**Sound Theory for Oral Historians**

Tuesdays, 17:00 – 18:20

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Office Hours By Appointment

This course equips oral historians with a theoretical and methodological framework for engaging with sound. What can aural sources tell us about the past? And what role has sound played at particular historical junctures? Topics addressed include sound technologies, listening and hearing, voice and voicelessness, and sound and space. The bulk of the reading is in English, although written work may be submitted in Czech. Students will produce two literature review essays over the semester, and a final project in which they analyze the oral histories they have produced using the perspectives discussed.

**Requirements:** Class participation (40% of your grade, calculated through attendance and participation); two review essays (each of maximum five pages, 1,600 words, comprising 15% of your grade apiece) and one final paper (of around 10 pages in length, comprising 30% of the grade) in which you analyze an oral history you have recorded using some of the techniques and theories discussed in class. I am on hand to look at drafts of any of these papers in the weeks before they are due.

**October 10 - Sound ≠ Text:**

Compulsory Readings:

Elinor A. Mazé, “The Uneasy Page: Transcribing and Editing Oral History” in Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers & Rebecca Sharpless, *The Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford, Baylor University Press, 2006) pp. 237-275

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984) – Chapter XI: “Quotations of Voices” pp. 157-166 (in the PDF, not the book)

Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2003) –“Hello!” pp. 1-31

Optional Further Reading:

David Novak & Matt Sakakeeny, “Introduction” in *Keywords in Sound* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2015) pp. 1-12

Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice* (New York, Hill & Wang, 1985) – “From Speech to Writing” & “The Phantoms of the Opera,” pp. 3-8, 183-188

**October 17 - Voice and Voicelessness:**

Compulsory Readings:

Amanda Weidman, “Voice” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 232-246

Jane Hill, “The Voices of Don Gabriel: Responsibility and Self in a Modern Mexicano Narrative” in D. Tedlock and B. Mannheim (eds.), *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 97-147

Michel-Rob Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Beacon Press, 1995) – Chapter 1: “The Power in the Story,” pp. 1-31

Optional Further Reading & Viewing:

Hans Christian Andersen, “The Little Mermaid” (Take your pick of which version, I recommend Karel Kachyňa’s 1976 film *Malá mořská víla* – with English subtitles – here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VCE2PRS-C8>)

**October 24 - Orality and Oral Cultures:**

GUEST LECTURE: Matěj Kratochvíl

Compulsory Readings:

David Hopkin, *Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 2012) – Chapter 1: “Storytelling in a Maritime Community: Saint-Cast, 1879-1882” pp. 31-78

Indira Chowdhury, “Oral Traditions and Contemporary History: Event, Memory, Experience and Representation” in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLIX, No. 30 (July 26, 2014) pp. 54-59 (you can find the article here: <http://www.academia.edu/7846105/Oral_History_and_Oral_Traditions>)

James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1990) – Preface & Chapter 2: “Domination, Acting & Fantasy” pp. ix-xv, 17-45

Optional Further Reading:

Matěj Kratochvíl, “Nespolehliví zapisovatelé. Sběratelé lidových písní jako fabulátoři tradice” in Hrdina & Piorecká (eds.) *Historické fikce a mystifikace v české kultuře 19. století. Sborník příspěvků z 33. ročníku sympozia k problematice 19. století.* (Prague, Academia, 2014) pp. 220-227

Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller” in *Illuminations* (New York, Schocken, 2007) pp. 83-111

Alan Lomax, “An Appeal for Cultural Equity” (1985) (<http://www.culturalequity.org/ace/ce_ace_appeal.php>) + Some Sound Recordings from Lomax’s Online Archive

Corey Gibson, *The Voice of the People: Hamish Henderson and Scottish Cultural Politics* (Edinburgh, 2015) – Chapter 5: “The Revivalist and the Folklorist,” pp. 161-198 + For biographical details on Hamish Henderson (which I recommend reading first), see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamish_Henderson>

**October 31 - Communities of Sound:**

Compulsory Readings:

Frantz Fanon, “This is the Voice of Algeria” in *A Dying Colonialism* (1959, translated 1965)

Chua Ai Lin, “‘The Modern Magic Carpet’: Wireless radio in interwar colonial Singapore” in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2012) pp. 167-191

Filip Pospíšil, “Hudební vysílání Svobodné Evropy” in Marek Junek, (ed.), *Svobodně! Rádio Svobodná Evropa 1951–2011,* (Prague: Radioservis, Czech Radio and the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, 2011), pp. 128-147 OR “Inspiration, Subversion and Appropriation: The Effects of Radio Free Europe Music Broadcasting”

Optional Further Reading:

Ian Baucom, “Frantz Fanon’s Radio: Solidarity, Diaspora, and the Tactics of Listening” in *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Spring 2001) pp. 15-49

