Soundscape composition, as pioneered by the World Soundscape Project at Simon Fraser University, has become a relatively well-defined genre, combining the artistic with the social, and often characterized as being intimately located to place. Although that may be true in many instances, it can also be understood as a range of approaches within an even broader concept, namely “context-based composition.” One of the aims of this seminar/lab is to provide not only a survey of historical and contemporary examples of this approach and concept, but to think more seriously about how it can be defined, what are its implications and affordances, and what emerging practices seem most fruitful. Special attention will be given to multi-channel reproduction techniques, environmental sound processing and composition.

A key distinguishing feature of context-based composition appears to be that real-world contexts inform the design and composition of aurally based work at every level, that is, in the materials, their organization, and ultimately the work’s placement within cultural contexts. Perhaps most significantly, listeners are encouraged to bring their knowledge of real world contexts into their participation with these works. As such they fundamentally differ from an approach that utilizes sounds related only to each other in an apparently autonomous form. Context-based practice can, among other approaches, range from sonifications, phonographic uses of field recordings, to site-specific installations, and abstracted soundscape compositions based in real-world or even virtual, imagined spaces.

Texts: (books on 7-day library reserve)
Soundscape Composition pdfs (online at http://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio/SoundscapeComposition)

References: (on 7-day library reserve)
Organised Sound, vols. 4(1), 7(1), 13(2), 16(3), 17(3), 21(3), 22(1); Soundscape Journal 7 (wfae.net)
Contemporary Music Review (ML 197, C752) vol. 15(1-2), A Poetry of Reality, K. Norman, ed.

Grading:
Your grade will be based solely on the studio projects you complete (see page 3). These will consist of:
(1) An assigned studio exercises (to be completed during the first half of the semester);
(2) One major audio project (to be completed during the second half of the semester).
Alternatively, a research paper (approx. 15 pages) may be proposed.

The Department expects that the grades awarded in this course will bear some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distribution of grades.

Deadlines: Project 1 is due the week of 20 February (25%).
Project 2 is due one week after the last class (75%).
SEMINAR TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: ESA refers to *Environmental Sound Artists*; RCSA to *Routledge Companion to Sounding Art*

Jan. 5  Soundscape as concept and terminology
Introduction to soundscape composition, acoustic ecology, sustainability, niche hypothesis
Reading: Wrightson, Ingold, Sterne, Truax-Sustainability, Monacchi-Fragments, Truax-Editorial

Jan. 12  Introduction to the World Soundscape Project
Survey of historical documents and approaches to field recording, documentation
Reading: Truax-CMR, Truax-Soundscape Composition, Gilmurray (in ESA)

Jan. 19  Approaches to soundscape composition (spatial perspectives)
Found sound (phonography) and abstracted practices and techniques
Reading: Truax-Genres, Drever-SCethnography, Drever (in RCSA), Drever-Exploitation

Jan. 26  Historical precedents (Ruttmann, Koch, Schwartz, Ferrari, Braun, Orchard)
Reading: Ruttmann, Schwartz, Ferrari, Koch-Orchard, Orchard-Documentaries, Clarkson

Feb. 2   Text and gender-based approaches (Rubin, Body, Truax, Lane)
Reading: Lane, Jack Body, Truax-Electrified Voices, Bosma, Truax-Homoeroticism, see also OS 21(3)

Feb. 9 & 16  No classes

Feb. 23  Hildegard Westerkamp, soundscape works
Reading: Kolber, McCormac, McCartney-Cricket Voices, Westerkamp-Linking

Mar. 2   Barry Truax, multi-channel soundscape works

Mar. 9   Soundscape and Acousmatic approaches mixed
Body, Ferrari, Risset, Tenney, Lanský, Norman, Andean, Raimondo, Pasoulas
Reading: Norman-Listening, Norman-Realworld Music, Pasoulas (in ESA)

Mar. 16  Other artists (Feld, Schine, Wagstaff, Burtner, Keller, Proy, Polli)
Reading: Feld, Burtner & Polli (in ESA), Keller, Burtner-EcoSono, Burtner & Polli (in RCSA)

Mar. 23 & 30  Compositional analysis and mentoring of student projects
& April 6
EXERCISES AND PROJECTS

**Note:** Projects should be handed in as stereo audio files, clearly identified in the title, with multi-channel works recorded in a ProTools session.

**Project Notes:**

1. **Soundscape exercise.** Take one or more recordings from the WSP Tape Collection, use editing, audio processing, and multi-track mixing to create a short (4-5 minute) composition in stereo or 8-channel format.

   WSP Database: [http://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio/WSPDatabase/](http://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio/WSPDatabase/)

2. **Final Project:** This is a 6-week project of your own design, and may use field recorded or studio recorded material, or copies of material in the WSP Tape Collection. The piece may be in any of the standard audio medium **genres:** Aural History, Documentary, Text-Sound, Soundscape Composition, or combinations thereof. Most of these will be discussed in class and illustrated. The project should be discussed with the instructor before it is begun in terms of resources needed, format, length, etc. You will use ProTools for this project in either the stereo or 8-channel formats (with or without spatialization with the TiMax2). Duration of the project depends on which genre is chosen, but normally this project will be in the 8 - 12 minute range.

**RULES FOR STUDIO USE: THESE MUST BE CONSCIENTIOUSLY FOLLOWED IF YOU ARE TO RETAIN STUDIO PRIVILEGES.**

1. NO smoking, eating, or drinking in the Studio; take a break in the hall or outside -- it will clear your head!

2. If unable to use your studio time, make every possible effort to trade with someone, or have someone else use the time.

3. **Clean up** after studio use (also a good precaution against losing things).

4. Purchase blank CDs, DVD’s or removable USB storage media to back up your computer soundfiles. Keep your files in your own folder and delete unused files.

5. When leaving the studio at the end of your work time:
   
   (a) Remove all patch cords (except those for the stereo and 8-channel monitors) and return to their proper storage.

   (b) Turn power off on all tape recorders, diffusion amps and peripheral devices. Computers, the monitor amplifiers and the mixer stay powered.

   (c) Turn off the lights, shut the window and shut the outer door. Regular users gain access to the studio with the punch code for the outer and inner doors.

6. You may use the studio when it is free even if it has been booked. When the person who has booked it is more than one hour late, he/she still has priority for the remaining time but must allow the person using the studio sufficient time to finish (up to 1/2 hour). Please co-operate as much as possible.

7. Studio security is an important issue! Make sure the outer studio door is shut at ALL times when you are temporarily out of the room - the punch code makes it very easy to get back in quickly. If you open the middle window, please ensure it is shut when you leave and draw the curtains shut.