



English 380W How We Listen Spring 2016

Contact Information:

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Stoever

Email Address: jstoever@binghamton.edu

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:05-11:30

Location: Student Wing 321

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3-4 or by appointment

“Really listening, when it goes bone deep into that hidden ark of bones, is something other than itself. It doesn’t alternate with but is seeing” –Fred Moten

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to the idea of listening as a critical practice. It will ask you to consider the many ways that humans make and experience sound, both by itself and in conjunction with the other senses. In addition to exploring individual listening practices, we will consider the larger social implications of listening, particularly how it impacts and embeds sound within our history, cultures, institutions, literatures, and technologies. We will tackle questions such as:

- Did the invention of the iPod actually change the way we listen to music?
- Do we all listen in the same way?
- Why does the crackle, pop, and hiss of old vinyl records comfort some and annoy others?
- Does the sound of your voice impact your chances at employment and good housing?
- Do supposedly neutral “noise ordinances” actually affect some people more than others? Is our environment getting “noisier”? Is there such a thing as “noise pollution”?
- How has sound played a crucial role in contemporary social movements like #Occupy and the Montreal #Casseroles protests?

Along the way, you will be introduced to the exciting new interdisciplinary field of sound studies and some of its primary theories and research, especially in regards to the role of listening in film, music, the environment, history, literature, urban space, and politics. You will also become involved in an ongoing Civic Engagement project involving the city of Binghamton and Techworks.

Required Texts:

- *The Auditory Culture Reader, 2nd. edition* – Michael Bull and Les Back (Bloomsbury)
- You will also be required to keep up with the Monday postings of *Sounding Out!: The Sound Studies Blog*, <http://soundstudiesblog.com> I recommend following @soundingoutblog on Twitter or liking *Sounding Out!* on Facebook to get alerts regarding new posts.
- Unless otherwise marked, all other readings and listenings will be available through **Blackboard** via the “Content” page. You are expected to print out copies and bring to class.

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze, critique, and actively investigate listening as a critical, cultural, social, and historical practice essential to the daily life of our contemporary society
- recognize and analyze the arguments, methodologies, and assumptions that unite and distinguish sound studies as a field of inquiry.
- acquire a critical vocabulary and knowledge base for continued engagement with sound studies.
- develop and hone skills of interdisciplinary cultural analysis such as close reading/listening, critical argumentation, archival research, and soundwalks.
- explore the major intellectual concerns and political debates that shape the interdisciplinary field of sound studies and participate actively in an ongoing civic engagement project regarding sound, listening, and the history of the city of Binghamton.

Course Credit Statement:

This course is a 4-credit course, which means that in addition to the scheduled lectures/discussions, students are expected to do at least 9.5 hours of course-related work each week during the semester. This includes things like: completing assigned readings, participating in lab sessions, studying for tests and examinations, preparing written assignments, completing internship or clinical placement requirements, and other tasks that must be completed to earn credit in the course.

Student Accommodations:

I am available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Services for Students with Disabilities (Phone Number: 607-777-2686; website address: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/ssd/>) and that you notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

Course Requirements:

To pass this course, **all** of the following elements must be satisfactorily completed:

- 10% Participation and Attendance
 - 10% **5 Bi-Weekly Sound Provocations on Blackboard** (Week Three to Week Thirteen)
 - 20% Sound Walk Assignment #1
 - 20% Midterm
 - 20% Sound Walk Assignment #2
 - 20% Final Group Dossier and Presentation
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- **PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE (10%)**

Among the many things this course aims to do is help you learn to discuss your ideas in a collegiate, intellectually engaged atmosphere. My primary duties are to structure, moderate, and facilitate critical discussions; what will keep this class interesting for everyone are the comments and questions generated by you. This means you must be here and tuned in for every class period. These sessions are vital to becoming more constructive critical readers, writers and thinkers. In addition to traditional discussions, there will be in-class quizzes, quickwrites, group activities, and other forms of active learning that will factor into your participation grade. Furthermore, I pre-select six random dates from the course calendar to keep track of who speaks in class to get a sense of the overall flow of discussion, so always arrive ready to discuss at least one point. I do, however, distinguish between quality and quantity; some folks will learn to speak more often, others more judiciously.

