

MUS 515, The Fundamentals of Electronic Music

Instructor: Daria Semegen | Tuesday and Thursday, 3:30pm – 4:50pm

A technical or scientific background is not required. Students in composition, performance, scholars, artists, creative minds experience observing, comparing and understanding how sounds behave within different contexts, their aural perception, psychological effects, strategies of use and their technical, structural and aesthetic aspects. Expand your observation, analysis of sonic details through parametric listening (notice the not-so-hidden details that you've been missing!). Enjoy being a sharper, more inquisitive observer of details in sound, visual media, combined intermedia, any sound, its maneuvers in time and interactions with combined sounds.

Included is a brief historical survey of electronic music's evolution, rise of audio technology, discussion of a landmark electronic, musique concrète and electroacoustic works, aesthetic concepts, approaches to structures and assembly, combinations with other time-art media, AV digital+analog technologies. What is the purpose of pitch? How is noise music and sound sculpture? How do we observe and analyze mixed-media-tech time-art works? How did DJs and sound-effects artists borrow from early analog electronic/musique concrète composers' techniques? How does a work rise above an ordinary demo? Is what's "new" really a recycled past trend, method or concept? (Be an imaginative, inquisitive skeptic!). The Electronic Music Studio is our classroom.

Students experience hands-on work in the one-of-a-kind analog-hardware classic electronic music studio with a custom array of analog, analog/digital, hybrid devices for sound generation and modification, analog voltage-controlled synths: vintage Buchla, Moog, Arp and Cologne Radio Studio pioneering engineer H. Bode's Klangumwander and Bode Ring Modulator used in K. Stockhausen's works. Included are Elektromesstechnik analog reverbs, Eventide Harmonizer; a variety of band-pass, graphic, parametric analog filters; TSM analog flanger, related devices, their uses and combinations. Tape loops collage and montage techniques with multiple magnetic tape machines and analog/digital sound processing devices.

Included are demos of basic studio engineering, designing timbres, densities, varieties of textures, patterns, variations; recognition/description/analysis of formal structures in electronic music works with/without instruments and scores, improvisation methods, editing and mixing techniques. Inventive experimentation includes sound generation, recording, manipulating register/speed/spatial changes, mixing, detailed amplitude sculpting, timbral/textural design, structures, forming sonic characters, essentials of editing; evaluation and modification in mixing/editing in post-production. More a practical lab/creative workshop with less emphasis on academic testing. Hear and discuss students' hands-on creative experiments, discover and learn through trial-and-error. Play with how and when to choose: choosing is every artist's crucial creative task. Design strategies for improvisation-play to generate and evolve new material, modify existing material, apply degrees of controlled-random to yield unexpected new results and discover surprising possibilities with the happy accident placed in just the right context. (This class has a midpoint refreshment pause: enjoy and breathe freely.)

Questions? Email Daria.Semegen@stonybrook.edu with your questions.

This is a required course for MA students in the Composition track.

3 credits