



## Sound Design (DRAM 2620)

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

### **DRAM 2620**

#### **Sound Design**

**Monday-Friday, 1-3:15PM, July 10-August 5, Culbreth Theater Building, Room B010**

**COREQUISITE: DRAM 2630 (Drama Majors Only, Fall and Spring Semesters Only)**

Instructed by Michael Rasbury

#### **OFFICE:**

Michael Rasbury, Room 208B, Culbreth Theatre Building

Appointments can be scheduled by phone at (434) 982-4542 or by email at [mr2xk@virginia.edu](mailto:mr2xk@virginia.edu). I check email daily.

#### **COURSE GOAL:**

We will explore Sound Design for Theatre and Media through discussion, critical listening, demonstration of music and sound, and creative application of digital sound editing for media. Techniques investigated include editing pre-recorded music, creating realistic sound environments, representing visual art with sound, three-dimensional sound, and sound creation for video and theatre.

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

DRAM 2620 is an introductory course designed to stimulate understanding of both the aesthetic and technical aspects of sound and sound design. Students will be introduced to the properties of sound, sound-reproducing equipment, and a series of exercises designed to reveal the process of Sound Design for the Theatre, using the computer as a primary tool for creating and editing sound. Students will be responsible for completing multiple sound designs. Each assignment will be unique; some will involve recreating actual realistic environments and others will involve a more abstract approach. Although several class periods are reserved for lecture, most scheduled class periods are reserved for completion of the designs. Source material for each exercise will be provided, but students may also record sounds.

#### **REQUIREMENTS:**

Notebook (for classroom notes)

***Full Size Stereo Headphones with 1/4" adapter*** (for monitoring)

Here are some examples:

<http://www.sweetwater.com/c412--Headphones> and

<http://www.musiciansfriend.com/headphones>

Students will be responsible for all work regardless of computer failures. A backup is recommended at the end of each class. Various backup methods may be considered including Home Directory Service, USB Flash Drive, etc. There is an available USB port underneath the left side of the computer's keyboard.

All files should be saved in the "Student" volume located each computer's desktop. All computers in this space utilize "DeepFreeze," software that will restore machines back to their original settings upon restart, despite changes made by users. The only volume that is not erased and restored on these computers is the "Student" volume.

To gain access to B010 outside of class time, you must enter the code into the lockbox on the door. The key must remain in the lock box at all times. The box must be reset by reentering the code in order to put the key back into the lockbox. The door must remain shut at all times. You may not enter during other scheduled classes in BO010. Do not share the code.

### **COURSE CALENDAR AND GRADING:**

There will be no midterm or final exam. There will be multiple projects and each project will be worth 100 points. Individual project grades will be determined by the attached rubrics; grading charts outlining all assessment criteria

***100-90= A, 89-80= B, 79-70= C, 69-60= D, and below 60= F***

### **Design Statements**

Before starting each project, a design statement must be submitted to me via email as a ".doc," or ".rtf" file (see attached calendar for due dates). The file name for the statement should be "lastnamefirstname\_p#". A design statement is a declaration of purpose and plan for construction of an idea. The design statement should include the designer's goal, a proposed plan for accomplishing the goal, and a list of potential sounds and content.

A collection of high quality, digital recordings is available as source media stored at the "Sound Effects" server alias on each desktop. Students may also use:

<http://www.freesound.org/>, Free Sound Effects

<http://www.earthrecordings.org> Michael Rasbury's website

<http://www.michaelrasbury.org>, Michael Rasbury's website

Any other freely available sounds from websites or other media

Upon completing a project, submit two versions. First, export or "bounce" your mix (<http://people.virginia.edu/~mr2xk/notes/dpbounce.html>) to the .mp3 format in stereo. Name the file "lastnamefirstname\_P#.mp3" and email it to [mr2xk@virginia.edu](mailto:mr2xk@virginia.edu) by 8 AM on the due date. Secondly, rename your project folder, "lastnamefirstname\_P#" and upload your entire project folder and all its contents to my drop box using the "Sound Design Dropbox" alias on the desktop.

I occasionally post selected projects on my University of Virginia Sound Design website. If you have any objections to this, please notify me.

**Project 1, 15% of Final Grade**

***Simple Music Editing and Exporting***, Students will edit music and/or audio by rearranging the parts of the original piece(s). Grading will be determined by [this](#) rubric.

**Design Statement Due July 17**

**Work Time- 2.5 Class Periods**

**JULY 17, Visit Heritage Theatre Festival's Tech Rehearsal for *Cocoanuts* in the Culbreth Theater.**

**Present on July 19**

**Project 2, 30% of Final Grade**

***Realistic Environments***, Students will use source material suggest a particular realistic environment. Grading will be determined by the rubric at

<http://people.virginia.edu/~mr2xk/courses.html>.

**Design Statement Due July 19**

**Work Time- 4 Class Periods**

**JULY 24, Visit Heritage Theatre Festival's Tech Rehearsal for *The Mountaintop* in the Caplin Theater.**

**JULY 25, Guest Speaker**

**Present on July 27**

**Project 3, 30% of Final Grade**

***The Use of Metaphor in Sound***, Students will use MIDI sequences and audio collage to create a sound design representative of another work of visual art. The results of this project will be presented using surround sound. Grading will be determined by the rubric at

<http://people.virginia.edu/~mr2xk/courses.html>..

**Design Statement Due July 27**

**JULY 24, Visit Heritage Theatre Festival's Tech Rehearsal for *Company* in the Culbreth Theater.**

**Work Time- 3 Class Periods**

**Present on August 2**

**Project 4, 25% of Final Grade**

**Design Statement Due August 2**

**Work Time- 5 Class Periods**

**Present on August 10**

***Option 1 (Suggested for Drama Majors and Minors)***

***Sound Design for a Script***, Students will create sound design elements for a section of a script. A design statement and cue list must be submitted for approval before embarking on this option. The project may be completed using any software available in the lab. Final playback of the project must utilize QLab as a means for executing the design. Grading will be determined by the rubric at <http://people.virginia.edu/~mr2xk/courses.html>..

***Option 2***

***Designing Sound for Video***, Students will provide stereo or surround audio score for a ten-minute or less film or video. A design statement and proposed video clip must be submitted for

approval before embarking on this option. Grading will be determined by the rubric at <http://people.virginia.edu/~mr2xk/courses.html>.

**Option 3**

**Make Your Own Project**, *Students may suggest a unique project that synthesizes techniques and aspects from the previous projects.*

Grading will be determined by the rubric at <http://people.virginia.edu/~mr2xk/courses.html>.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

You should make every effort to be present at each class period. No unexcused absences are permitted. Please notify me before the absence and provide an official written notification after the absence to count as an excused absence. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of your final grade percentage by three (3) percentage points per absence.

Students needing special accommodations are encouraged to discuss the need with the professor as soon as possible.

*The syllabus and/or each rubric is subject to change at any time, without prior notice, and it is the responsibility of the student to keep informed of changes, new material, or missed content.*