You are entitled to 3 class absences, no questions asked. I advise you save them up for illness and other conflicting obligations. **Please do not email me about them.** Starting with your fourth absence, however, each unexcused absence will lower your participation grade by one full grade (i.e. 4 absences and your highest participation grade is a "B," 5 absences and your highest is a "C," etc.). If you are late, it is your responsibility to see me after class or you will be marked absent. More than 3 late arrivals will impact your grade. Any absence for official BU purposes must be arranged with me at least one week prior to the event. You are responsible for any missed lectures and course materials. Reserve all absences for illness or other unpredictable events such as transportation problems, unforeseen family obligations, and the like. Regardless of when you add the course, all classes missed after the first week count toward absences. ***Under normal circumstances, course credit will not be given for more than six absences.***

- **SOUND PROVOCATIONS (10%)**

You will respond to bi-weekly sound provocations delivered via the discussion area on Blackboard. You will have a week to perform the activity suggested by the provocation, and one week to write up a 300-500 word entry on the discussion board in response. Posts should also relate your listening experiences to the week's theme, reflect on the readings for the class in some fashion, and include audio whenever possible (mp3, youtube, links to sound cloud etc.). Visual images are encouraged. **Posts are due before class and must bear the correct time-stamp for full credit.**

- **SOUNDWALK ASSIGNMENT #1 PROVOCATIONS (20%)**

This deceptively simple paper is keyed to help you practice three important concepts: listening, writing about sound, and explaining your methodology. In the opening weeks of class, you will be asked to compose a soundwalk for Binghamton, NY. A soundwalk, according to R. Murray Schafer, is "an exploration of the soundscape of a given area using a score (map) as a guide" (213). Can Binghamton, NY be evoked through sound? If so, how? **Your goal is to design (and draw) a score that would really give the flavor of the town to someone who has never been here before and compose a 3-5 page description of the sounds one would encounter along this walk (and their significance).** Relevant information to include – the meanings of the sounds, what they signal, the histories they represent, the feelings they evoke, the time/place they represent, etc. Please begin your paper with a write-up of your methodology for the soundwalk – the rationale for the design of your walk, how and when you collected and organized your information, and the basis on which you included/excluded sounds. If you have access to recording technology, please turn in a sound file along with your paper. To ensure the success of Soundwalk #2, please perform your sound walk in areas easily accessible by either walking or public transportation and no later than 8:00 p.m. Please include relevant bus/walking routes on your carefully drawn map.

- **MIDTERM (20%):**

Your midterm will be an in-class exam based on defining and applying the course's conceptual "keywords" drawn from our in-class discussions and our course reading. Examples include: "listening," "noise," "soundscape," "silence," etc. We will generate a list of the keywords in class and online.

- **SOUNDWALK ASSIGNMENT #2 (20%):**

After the first set of soundwalks are completed, you will receive the map and instructions to a soundwalk devised by one of your classmates. You will then follow the instructions on the soundmap and write a paper about your listening experiences along the path. This paper will continue improving your skills of writing about sound and your metacognitive understanding of listening as a critical exercise, with the added layers of critical analysis and argumentation. Rather than trying to guess the “original” intent of the soundwalk’s author, your paper should concentrate on your own listening experiences at each location and the meanings you devise. Your paper should have a central argument about the sounds experienced on the sound walk (what is the main conclusion you draw about Binghamton based on these sonic experiences? What did you learn about the relationship between sound and place based on this exercise?) and use your listening experiences as supporting evidence. Include a discussion of important sounds you feel were missing from this soundwalk and why. You will compare notes with the original sound walker in class on the day the paper is due. As a class, we will compare and contrast our findings, drawing conclusions about listening as a practice shaped by culture, gender, and other individual and social differences.

- **FINAL GROUP PROJECT (20%):**

For your final project, you will be working in teams of four to begin phase three of a student-designed community-based sound project that uses the concept of “historical soundwalks” to A) mediate relationships between Binghamton University students and year-round residents of the city and B) help all Binghamton residents listen differently to the space and the people around them. This project will ask you to put the theoretical knowledge and conversations we have been having about listening and social difference into action.

Your role in this multi-year community project will entail:

- examining and evaluating prior site-based research from the Fall 2014 course: maps, recordings, images, and written research for what will be usable for our eventual soundwalk.
- selecting an historical event located along our intended route your group finds essential to the mission of our soundwalk, and
- performing research with Susan Sherwood at Tech Works/The Center for Innovation and Technology [321 Water Street, Binghamton, NY 13901] on the technological history of Binghamton in support of representing this story and event sonically on the walk. Ideally, the next class will begin representing, creating, and performing the sounds you select, so your work and research will be toward leaving a blueprint for a segment of the soundwalk.
- Successfully complete both individual and group-based reflection on your research and community work.

