

## **MCOM 350 - AUDIO PRODUCTION - Spring 2007**

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Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m., Monday - Friday

### **Catalog Description:**

Introduction to audio production for radio, video, film and music recording, including principles, equipment, pre-production, production, and post-production. A \$50 fee is charged each student to help defray expenses related to this course. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with an understanding of audio production as a medium of communication, as well as to familiarize the student with the terminology, facilities, and processes of audio production. The course will examine the theories of communication as they apply to audio production for radio, video, film, and music recording, and will practice the techniques and skills involved in the process of producing audio material.

### **Objectives:**

1. To identify the major acoustic principles and understand how they relate to the technology and practices of audio production.
2. To become familiar with basic audio production technology and the terminology associated with the technology and practices of audio production.
3. To apply the student's conceptual understanding of audio technology and practices to practical experiences in production.
4. To relate communication theory to audio production for radio, video, film, and music recording.

### **Course Format:**

This course will consist of two (2) hours of lecture and two (2) hours of laboratory work each week. Individual student projects will require additional work outside of the scheduled course time. Each student should be prepared to allocate approximately two (2) hours outside of scheduled course times for each class or laboratory hour. Because of the nature of audio production, demands on your time outside of the scheduled course times will tend to cluster near the due dates for laboratory assignments. You should therefore anticipate the need to adjust your personal schedule accordingly.

### **Required Text and Materials:**

Stanley R. Alten. Audio in Media. 7th Ed. Wadsworth Publishing Company. 2005. (ISBN: 0-534-63046-4).

Each student must also provide his/her own magnetic tape, take-up reels, CD-Rs, CD jewel cases, and other production supplies as necessary for individual project assignments.

### **Attendance:**

As required by University policy, attendance will be taken each class session. The University regards class attendance as an obligation as well as a privilege, and defines as "excessive" absences of ten percent (10%) or more of the total class sessions for any course; for this particular course a total of three (3) lecture absences, two (2) laboratory absences, or a lesser combination of each are considered excessive under that University policy. Production is often a cooperative effort and your attendance and participation is vital to the class as a whole.

Each student is allowed a maximum of two (2) lecture absences and one (1) laboratory absence without penalty. Such absences shall include any excused absences. Further unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the student's final course grade by one (1) full letter grade for each absence. Absences for lecture or laboratory meetings scheduled immediately prior to or following holidays will be double-weighted. Any student accumulating a combined total of six (6) absences, regardless of reason, will not have substantially completed this course and will receive a final grade of "F" for the course.

Tardiness is disturbing to the class; habitual lateness is viewed unfavorably. Be considerate to your colleagues and be punctual to lecture and laboratory. Tardiness counts as one-half (½) of an absence.

Acceptable excuses for absences are listed in the University's Student Policy Manual: 1) authorized trips away from the University or absences resulting from special duties at the University, 2) confinement in a hospital or other in-patient facility or doctor's excused absence, or 3) a death in the immediate family. Each student should make every effort to ensure medical appointments do not conflict with the class schedule. Excuses must be presented for the instructor's consideration within three (3) class meetings of the student's return to class. Students participating in University activities, whose names appear on the Authorized Class Absences list from the Academic Affairs office, should specifically notify the instructor.

In the event of emergency absences, the student shall initiate such arrangements immediately. A student who misses the final examination for emergency reasons shall notify the instructor or the academic dean immediately.

Absences do not excuse you from performing with the rest of the class. A student is responsible for all academic work missed during absences, whatever the reasons for any absences.

Pagers, cellular telephones, and other devices must be switched to silent mode during class time. Students must not send or retrieve text messages during class time.

### **Assignments:**

Lecture: Three (3) examinations will be given during the academic term. The final examination will be comprehensive. Make up examinations will only be allowed with an official University excuse. Make-up examinations must be administered before the first regular class meeting following the student's return to school. Students missing examinations because of University activities must arrange to take the examination before the scheduled examination date.

Laboratory: Four (4) audio projects and two (2) practical examinations will be completed as part of the laboratory for this course. All audio projects must be done by an individual and may not be done as part of a group. All projects are due on the specified deadlines; a late project will not be accepted unless it is accompanied by an official University excuse. A student with an excused absence must contact the instructor immediately following his/her return to school to secure any missed assignment.

