

Sound Studies and Sonic Arts

Summer Term 2026

Phase Focus

Module Practice

Course Title Site-responsive Sound | Seminar

Course Times and Location Wednesdays | 3 – 7 pm | LIE 316

Instructor [Chelsea Leventhal](#)

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Office Hours Upon request after class

Possible Credit Points Practice 2CP (NG), Practice 4CP (G), Free Focus 2CP/4CP (NG)

Course Description

The purpose of this seminar is to explore site-specific and site-responsive sound practices, including the particular challenge of creating works with sound in public space. We will take a comprehensive approach, beginning with historical perspectives and theoretical analyses, and moving on to technical and practical strategies, as well as topics related to the social, political, and psychological engagement inherent in this work. Much of our time together will be spent outside and on the go, as the group visits institutional sites in Berlin that have hosted multiple site-responsive works, as well as non-institutional public spaces of interest (including those suggested by participants). Together, we will present our research on the topic, discuss our experiences as both artists and encounterers, carry out creative and practical exercises, and create a shared base of knowledge, methods, and skills.

This seminar is for anyone interested in working outside of the white cube or concert hall and drawn to unusual sites and working in public space. At the end of the seminar, participants will have a deeper understanding of their own practice in the broader context of the history of site-responsive work, will have benefited from exchanging practical and technical strategies, and will feel more confident submitting proposals for and carrying out site-responsive projects in the future.

Requirements for attending

You must attend at least 6 sessions. Please contact me with a short bio and your idea(s) for the 2CP presentation before our first meeting so that we can start creating our schedule.

max. 12 students

Exam / Credit Points

2 CP assignment (not graded: Practice, Free Focus): Regular attendance (6 sessions) and a 20-minute presentation on a historical/aesthetic and/or practical/technical aspect of site-responsive work. This should be broader than one piece or one artist, instead establishing a topic of inquiry, referencing texts and diverse examples, and drawing connections between different practices, technologies, and sites. You can also choose to lead the group in a creative or practical exercise.

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Consecutive assignment leading to 4 CP for the course (optional, graded: Practice; grading: mean of both grades; not graded: Free Focus):

Option 1 - Participants will create a site-responsive sound work engaging a location of their choice and submit a 2-5 page professional documentation (including images) along with video or audio documentation. This piece might, for example, take the form of an intervention, small installation, short performance, or sound walk, and must be created specifically for this seminar. You will present your plans in as much detail as possible at our final meeting. The documentation is due on October 1, 2026.

Option 2 - Participants will create a detailed 10-15 page proposal for a permanent sound work or ongoing project at a particular site or in public space, including not only background information about the site and a detailed concept with images and diagrams, but also a thorough budget (upward of €100,000) with researched quotes for services provided by relevant manufacturers or fabricators, fees for required assessments, permits, or preparations from local authorities, costs for installation by professional construction companies, and a plan for the maintenance or continuation of the work. This must be accompanied by a sound sample (1-2 minutes), and can also be accompanied by a material sample (less than 40 cubic centimeters) if necessary. You will present your plans in as much detail as possible at our final meeting. The proposal is due on October 1, 2026.

Schedule

1. April 15: Introduction to the topic and our work together. To get to know each other, each participant will bring documentation or links for a site-specific or site-responsive piece (their own or an artist they admire) to share with the group.
2. April 29: On-site session at location #1: Kesselhaus, Kindl Contemporary Art Center. Visit to Cornelia Parker's *Stolen Thunder (A Storm Gathering)*. Practical and creative exercises related to navigating a first site visit, gathering information, brainstorming ideas, narrowing down possibilities, and determining the first steps towards realization.
3. May 13: Historical influences and a survey of current practices and discourse, including presentations by participants. Navigating open calls, writing proposals, and the application process for project grants and public art commissions.
4. May 20: On-site session at location #2, TBD. Practical and creative exercises. Discussion of preliminary ideas for the 4CP assignment.
5. June 3: Overview of practical and technical considerations and strategies, tools and techniques, including presentations by participants. A closer look at strategies for documenting site-specific work.
6. June 17: On-site session at location #3, to be determined by the group. Exercises on site, some of which may be developed and led by participants.
7. June 24: Last 2CP presentations and conclusion. Participants will present their plans for the 4CP assignment to get feedback from the group.