The final presentation will entail an 8-10 minute group presentation on your research followed by an open Q and A. You will also compile a final draft version of your research dossier – all the written work you accomplished along the way – for evaluation. You will also peer-evaluate each other’s projects during the final week presentations. We will meet during our scheduled final exam time to discuss the projects in more detail and assign final grades. This session is not optional. Members of the Binghamton community, both on- and off-campus, will be invited to this session.

**Full details of the assignment as well as grading rubrics will follow on a separate handout.
This course is designated a Community Engaged Learning (CEL) course.**

Course Protocols

- *PROFESSOR'S DISPOSITION*

While I am usually chill in class – I enjoy making my students feel comfortable so that we may have intense and fruitful class discussions – don't mistake my kindness for weakness. Please be advised this is a rigorous course and I have high expectations. Do not wait until the midterm to note this. #realtalk Also, be forewarned, before class is not a good time to talk with me, particularly about something important. I usually have tech set-up and/or my head full of our class topics. So respectfully choose another time.

- *PLAGIARISM*

Plagiarism is the submission of any material under your own name that you did not create by yourself. DON'T DO IT. I do not tolerate lapses in academic integrity. General principles of academic integrity include: the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that original, individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. This includes failing to cite paraphrases from research and neglecting to quote and cite the use of another's words.

Any student who plagiarizes, steals, copies or purchases a paper will not only fail the course, but will also be subject to a review by the university for further reprimand. If you have any questions, please see the Binghamton University Student Academic Honesty Code at the following address: <http://bulletin.binghamton.edu/integrity.htm>

- *LATE WORK AND MAKE UP EXAMS*

All late work will be docked one letter grade for each day it is late. No work that is more than 4 days late will be accepted unless you receive approval from the professor at least one day *prior* to the paper's original due date. Barring exceptional circumstances, all make-up exams must be *arranged far in advance* and must be taken before the scheduled exam date. Please consider course deadlines when making any travel arrangements. . If you experience a crisis that prevents you from completing your work, speak to me or ask an appropriate campus official to document your situation. I cannot accept doctors' notes to excuse absences: only an appropriate campus official, such as the Office of the Dean of Students, can document extenuating health circumstances.

- *PAPER FORMATTING*

All work must be typewritten in a professional, double-spaced, 12-point font with a serif (Times New Roman, Cambria, or a close equivalent, please change from the default Calibri) with no larger/smaller than one-inch margins all the way around the document. Your citations must follow the MLA format unless you receive approval from the professor to use another style sheet. Please spend time editing and synthesizing your work, to ensure that your paper is within established page count. If you have a brief amount of overage – *no more than 200 words* – please continue to use regular margins and spacing. ALL formal written assignments must be submitted in hard copy, unless otherwise specified by the professor. *No electronic submissions will be accepted for a grade unless invited by me.*

As this is a "W" course, I expect that you take time and care with your writing. At bare minimum, I want the second draft of your paper – one you have read aloud at least once,

one that at least one other classmate or trusted friend has read and commented on, and one that has been *revised* (for both grammar and content) and not merely spellchecked. In short, I can easily recognize intensive critical work attempted the night before a due date by its poor quality. For further assistance in advance of your deadlines, appointments with the campus writing center can be made online at the following address:

<http://www2.binghamton.edu/writing/writing-center/index.html>

- *ELECTRONIC DEVICES*

You may use your tablet, computer, and/or phone during our class time only for note-taking and necessary research tasks in support of our work together. However, on days you do so, you must sit in *one of the front two rows*, and do not distract those behind you with shopping, social media, or other ill-timed activities or you will be asked to do so elsewhere. Also, please use the “do not disturb” function (or silence your phone) before class; if you are undergoing an emergency situation, please alert me before our session begins.

- *A NOTE ON EMAIL*

Throughout the semester, I will e-mail you with important information such as due date and/or assignment clarifications; please check your binghamton.edu address regularly.

While I am not inaccessible by email, it does not take the place of office hours in my courses. I invite you to stop by (or use e-mail to make an appointment) for any course issues, major or minor, or to talk about the material. Personal health, grading, or other such matters should always be discussed in person. Always consult your syllabus first (and thoroughly) if you have questions about assignments, due dates, policies, readings, etc. If you still have questions, then contact a classmate or two and ask if they caught something in lecture you missed. Please use the space below to get the contact info of two other people in our class:

If results are still inconclusive and your question cannot wait until office hours or the next class period, then email me. But I will likely suggest office hours. If you choose to e-mail, make sure to put ENG 450S in the subject line and please do not expect to use email like texting. Email etiquette is very important to me, and should be important to you. Please remember we write to each other in a professional setting. Therefore, use formal salutations/signatures as well as appropriate word choice and tone.