Each student is encouraged to collect his or her audio projects for inclusion in a student portfolio for an eventual job search.

### **Facilities:**

All audio production work for this course must be completed in the Department of Communication audio suite, 156A Stubbs Hall. The facilities, equipment, recordings, and materials of radio stations KXUL or KEDM are not to be used for this course; violation of this policy will result in a course grade of "F."

Students are responsible for following the policies listed in this syllabus and posted in the audio suite. Anyone in violation of these policies can lose the privilege of access to the audio studio facility. Generally, only one student should be in the audio studio at a time.

- Do not bring food or drink into the audio suite.
- Do not use excessive volume or disturb any classes in the adjoining classroom.
- Never leave unauthorized persons in the audio suite without supervision.
- The door to the audio suite must be locked at all times when not occupied.
- Make sure all equipment is "normalled," the ceiling lights are switched off, and the suite is locked when you leave.
- Report all damage or malfunctions to the instructor immediately.
- Always leave the audio suite in a better condition than you found it.

Do not attempt to add programs or change the system configuration of the audio studio computer. You may not use the audio studio computer for any purposes other than audio production. Violation of this policy will result in a course grade of "F."

A calendar for reserving individual production times will be posted on the door to the audio suite. The audio studio will only be available during normal University office hours, when classes are not scheduled in the facility. Schedule your production time in no more than two-hour time blocks, with no more than a total of two (2) hours per day, and no more than five (5) hours per week. Because of the limited availability of the audio studio you are strongly advised not to procrastinate with the completion of your projects.

The key to the suite is available from the instructor or from the College of Arts and Sciences (Admin 1-45); return the key immediately after vacating the facility. A student failing to timely return the key to the audio suite will receive a failing grade for that assignment. Make prior arrangements to obtain a key for audio studio access.

### **Evaluation:**

The weighting of the requirements of this course, as a portion of the final grade, is as follows:

Lecture (Total = 500 points):  
Examination #1 = 150 points  
Examination #2 = 150 points  
Final Examination (comprehensive) = 200 points

Laboratory (Total = 500 points):  
Project #1 (Live-On-Tape Program) = 80 points  
Project #2 (Editing Exercise) = 80 points  
Project #3 (Multi-Track Project) = 90 points  
Project #4 (Open Digital Project) = 100 points  
Practical Examination #1 = 75 points  
Practical Examination #2 = 75 points

The specific requirements and objectives for each audio project will be included at the time each project is assigned. Some assignments will require accompanying written supporting documentation.

Promptness and punctuality are evidence of a personal discipline that is essential to future communication professionals. As such, each assignment will include a stated deadline that will be strictly enforced. Each audio project will also include a strict time length requirement. Audio projects will be evaluated on objective standards of technical proficiency and subjective standards of content. Evaluations will reflect sound quality of the audio project, timing, mixing of sound, delivery, overall quality, mastering, and how closely the project equals the assignment specifications.

If you receive a grade of less than 70% of the total possible points on an audio project, excluding the last project, you may make the changes suggested on your critique and resubmit the project for further evaluation. If you choose to take this option, you must resubmit a given project within two (2) weekdays of the time that project was returned in class, accompanied by the original evaluation. The highest grade that will be awarded for a resubmitted project will be 70% of the total possible points on that project. Lecture examinations and laboratory practical examinations cannot be retaken, and extra credit opportunities, other than the merit credit discussed below, will not be made available.

All written materials must be typewritten. Written materials will be evaluated based on thoroughness, organization, proper use of language and style (e.g., grammar, punctuation, and spelling). Professional presentation is expected and citations of the writings of others must be properly credited (Refer to the "Cheating and Plagiarism" section of the University's Student Policy Manual).

Practical examinations will assess the student's technical proficiency in operating audio production equipment according to the practices discussed in the classroom. The student will be expected to complete a series of assigned tasks within an established time limit.

