

MUSC 2245 Experimental Voice
Brown University
Fall 2017

Monday 12:00-2:50pm
Steinert Tracking Room

OBJECTIVES

- Gain familiarity with acoustic and electronic extensions of one's own voice, and develop a personalized repertoire for putting these techniques into practice.
- Understand trends and gaps in Western scholarship on contemporary vocal work.
- Engage deeply with voice; make critical and creative work that encourages future research.
- Gain awareness of the contemporary landscape of experimental voice practice, including aesthetic, professional, and cultural features.

PARTICIPATION, WEEKLY WORK

Weekly readings and listenings drive in-class discussion. Many weeks also include a technical component. We will workshop acoustic or digital techniques the week before, students will have a week to implement these on their own, and the following week we will share our observations. (Consider questions such as: Is this sound reliable in my voice? Could I see myself using this technique? What does this sound imply rhetorically/socially?) Weekly readings, listenings, and technical activities should inform your midterm, interlude, and final projects.

Student-led discussions (c. 30 min.) can take a variety of forms. They might involve providing 2-3 readings/listenings in advance and addressing these in class, and/or undertaking a creative group activity, etc. Each student may choose any voice related topic on which to lead discussion.

PROJECTS

Diverse critical and creative expertise is welcome in this seminar. Thus, the midterm, interlude, and final projects may take the form of either written papers or creative pieces. However, each student must do **at least one project of each type** – written and creative – during the semester. For instance, if your creative skills are strong but your critical writing is weaker, you might choose to make creative pieces for both midterm and final, and use the interlude as an opportunity to develop your writing.

Group work is possible. Consult with me individually to develop a plan for group projects, and/or to articulate scope for alternative-format projects. For creative works with a live component, submit representative audio/video documentation.

Midterm Project 25% Due Sat 10/28, 5pm

Approximately 5-10 minutes or 10-15 pages. Respond to the extended vocal techniques and the pieces we have considered in the first half of the semester. Consider questions such as: What is the significance of acoustic modifications of voice in the largely digitized 21st century? Are the polyphonic and noise potentials of voice more conducive to solo or ensemble work, or to certain performance situations?

Interlude 10% Due Sat 11/4, 5pm

Approximately 1-2 minutes or 2-3 pages. Think expansively; experiment; push your comfort zone. Riff on your midterm project, or explore a separate idea not covered in your midterm. Consider questions such as: In a perfect world, what would you like people to know about the voice, or about your voice? Treat this as possible fodder for the final project or future work after this seminar, and/or a chance to output something unique on a fast time scale.

Final Project 40% Due Sat 12/9, 5pm

Approximately 10-15 minutes or 15-25 pages. Should constitute a significant departure from or elaboration on your midterm project, accounting for the digital and live performance techniques covered in the second half of the semester. Think deeply about intersections of voice and technology, or about voice as technology, or about unique creative potential of dealing with voice, etc.

SCHEDULE

Sep 11	Intro, syllabus Improvisation; Duck call (in class) Oliveros , <i>Teach Yourself to Fly</i> (in class) Tonelli interviews Nicols, Minton
Sep 18	Body (breath, larynx, mouth, torso); Undertone singing Blonk , <i>Flux de Bouche</i> excerpt Borch et al, "Vocal fold vibration..." LaBelle, <i>Lexicon of the Mouth</i> excerpt Tagaq , <i>Sinaa</i> excerpt Young, <i>I sing the body electric</i> excerpt
Sep 25	Text; Writing and setting text Dolar, <i>A Voice & Nothing More</i> excerpt Lane, "Voices from the past" Mann , <i>Goes a little something like this</i> Stewart , <i>Forked lands</i>
Oct 2	Notation; Lip buzzes Berberian , <i>Stripsody</i> La Barbara , <i>Voice is the Original Instrument</i> excerpt Hewitt, "Choreographic approaches to music composition..."

- Oct 9 **No class**, Indigenous Peoples' Day
 Brainstorm Midterm
 Continue rehearsing vocal techniques this week
- Oct 16 Student-led discussion day 1
 Identity; Vibrato and ululation
 Baars, *The bonnie banks o Fordie*
 Cavarero, *For more than one voice* excerpt
 Schlichter, "Do voices matter?"
- Oct 23 Share Midterm drafts (due Sat 10/28, 5pm)
 Presence & sampling I; Recording, sampling, layering
 Woloshyn, "The recorded voice and the mediated body..." excerpt
 Z, "A tool is a tool"
 Z, *A Delay is Better* excerpt
- Oct 30 Share Interlude drafts (due Sat 11/4, 5pm)
 Presence & sampling II; Production, editing
 AGF, *Kon:3p>UTION to: e[VOL]ution* excerpt
 Kyoka, *Is (Is Superpowered)* excerpt
 Prikrylova interviews Kyoka
 Taylor interviews AGF
- Nov 6 Voice-electronics interaction: timbre; Worldize, vocode
 Cassidy, "Noise and the voice"
 Eidsheim, "Race and the aesthetics of vocal timbre"
 Yoshida, *Tiger Thrush* excerpt
- Nov 13 Voice-electronics interaction: temporality; Granulate
 Levin, "Before the Beep" (in Neumark et al, *VOICE*)
 Motland, *Fake Synthetic Music*
 Norderval, *Aural Histories* excerpt
- Nov 20 Student-led discussion day 2
 Voicing through the system I; Cuing and control info
 Guilleray, "Entre chien et loup"
 Hughes, "Technologized and autonomized vocals"
 Zorn, "Voices in the Electronic Furnace" excerpt
- Nov 27 Brainstorming final projects
 Voicing through the system II; Staging and form
 Herndon, *Platform* excerpt
 Vágnerová, "Sirens/Cyborgs" excerpt
 Weheliye, "Feenin"
- Dec 4 Share final project drafts (due Sat 12/9, 5pm); Wrap-up