I hold regular daytime email hours for classroom related correspondence. I will generally respond within 48 hours, but I do not check e-mail after 7 p.m or at all on weekends.

- Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Call / Text / Both

Email: _____

- Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Call / Text / Both

Email: _____

READING SCHEDULE

Note: This course is intended to provide an overview of readings influential to critical debates in the interdisciplinary field of sound studies and to supporting a civic engagement project. Time will not permit us to discuss all of the assigned readings in equal depth. Our focus will be determined by student interest. Also, the syllabus may be adjusted as the course progresses to accommodate logistical needs. I reserve the right to add or modify assignments throughout the semester.

Course readings should be completed **before the date** on which they are assigned so that you will be able to participate in the discussion and more easily follow the lectures. **Print out any electronic readings; bring them to class with you in order to facilitate discussion.**

Date	Class
<p>Week One 26 January</p> <p>28 January <i>**Email Assignment Due</i></p>	<p>Introductions, Beginnings, and Listening Exercises Welcome and introductions; course syllabus, theme, and goals Pauline Oliveros’s Listening Exercises</p> <p>Sound Studies, Civic Engagement, and YOU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sound Pedagogy” – Jonathan Sterne (ACR, 453-457) • Toward A Civically Engaged Sound Studies, or ReSounding Binghamton – Jennifer Stoever (2015) (SO!) • “Introduction” to <i>The Sonic Color-line</i> – Jennifer Stoever (Blackboard)
<p>Week Two</p> <p>2 February:</p> <p>4 February</p>	<p>The Soundscape: Hearing Silence and Listening to Noise</p> <p>Listening as a Critical, Cultural, Social, and Historical Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Splicing the Sonic Color-line: Tony Schwartz Remixes Postwar <i>Nueva York</i>” – Jennifer Stoever (Bb) • <i>Nueva York</i> – Tony Schwartz (recording on Bb) • “Into Sound. . .Once More With Feeling” – Michael Bull and Les Back (ACR, 1-20) <p>Listening and Space/Place: Introduce Sound Provocation and Soundwalks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sonic Geographies, Soundwalks, and More-Than-Representational Methods” – Helen Wilson (ACR, 163-173) • “Listening to Kansas City” and “Springtime in KC: Soundwalk #2” <i>Sounding Out!</i> – Liana Silva (2010) • (Sound)Walking Through Smithfield Square in Dublin –Linda O’Keeffe (2014)

<p>Week Three 9 February: <i>**Receive Sound Provocation</i></p> <p>11 February:</p>	<p>Introducing the Final Project: Place + Event +Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hearing Urban Regeneration: Community Composition as a Tool for Capturing Change” – (151-162 ACR) • “Listening to and through ‘Need’: Sound Studies and Civic Engagement – Christie Zwahlen • “Inventing the Wayback Machine: Sound Through Time, Space, and Place” – Maile Colbert (SO!) • Listening: “Radio Terramoto” – Rui Costa and Maile Colbert (SO!) <p>Who We Are↔How We Listen <i>IN CLASS FILM: “Do I Sound Gay?”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hearing Queerly: NBC’s “The Voice” – Karen Tongson (SO!) • “Live Through This: Sonic Affect, Queerness, and the Trembling Body” – Airek Beauchamp (SO!) • “On Sound and Pleasure: Meditations on the Human Voice” – Yvon Bonenfant (SO!)
<p>Week Four 16 February: <i>**Sound Prov. Due</i></p> <p>18 February:</p>	<p>Guest Lecturer: Maria Chaves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Enacting Queer Listening, or When Anzaldúa Laughs” – Maria Chaves (SO!) • Chapters 1 and 2 of Gloria Anzaldúa’s <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> (Bb) <p>Gendered Soundscapes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gendered Voices and Social Harmony” – Robin James (SO!) • “Finding My Voice While Listening to John Cage” – Art Blake (SO!) • “Vocal Gender and the Gendered Soundscape: At the Intersection of Gender Studies and Sound Studies” – Christine Ehrick (SO!) • “As Loud as I want to Be: Gender, Loudness, and Respectability Politics” -- Liana Silva (SO!)
<p>Week Five 23 February <i>**Receive Sound Provocation</i></p> <p>25 February: <i>*Soundwalk #1Due</i></p>	<p>Listening and Technological Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Tape Recorder” – Les Back (137-150 ACR) • “Reproducing U.S. Citizenship in a <i>Blackboard Jungle</i>: Race, Cold War Liberalism, and the Tape Recorder” – Jennifer Stoever (Bb) • “Tape Hiss, Compression, and the Stubborn Materiality of Sonic Diaspora” – Chris Chien (SO!) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In Class Worktime – Final Group Project</i>
<p>Week Six 1 March:</p> <p>3 March: <i>**Sound Prov. Due</i></p>	<p>Sounding Out the City: Sound, Listening, Power and “Shared Space”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sounding Out the City” – Michael Bull (73-86 ACR) • ““Just Be Quiet Pu-leeze’: New York’s Black Press Fights the Postwar ‘Campaign Against Noise’” – Jennifer Stoever (Blackboard) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Aural Postcards: Sound, Memory, and the City” – Fran Tonkiss (243-247 ACR) • “Memories of Sound: Socioeconomic, Community, and Cultural Soundscapes of Smithfield, Dublin from the 1950s” – Linda O’Keeffe (217-228, ACR)