Lecture examinations shall consist of a varied format, including true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Grading for this course will be determined by the following scale:

- 900 - 1,000 points = A Extraordinary Effort. All criteria are performed with a high degree of excellence and enthusiasm. The student demonstrates active participation and high-quality work.
- 800 - 890 points = B Honorable Effort. All criteria are performed with considerable endeavor and energy. The student solidly participates and demonstrates a desire to achieve more than basic requirements.
- 700 - 790 points = C Average Effort. All criteria are performed satisfactorily, though with some room for improvement. The student demonstrates that he or she is fully engaged with the class.
- 600 - 690 points = D Minimal Effort. The criteria are performed with considerable room for improvement. The student falls short of being fully engaged with the class, but demonstrates a basic effort to pass the course.
- 590 points and below = F Unsatisfactory Effort. The student fails to meet the criteria and displays little or no effort to pass the course. This is usually accompanied by poor participation and minimal attendance.

Grades may be discussed at any time throughout the term during the instructor's office hours, by appointment only. You should save the critique forms returned to you for each assignment; if you later have any question about your grade, these forms will be your only proof that you completed your projects.

Final grades will not be posted or otherwise distributed before they are made available by the University Registrar.

### **Academic Integrity:**

The University forbids plagiarism, and provides for penalties for students violating this policy (Refer to the "Cheating and Plagiarism" section of the University's Student Policy Manual). Included in the University's definition of cheating and plagiarism is copying or obtaining information from another student's examination paper; using, during an examination, materials not authorized by the person giving the examination, collaborating, conspiring, or cooperating during an examination with any other person by giving or receiving information without authority; and stealing, buying, or otherwise obtaining all or part of an unadministered examination. Submitting as one's own, in fulfillment of academic requirements of this course, any audio project or accompanying written materials shall also be deemed prohibited plagiarism. In any case of copying, both the copier and the lender will be penalized.

### **Work for Hire:**

All work produced utilizing University facilities and submitted as part of the requirements for this course becomes the property of the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

### **Drop Policy:**

Any student who does not withdraw from this course, and who otherwise fails to complete the requirements of this course, will automatically receive a final grade of "F."

### **Students with Special Needs:**

A student with special needs seeking reasonable individual assistance or accommodation to achieve the objectives of this course must immediately file a Special Needs Accommodation Form with the Counseling Center (Refer to the University's Student Policy Manual). According to the ULM policy, accommodations do not apply retroactively. If the student neglects to request accommodations from his or her instructors, those instructors are under no obligation to retroactively correct for this. Accommodations apply to present and future, not past, events. Information about University student services, such as Student Success Center (<http://www.ulm.edu/cass/>), Counseling Center (<http://www.ulm.edu/counselingcenter/>), Special Needs (<http://www.ulm.edu/counselingcenter/special.htm>), and Student Health Services, is available at the following Student Services web site <http://www.ulm.edu/studentaffairs/>.

### **Schedule:**

The sequence of topics to be discussed for this course is detailed below. As discussions of these topics evolve, adjustments to this preliminary schedule might become necessary. As such, students are advised to be prepared for alterations in this schedule, including changes in readings, discussions, projects, and examination dates.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Lecture Topic:</u>	<u>Reading:</u>
Jan 17	Course Introduction/Principles of Sound	Chapter 2
22	Principles of Sound (Continued)	
24	Microphones	Chapter 4
29	(Continued)	
31	Consoles and Control Surfaces	Chapter 5
Feb 5	(Continued)	
7	(Continued)	
12	Monitor Systems	Chapter 9
14	<b>Examination #1</b>	
19	<i>Mardi Gras Holiday – No Class</i>	
21	<i>Mardi Gras Holiday – No Class</i>	
26	Analog Recording	pp. 101-112
28	(Continued)	
Mar 5	Digital Recording	pp. 112-134, 138-139, 142-144
7	(Continued)	
7	<i>Mid-term Grades Due</i>	
12	Editing	Chapter 18
14	(Continued)	
19	Nonlinear Multi-Track Production	pp. 398-408, 413-428, 433-440
21	(Continued)	
26	<b>Examination #2</b>	
28	Acoustics and Psychoacoustics	Chapter 3
Apr 2	(Continued)	
4	Signal Processing	Chapter 8, pp. 405-406, 408-413
9	<i>Spring Holiday – No Class</i>	
11	<i>Spring Holiday – No Class</i>	
16	Signal Processing (Continued)	
18	TBA	
23	Assorted Production Practices	Chapter 10, pp. 210-216, 223-225, 308-310
25	(Continued)	
30	Field Production	pp. 239-259
May 2	Music and Effects Libraries	pp. 341-345, 366-371
11	<b>Comprehensive Final Examination (Friday, 8:00-9:50 a.m.)</b>	

