	18	34.6
2.	Sound recording technique: - Introduction to different types of mics (dynamic, condenser, wire/wireless, contact/hydrophone) and pick-up patterns (omni-directional, shotgun, cardioids and hyper-cardioids); - Use of supported gears (fishpole and windscreens); - Operation of recorders; - Audio recording techniques (mic positioning, reference level and dB meter).	18	34.6
3.	Sound editing: - Audio Capability of Final Cut Pro; - Planning of sound design; - Mixing, filters and manipulations; - Exporting.	16	31.4
		52	100

I.3. Intended Course Learning Outcomes (CILOs):

(Please take note of the PILOs for the overall BA programme in the Programme Document.)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	Intended Course Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
1.	Generally recount principles and aesthetics of sound works;
2.	Use different types of microphones, and do sound recording and editing;
3.	Analyse sonic space via practising various types of listening and notation systems;
4.	Discuss, and produce critical comments on sound works;
5.	Make a complete sonic creation from idea/concept to actual production and management; and

6.	Adhere to standards of professional practice and ethos.
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- *More may be added.*

I.4. Alignment of CILOs with PILOs:

Learning Outcomes	<i>Please indicate alignment by checking '✓' the appropriate box</i>					
	CILO1	CILO2	CILO3	CILO4	CILO5	CILO6
PILO1.1	✓					
PILO1.2		✓	✓		✓	
PILO2.1						
PILO2.2					✓	
PILO2.3				✓		
PILO3.1						✓
PILO3.2						✓

* *There may not be 6 CILOs, in which case, just leave columns empty.*

I.5. Alignment of Teaching and Learning Activities with CILOs:

No.	Teaching and Learning Activities	CILO	Hours
1.	Lectures and screenings/listening with the aid of AV-equipment, showing sound works and film/video art works	1, 4, 6	12
2.	Technical demonstrations and studio workshops for equipments (mics, recorder and cameras) and skills, including practice opportunities for students in small groups; students will do simple in-class exercises	2, 6	16
3.	Field Work: practise different ways of listening (casual, critical, focus, engaged listening) in an actual location and practise the method of Soundwalk	2, 3, 6	4
4.	Technical demonstrations and studio workshops on sound editing, using Final Cut Studio on Mac Pro computers	2, 6	10
5.	Screenings and critiques of students' projects	1, 4, 5, 6	10

**More may be added.*

I.6. Assessment:

No.	Assessment Methods/Activities	Weighting	Alignment
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			with CILOs
1.	Two assignments showing students' knowledge and progress of learning in techniques and concepts of listening, sound recordings and computer editing: i. Soundmark; ii. Sound design for a given moving image.	20%	1, 2, 3
2.	Discussion of materials captured on location (Soundwalk)	10%	2, 3, 4
3.	The Final Project is a sonic creation, or a sound design for a moving image work, which can be student's own work or by somebody else.	40%	5
3.	Professional Attitude: Professional Attitude does not necessarily define its own learning outcomes, but takes a look at 'how' the other, non-attitudinal outcomes are achieved. Assessment will always be based on direct personal contact with the student. Assessment methods include personal conversations – formal and informal –, class observation, individual and group-tutorials, and such like. Assessment evidence is continuously produced through attendance and participation class-records, public presentations, peer-reviews, evaluation of sketchbooks or visual diaries, personal notes of students and teachers, etc. For more information, please refer to the BA (Hons) in Visual Arts' Programme Document.	30%	6

**More may be added.*

I.7. References (up to 10 books):

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

Augoyard, Jean-Francois and Henry Torgue, eds. *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005.

Gibbs, Tony. *The Fundamentals Of Sonic Art & Sound Design*. Lausanne: AVA Publishing, 2007.

Kahn, Douglas. *Noise Water Meat*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001.

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

Licht, Alan. *Sound Art: Beyond Music, Between Categories*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2007.

Schafer, Murray R. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment And The Tuning Of The World*. Rochester: Destiny Books, 1994.

Sider, Larry, Diane Freeman and Jerry Sider, eds. *Soundscape: The School Of Sound Lectures 1998-2001*. London: Wallflower Press, 2003.

Websites:

1. The Sonic Research Studio

<http://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio/index.html>

2. phonography.org (a website for phonographers)

<http://www.phonography.org>

I.8. Academic Integrity:

Students will endeavour to only claim work that they have actually produced themselves. Claiming the work of others is considered plagiarism, and will be dealt with under the academic policies of the university.

I.9. Health and Safety:

Every effort will be made to comply with the intent of Hong Kong's law or acts and the University's policies to maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

I.10. Final Note:

The instructor reserves the right to modify the class and the syllabus or the schedule to adjust to the dynamics of the particular group or to take advantage of opportunities that may arise.