

SOUND AND RESEARCH-CREATION

Dr. Petra Klusmeyer

Summer Term 2025

MA-2/DM.M-MD Special Topics in Digital Media/Media Design

MT credits possible; needs prior consultation!

Interdisciplinary course: FK, ID, Music

Tue 10:00 – 18:00 (10:00 - 12:30 + Lunch break + 14:00 - 18:00 (class duration may vary))

OVERVIEW

Sound and Research-Creation (SnRC) is an ongoing research initiative at the intersection of Sound Studies and Artistic Research (research-creation). Dedicated to a critical and research-led exploration of sonic practices in art, design, and music, SnRC integrates philosophical, socio-cultural, and economic perspectives to investigate how sound, technology, and artistic methodologies intersect across diverse contexts. At its core, SnRC bridges theoretical inquiry with artistic practice, encouraging students to experiment with the ephemeral nature of sound while developing thorough conceptual frameworks.

In past iterations, SnRC coursework has focused on transposing aspects of a student's existing project into a sonic paradigm – exploring aesthetic considerations of sound and research, experimenting with fabulation as an inquiry method (e.g., using creative writing as a narrative device), and “problematizing” practice by thinking through, producing, and critiquing theory. These experiences have underscored how sonic thinking can illuminate new dimensions within students' artistic or design work.

This semester, SnRC continues to position sound as both a conceptual and methodological framework accessible to everyone, whether they consider themselves “sound artists” or not. Students will be introduced to select sonic theories, philosophical perspectives, and art-writing approaches, while listening to audio works that span multiple genres and historical periods. By the end of the course, participants will gain clarity on how “sonic thinking” can help delineate their research interests – ultimately finding or refining their own “voice” (both conceptually and, where relevant, literally) within their chosen medium.

As part of this discovery-led approach, students will engage with reading and writing experiments, develop a basic familiarity with audio production, and create a very short-format audio podcast (as part of the Loopholes series) early in the semester that tackles an aspect of their inquiry in an experimental manner. Later in the term, they will also produce a (free and wild) radio show on Radio Angrezi, where they can present by the end of the term interim findings, express emerging ideas, and push the boundaries of their creative practice. This combination of conceptual exploration and hands-on experimentation aims to foster a richer understanding of how sound can inform and transform artistic research.

GENERAL

The course structure relies on your commitment to your work and interest in the practice of others. The idea is to proceed iteratively, which means sticking to the process: read and write, explore the sonic realm, be present for listening and discussion, etc.

AUDIO RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

If you wish access to the audio lab, you will need to schedule an individual introductory appointment with Jukka Boehm (DM Workshop Manager – email j.boehm@hfk-bremen.de). Additional audio equipment, visit the Media Centre or “Zentrale Ausleihe”. The TA for this course is Chi Him Chik. He will offer the workshops for basic audio production skills.

READER AND DOCUMENTS

All materials used for or produced in this class will be archived on MS Teams (via SharePoint). I provide the readings for the course in PDF format. Each student will be assigned a personalized folder where you place your assignments and other materials. Please be diligent in naming your files adequately (your name, date, adequate title). Use the MS Teams Word doc (on SharePoint) to write your texts or copy your draft into the doc; then, I have a chance to comment if I needed.

READING LIST

There will be a reading list that I will provide separately.

CLASS SCHEDULE

I will provide a class schedule separate to this syllabus which is subject to change. Changes to that schedule will be announced in class and on MS Teams.

ETIQUETTE

If you feel ill, please inform me, and do NOT attend class! If you “only” have a cold, please wear a FFP2 mask during class and follow the usual hygiene rules. Being sick will not affect your grade; however, if you do not let me know, it might. Thank you for your understanding.

CREDITS

12 CP for M-MA-2/M-MD. Receiving credits for Media Theory (MT credits) is possible, however, we need to discuss this option at the beginning of the semester and come to an agreement of what is needed to receive MT credits (and how many credit points). For FK students: signature in student book for Interdisciplinary course; a theory sign-off is possible once we come to an agreement of what is required for this early in the semester.