<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Laboratory Topic:</u>
Jan 17	No Laboratory
22 & 24	Studio Tour
29 & 31	Demonstration: Microphones
Feb 5 & 7	Demonstration: Console
12 & 14	Practice: Console
19 & 21	<i>Mardi Gras Holiday – No Lab</i>
26 & 28	Demonstration and Practice: Analog Recording
Mar 5 & 7	Demonstration and Practice: Analog Multi-Track
12 & 14	Demonstration and Practice: Nonlinear Editing
19 & 21	<b>Practical Examination #1</b>
26 & 28	Demonstration and Practice: Nonlinear Production
Apr 2 & 4	Demonstration and Practice: Nonlinear Production
9 & 11	<i>Spring Holiday – No Lab</i>
16 & 18	Individual work on Project #4
23 & 25	Demonstration: Signal Processing
30 & May 2	<b>Practical Examination #2</b>

**Project Dates:**

- Project assignments will be distributed during the lecture period on the dates listed below.
- Projects will be due at the beginning of the lecture period on the dates listed below.

	<u>Project Description:</u>	<u>Date Assigned:</u>	<u>Date Due:</u>
Project #1	Live-On-Tape Program	February 28	March 14
Project #2	Editing Exercise	March 14	March 28
Project #3	Multi-Track Project	March 26	April 16
Project #4	Open Digital Project	April 2	May 2

**Merit Credit:**

Students in Audio Production may earn additional credit for the course by electing to pursue optional merit credit. The merit credit is earned by applying audio production practices while working on-air shifts at KXUL radio. Any student wishing to pursue merit credit must abide by the following guidelines:

1. The merit credit agreement form, found at the bottom of this page, must be completed and returned to the instructor by the time of the regular class meeting on Wednesday, January 24, 2007.
2. By the deadline above the student must also have met with the KXUL manager responsible for staff training and must have scheduled the initial training session.
3. The student must successfully complete training by KXUL management. The number of training sessions required will depend on the individual aptitude of the student.
4. After training is completed, the student must work a minimum of 10 three-hour on-air shifts, as scheduled by KXUL management, during which the student is primarily responsible for the operation of the station. These shifts should be scheduled one per calendar week, with a minimum of four to be completed by the time of the student's first aircheck session and the remainder completed before the time of the student's final aircheck session. Availability of shifts on KXUL is limited, and the student might need to work on weekends in order to complete the requirements for merit credit. Students on the KXUL payroll cannot receive wages for shifts worked for this merit credit.
5. The student must initiate two 30-minute aircheck sessions with the instructor. The student will bring to each session a prerecorded, scoped aircheck tape. These aircheck sessions must be completed on or before the following deadlines:  
Aircheck #1: Wednesday , March 14, 2007  
Aircheck #2: Wednesday , May 2, 2007
6. The student must submit to the instructor the supplied time sheet, signed by the KXUL manager supervising the student, on or before the deadline for the final aircheck session.
7. Once the student is assigned a shift at KXUL the student is responsible for that shift through the final exam period at the end of the semester, including any break periods during the academic term. The student is responsible for arranging for a qualified replacement for any shift s/he cannot work.
8. A student missing any scheduled shift, who does not arrange for a qualified replacement, will forfeit all merit credit.
9. A student successfully completing work under this agreement will receive merit credit up to a maximum of 150 points. The amount of the actual credit earned will be determined based on the student's performance, as evaluated during the aircheck sessions and as reported on evaluation forms completed by KXUL management. An evaluation form will be completed by KXUL management in advance of each of the two aircheck sessions.
10. Any student working at KXUL must abide by all policies of the station, as listed in the University's Student Policy Manual and as articulated during the course of the student's work at the station. Any student working with KXUL must abide by all policies of the Federal Communications Commission and any other governmental agencies. Failure to abide by such policies shall be grounds for separation from KXUL, which will result in the forfeiture of all merit credit.

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Merit Credit Agreement

(To be completed and submitted on or before 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 24, 2007)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, commit to pursuing merit credit for the Audio Production course and have read and agree to abide by the course requirements for this merit credit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date