<p>Week Seven 8 March: <i>**Receive Sound Provocation</i></p> <p>10 March:</p>	<p><i>Listening, (Im) Migration, Nationalism, and Belonging</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Between the Blues and the Blues Dance” – Paul Gilroy (323-334 ACR) • “Calypso Kings” – Stuart Hall (335-341 ACR) • “The Noise of SB1070” – Jennifer Stoeber (SO!) <p>• Case Study and Debate: Marcus Garvey Park (Links on Bb)</p>
<p>Week Eight 15 March:</p> <p>17 March: <i>*Sound Prov. Due</i></p>	<p><u>MIDTERM</u></p> <p>In Class Film: “Touch the Sound” – Evelyn Glennie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plasticity of Listening: Deafness and Sound Studies – Steph Ceraso (SO!)
<p>Week Nine 22 March:</p> <p>24 March: <i>*Soundwalk #2 due **Receive Sound Provocation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sound Studies Meets Deaf Studies” – Michele Friedner and Stefan Helmreich (87-98, ACR) • “Walking through the Woodlands: Learning to Listen with Companions Who Have Impaired Vision” – Karis Petty (173-184, ACR) <p>• In-class Soundwalk Discussion</p>
<p>Week Ten 29 March-1 April</p>	<p>SPRING BREAK</p>
<p>Week Eleven 5 April</p> <p>7 April: <i>**Sound Prov. Due</i></p>	<p>No On-Campus Class Meeting: MEET WITH GROUP FOR WORKTIME//RESEARCH AT TECHWORKS</p> <p>No On-Campus Class Meeting MEET WITH GROUP FOR WORKTIME//RESEARCH AT TECHWORKS</p>
<p>Week Twelve 12 April</p> <p>14 April:</p>	<p><i>Listening, Representation, and Historical Conflict</i></p> <p>Group Pitches Due// Present for Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Noise of the Past: Spatial Interruptions of War, Nation, and Memory” – Nirmal Puwar (261-276, ACR) • “Unruly Voices in the Museum: Multisensory Engagement with Disquieting Histories” – Julia T.S. Bintner (277-292, ACR)

Week Thirteen: 19 April: 21 April: <i>**Sound Prov. Due</i>	<i>In Class Worktime – Final Group Project</i> <i>In Class Worktime – Final Group Project</i>
Week Fourteen 26 April 28 April:	<i>In Class Worktime – Final Group Project</i> <i>In Class Worktime – Final Group Project</i>
Week Fifteen 3 May 5 May:	Evaluations & Endings <i>In Class Presentations – Final Group Project</i> <i>In Class Presentations – Final Group Project</i>

**FINAL EXAM DOSSIER OPEN HOUSE, GRADING, AND DISCUSSION:
FINAL EXAM TBA**

Assignment Due Dates

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|------------------------|---------------------------|
| ➤ Email Assignment | January 28 th |
| ➤ Sound Provocation #1 | February 16 th |
| ➤ Soundwalk One | February 25 th |
| ➤ Sound Provocation #2 | March 3 rd |
| ➤ MIDTERM EXAM | March 15 th |
| ➤ Sound Provocation #3 | March 17 th |
| ➤ Soundwalk Two | March 24 th |
| ➤ Sound Provocation #4 | April 7 th |
| ➤ Group Pitch | April 12 th |
| ➤ Sound Provocation #5 | April 21 st |
| ➤ Final Presentations | May 3-5 th |
| ➤ DOSSIER OPEN HOUSE | TBA |