COMPONENTS OF YOUR SEMESTER GRADE

It so goes that we give grades in the DM program of study. Taking this as a given, regardless of the sense or nonsense of grading in art school let me clarify what I expect of you to conclude the course and what it takes to receive a grade (or a signature).

Assignments

Assignments in this course are designed to help you discover how sonic thinking can inform your artistic research or creative practice – whether or not you see yourself as a sound artist. This semester, our in-class activities will emphasize listening, reading, and art writing, introducing sonic theories and philosophical positions that might invite reflection on your work. Alongside these conceptual explorations, you will also engage in practical exercises (e.g., creating a very short-format audio podcast) to experiment with transposing ideas, atmospheres, and themes into sound. These varied approaches should uncover new insights into your own process and refine your artistic “voice.” Specific to-dos will be announced in class throughout the semester.

Participation

Make it your priority to be on time and attend class (and workshops) on regular basis. To participate means to me that you engage with the reading materials, that is, reading them! Taking notes, extract citations, do a brief annotated summary if you are ambitious enough (or use A.I.; we should discuss its use). Further, to participate means to be interested in what your colleagues have to say – to give and receive feedback; to attend carefully to and care for the subject matter, which translates to me as a caring for yourself as part of this course ethic. Participation also means to do the assignments on time and keep taking the necessary steps towards completing the audio-based works – even when it gets tough occasionally. I am here for you if you need me.

Reading/Reflection

This course combines theory and practice. We will read texts for discussion in preparation for each theory session, engaging with sonic theories and various meta-narratives to better understand how sound-based or related art practices operate. Since the readings feed directly into your development as an artistic researcher, it's crucial that you actively engage with them and be prepared to contribute to in-class discussions.

Reading Procedure

1. Summary

Note: This part of the assignment is the most challenging. I encourage you to do it, but I don't mandate it. (If you see your future in academic research, you may want to get used to it.) Write a concise summary (approximately one paragraph) capturing the main thrust of the text:

- What is the author's central argument or idea?
- How does it relate to the concept of “sonic thinking,” research-creation, or other course themes?

2. Key Citations

Identify 1–3 quotations that resonate with you and note the page number(s).

- Why do these particular quotes stand out?
- Do they open up new perspectives on your own creative or research process?

3. Questions for Discussion

Formulate 1–2 open-ended questions that probe deeper into the text's themes.

- You might focus on theoretical puzzles, connections to your practice, or implications for how we create or experience sound.

Connecting Theory and Practice

- Reflect on Relevance: As you read, keep your own work or creative interests in mind. How might the text's ideas reshape your practice or spark a new line of inquiry?
- Link to Sound Experiments: Whenever possible, consider how the author's concepts might inform your approach to upcoming assignments (like the Loophole pieces or the Radio Angrezi broadcast).
- Share Insights in Class: Be ready to share not only the "what" of the reading but also the "so what?" — why it might matter for you and your peers, both theoretically and practically.

Why This Matters

- Depth of Engagement: Strong reading habits – annotating, reflecting, and questioning – may translate into richer class discussions.
- Artistic Research Skills: These texts serve as the conceptual scaffolding for your "sonic thinking" and sound experiments. Engaging critically helps you refine the "research" portion of research-creation.
- Practice-Led Discovery: Your reading notes, quotations, and questions can fuel your audio explorations – turning theory into lived, "sonic encounters".

SnRC: Loopholes (duration 1 – 2 min)

Loopholes came to life some time ago as a quick way to turn a specific point of interest from students' practice, reading, or writing explorations into a sonic artifact. The gist is to avoid overthinking and simply craft your "loophole" by making. We're using this same approach now to support the discovery of your "voice" (conceptually and perhaps literally) and serve as a stepping stone toward your Radio Angrezi show.

