

# Sound Studies and Sonic Arts

## Summer Term 2026

**Phase** Focus

**Module** Theory, Listening

**Course Title** **Sounding Relational Beings** | Workshop

**Course Times and Location** June 8-12, 2026 | LIE 316

**Instructors** [Brandon LaBelle](#)

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**Office Hours and Location** upon request

**Possible Credit Points** **Theory 2CP/4CP (G)**, **Listening 2CP/4CP (G)**, **Free Focus 2CP/4CP (NG)**

## Course Description

In his book, *Sounds Wild and Broken*, David Haskell maps the ways in which sound underpins the emergence and evolution of living matter, where cosmic pulses have come to shape celestial bodies. This is elaborated by recognizing the deep connection between sound and movement, vibration and survival: the hair-like cilia of the inner ear carries this fundamental connection, reminding how hearing and movement, sensing and orientation, are expressive of a primary acoustic force key to vitality.

Considering this biological, material significance, the workshop explores sound as an animating, energetic force, one that passes through bodies, environments, worlds and things. As such, sound is often that medium which connects the terrestrial and the divine, the vibrational and the transmitted, daily struggles and cultural dreams, leading to deep and enduring meanings. This includes an appreciation for sound as what comes to express a “culture of life”, lending to conditions that honor and support liveability: *to be sound* is to feel well, and to sense when things are out of balance or injured (unsound).

Following understandings of sound as animate force, and as what supports a culture of life, we’ll investigate ways of sounding liveability. Through creative, theoretical discussions and practical activities, we’ll bring sound to life, following it as a means for challenging the prevailing logic of “necropower” today. As Achille Mbembe argues, an ideology of death defines much of the political world, where exclusion, discrimination, violence and war are normalized. Against such a logic, we’ll listen into and with sound as a Relational Being whose vibratory, resonant and noisy nature emerges as a radical carrier of vitality: as what animates and holds stories of resistance, communal bonds, struggles for freedom and embodied memory. By way of such a focus, sound is considered an important contribution to wielding what Amitav Ghosh calls a “vitalist politics” in support of life. While sound may certainly harm and hurt, we’ll attend to it as a life-force, one that can teach of the cosmic thunders, the social currents, and the radical sympathies shaping ecologies of relation. This will include a focus on: sounding inner lives (finding the story of your body: listening as inner touch), resonant practices (sonic divination and the crafting of vibrational worlds), and rest as an alter-ontological rhythm (countering the logic of productive sound). The workshop will be speculative, explorative, and caring, inviting individual perspectives and creative imagination with a view toward developing new methodologies related to “vitalist sound”.

## Requirements for Attending

Max. 15 students

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## Exam / Credit Points

**2CP assignment (graded: Theory, Listening; not graded: Free Focus):** Regular attendance, participation in class discussions and activities, 20 minute presentation in class (related to assigned topics).

**Consecutive optional theory assignment leading to a total of 4CP for the class (optional, graded: Theory; grading: mean of both grades; not graded: Free Focus):** A theory term paper (5-8,000 words) due Nov. 1st.

OR

**Consecutive optional listening assignment leading to a total of 4CP for the class (optional, graded: Listening; grading: mean of both grades; not graded: Free Focus):** A fixed media audio composition (1 to 4 channels, 6 to 12 minutes), and elaborated reflection (4,000 words), due Oct. 1st

## Schedule

Each day of the workshop (10:00-16:30) will be organized around specific themes and methods, involving collective discussion and creative experimentation. This will be complemented by readings which we'll do together in class. These will be handed out on the day.