

Sound Studies and Sonic Arts

Summer Term 2026/27

Phase Focus

Module Theory, Practice

Course Title **When the Senses become Theoreticians: A Seminar on Audio Papers and Sound Essays** | Workshop

Course Times and Location November 16 – 20, 2026 | 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. | LIE 316

Instructors [Dr. Pedro Oliveira](#)

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Office Hours and Location upon request, LIE 312

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

Course Description

What is it that theory can do, and how much of what it can do has been sequestered by the rigidity of academic language? How much of theory is defined – but also limited – by its material conditions of emergence? Or, better yet: when does theory listen, and how is theory listening?

These questions are the starting point for this Block Seminar. The Seminar explores what are the breaking points of theory-making that sound can traverse. It treats sound practice, voice, semantics, and affect as theory, working with the idea that the senses can be not an object of theory but theoreticians in themselves. With sound and listening the focus shifts to that grain, the thick matter of how an argument sounds with the voice that names it; the grain of the word, within or away from semantics, might offer an entry point for a different way of doing science.

The main object of investigation however is not sound per se but specific mobilizations of it: Audio Papers and Sound Essays. We will discuss them as medium, as method, and as interfaces, where they converge and diverge, and how they function both as an opening and a framing for the subject and object of research, presenting an argument rather than representing it. We will investigate together how they can produce a different form of knowledge for which the written word, alone, might not suffice.

This Seminar builds upon the "Audio Paper Manifesto", published originally in 2016, and from an upcoming book by Sanne Krogh Groth and Stefan Östersjö exclusively dedicated to the format. However we will not be limited by what these two documents define – especially because they, too, refuse stable definitions for the format. This Seminar has instead a more ambitious goal: to provoke a more sensorial, affective, and embodied relation to theory, while at the same time propose, experiment with, and expand the formats of Audio Papers and Sound Essays for future scholarship in Sound Studies. Our task will be to critically engage with the format, challenge it, build upon, expand, and contribute to its own intended generativity.

We will explore how different forms of listening can be activated, mobilized, made more complex and generative, engaging with a multitude of sounding tools, including that of writing. Through listening, reading, discussion but also experimentation we will engage in method-finding: by the end of the week we should have a collection of experiments pointing towards the production of an Audio Paper or a Sound Essay, defined as such in the terms we collectively agree upon.

We will explore, together, when sound and listening become both theoretical and theoreticians, what it is that sound can do to theory, and what writing can do to listening.

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Requirements for Attending

This Seminar is for anyone interested in the limits of theory and in working with sound as a form of academic knowledge. It requires attendance, participation, openness and curiosity.

The Seminar is limited to 15 students.

In preparation for the Seminar, please read the **Audio Paper Manifesto** from 2016:

Groth, SK and K. Samson. "Audio Papers – a manifesto", *Seismograf*, vol. 16, 2016.

doi: 10.48233/seismograf1601. https://seismograf.org/da/fokus/fluid-sounds/audio_paper_manifesto

Exam / Credit Points

2CP (not graded: Theory, Practice, Free Focus): attendance, engagement, short presentation at the end of the Seminar.

2CP (graded: Theory): all of the above + short written assignment TBD (500 words).

Consecutive assignment leading to 4CP for the course (optional, graded: Theory, Practice, only the consecutive assignment is graded; not graded: Free Focus): all 2CP non-graded + Audio Paper or Sound Essay, 15–25 minutes maximum + extended abstract with references (800–1000 words maximum).

Due date for 4CP assignments in this course: 31.01.2027

Schedule

November 16 to 20, Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Every day we will start either from theory- or practice-centered questions which will guide collective reading to short texts and listening to sound essays, audio papers, and adjacent formats. Collective discussion and annotation will guide most of the day, which will culminate with exercises in writing, experimenting with sound and voices, and recording. By the end of the week these exercises should point towards a script for a final production or a guideline/corrective to the original Audio Paper Manifesto.

Reading and Listening materials will be provided in class.

Supporting Media

Barton, Justin, Maya B. Kronic, Steve Goodman, et al., eds. *Sonic Faction: Audio Essay as Medium and Method*. RE 007. Urbanomic Media Ltd, 2024.

Eshun, Kodwo Ofori. *More Brilliant Than The Sun: Adventures In Sonic Fiction*. London: Quartet Books, 1997.

Ferreira da Silva, Denise. "Reading Art as Confrontation." *E-Flux Journal*, no. #65 (2015). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/65/336390/reading-art-as-confrontation/>.

Groth, SK and K. Samson. "Audio Papers – a manifesto", *Seismograf*, vol. 16, 2016.

doi: 10.48233/seismograf1601. https://seismograf.org/da/fokus/fluid-sounds/audio_paper_manifesto

Gumbs, Alexis Pauline. *Dub: Finding Ceremony*. Duke University Press, 2020.

McKittrick, K. *Dear science and other stories (Errantries)*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2021

Wardany, H. el-. *How to disappear*. Kayfa ta. Berlin: Sternberg Press. 2018.

Wark, M. *Raving*. Durham; London: MNG University Presses. 2023.

Weheliye, Alexander G. *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity*. Duke University Press, 2005.