At its core, it's about abstracting one key idea (be it concept or intuition) from your interests or current process and transposing it into sound – all within a very short format. Rather than planning a long-form piece, you'll face the challenge of conveying "sonic information" quickly and in surprising ways.

Think of it as quick, sharp, and feisty podcasting. "Sharp" means intelligent, unexpected – surprise yourself (and the listener). You don't have to stick to a linear or "talking-about" approach; you can focus on sonic exploration and creative organization. "Feisty" suggests revealing something unique to your artistic research – perhaps with a bit of edge or humor (though humor can be hard to prescribe). Above all, have fun experimenting with these constraints!

Here to the previous Loopholes:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/soundstudies/loopholes/>

<https://www.mixcloud.com/soundstudies/loopholes-2/>

SnRC: Free and Wild on Radio Angrezi (duration min. 20 min – max. 50 min)

In previous iterations of Sound & Research-Creation (SnRC), students developed long-format podcasts to experiment with sonic thinking. This semester, we're carrying that same spirit of

playful, discovery-led creation into a Radio Angrezi broadcast, offering the immediacy and flexibility of live or pre-recorded audio. Whether you work independently (or collaborate with peers, to be discussed), the goal remains to reveal a new perspective, atmosphere, or feeling unique to your work by exploring sound-based expression.

By the end of the teaching term, you'll present this "free and wild" radio show on Radio Angrezi – be it talk- or narrative-based, soundscape-oriented, or entirely abstract. Whatever shape it takes, it should illuminate an aspect of your research process and the ongoing search (or re-search) for your "voice," "loophole," or creative path. As you develop the broadcast, consider which themes, insights, or feelings you want listeners to take away, and how working in radio might lead to new discoveries about what it means to engage with sonic thinking in your artistic research and beyond.

Depending on the number of participants in this course, the Radio Angrezi shows are scheduled to take place on July 10 and 11 (two sessions if needed). The radio show should be somewhere between 20 and 50 minutes – tailored to your needs. Further details will be discussed in class.

Documentation Requirements (MUST READ!)

Why Document?

Part of our work involves producing audio-based pieces – Loophole and Radio Angrezi broadcasts – and exploring ideas through reading and writing. Because sound can be ephemeral and conceptual development isn't always obvious, documentation ensures you have a record of your creative process and helps others (including external audiences) understand how you arrived at your final pieces.

What to Submit?

Important: For Part A, follow the Digital Media documentation style. Consult "**Guidelines for Final Project Documentation**" for details.

Part A

1. Final Audio Files

- Provide .wav versions of your Loophole piece and Radio Angrezi broadcast.
- Include links to SoundCloud (or a similar platform) for quick listening access.

2. Short Description or Reflection

- Introduce each audio piece: its concept, methods, and key ideas.

3. Images (Process & Context)

- Include a few visual elements – cover art or process photos (e.g., recording setups, editing sessions, field-recording locations).
- This helps illustrate the behind-the-scenes progression of your project.

Part B

Provide a MS Word file for the written reflection (not PDF).

1. Reading & Writing Reflections

- Summarize key readings or theories that influenced your approach (e.g., a short, annotated bibliography or one-page reflection).
- Briefly describe how your writing experiments (journals, creative texts, or concept sketches) shaped the themes, structure, or atmosphere of your audio pieces.
- You do not have to submit all notes or drafts but do provide a concise overview of how reading and writing guided your sonic decisions.

Naming and Organization

- Place all required materials in a single folder labeled with your name.
- Make sure each file (audio, images, written reflections) is clearly named for easy navigation.

Further Details

In the Digital Media program, final projects may be published online. Consult the “Guidelines for Final Project Documentation” on MS Teams for practical tips, and feel free to reach out with questions. This documentation process should reflect the full scope of your creative and intellectual work.

DEADLINE

- *Deadline:* All documentation (audio files, written reflection, images, etc.) is due by **September 30, 2025, 23:59.**