Michelle E. Garceau (2011) “‘I call the people.’ Church bells in

fourteenth-century Catalunya” in *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 197-214

Maurice Halbwachs, “La mémoire collective chez les musiciens”

**November 7 – No Class [[[First Paper Due]]]**

**November 14 - Listening and Hearing – double the reading this week, so start early:**

Compulsory Readings:

Tom Rice, “Listening” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound,* pp. 99-112

Michael Beckerman “In Search of Czechness in Music” in *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Summer 1986) pp. 61-73

Rosamund Johnston, “Secret Agents: Reassessing the Agency of Radio Listeners in Czechoslovakia, 1945 – 1953”

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (Routledge, 2005) – Sections TBA

Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound, Second Edition* (Albany, SUNY Press, 2007) – Chapters 1, 4 & 5: pp. 3-15, 49-55, 57-71

Optional Further Reading & Viewing:

Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis & London, University of Minnesota Press, 1985) “Listening,” pp. 3-21 (A report on Attali’s enduring influence can be found here: <http://www.rozhlas.cz/radiowave/vychodiska/_zprava/vychodiska-umenie-hluku--1492500>)

Karel Kachyňa (dir.) *Ucho* (Czechoslovakia, 1970)

Francis Ford Coppola (dir.) *The Conversation* (USA, 1974)

**November 21 - Sound vs. Noise:**

Compulsory Readings:

David Novak, “Noise” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 125-139

Lilian Radovac, “Muting Dissent: New York City’s Sound Device Ordinance and the Liberalization of the Public Sphere” in *Radical Review*, No. 121 (2015) pp. 32-50

Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity* (MIT Press, 2004) – Chapter 4: “Noise and Modern Culture, 1900 – 1933,” pp. 115-169

Optional Further Reading:

Peter Payer, “The Age of Noise: Early Reactions in Vienna, 1870-1914” in *The Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (July 2007) pp. 773-793

**November 28 – No Class**

**December 5 - Sound Technologies I:**

GUEST LECTURE: Petr Szczepanik

Compulsory Readings:

Petr Szczepanik, “Hollywood in Disguise: Practices of Exhibition and Reception of Foreign Films in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s” in Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby & Philippe Meers (eds.), *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity* (London – New York: Routledge, 2011) pp. 166-185 (<https://www.academia.edu/5126384/Hollywood_in_Disguise_Practices_of_Exhibition_and_Reception_of_Foreign_Films_in_Czechoslovakia_in_the_1930s._In_Daniel_Biltereyst_Richard_Maltby_Philippe_Meers_eds._Cinema_Audiences_and_Modernity_London_New_York_Routledge_2011_>)

AND

“Modernism, Industry, Film: A Network of Media in the Baťa Corporation and the Town of Zlín in the 1930s” in Vinzenz Hediger & Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *Films that Work. Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media* (Amsterdam University Press, 2008) pp. 349-376 (<https://www.academia.edu/5126427/Modernism_Industry_Film_A_Network_of_Media_in_the_Ba%C5%A5a_Corporation_and_the_Town_of_Zl%C3%ADn_in_the_1930s._In_Vinzenz_Hediger_and_Patrick_Vonderau_eds._Films_that_Work._Industrial_Film_and_the_Productivity_of_Media_Amsterdam_University_Press_2008_>)

OR

*Konzervy se slovy. Počátky zvukového filmu a česká mediální kultura 30. let* (Brno, Host, 2009) – Sections TBA

Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* – Sections TBA

Optional Further Reading & Viewing:

Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone-Film-Typewriter* (Palo Alto, Stanford University Press, 1999) – Sections TBA

Humphrey Jennings (dir.) *Listen to Britain* (Great Britain, 1942) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bdx5bZ5W0cA>

**December 12 - Sound Technologies II - Radio:**

GUEST LECTURE: David Vaughan

Compulsory Readings:

David Vaughan, *Battle for the Airwaves/ Bitva o Vlny* (Prague, Radioservis, 2008)

Walter Benjamin, *Radio Benjamin* (London, Verso, 2014) – Part IV: “Writings on Radio, Off Air”

Siobhan McHugh, “The Affective Power of Sound: Oral History on Radio” in *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2012) pp. 187-206

Theodor Adorno, “A Social Critique of Radio Music” in *The Kenyon Review*, Vol. 18, Nos. 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1996) pp. 229-235 (first published 1945)

Optional Further Reading:

Daniel Fisher, “Radio” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 151-165

Lucas Bessire & Daniel Fisher, “Introduction” in *Radio Fields: Anthropology and Wireless Sound in the 21st Century* (New York, NYU Press, 2012)

Norman Corwin, “One World Flight #6: Prague” (CBS broadcast from February 18, 1947) <https://www.oldtimeradiodownloads.com/historical/one-world-flight/czechoslovakia-1947-02-18>

**December 19 – [[[Second Paper Due]]] - Sound and Space, Acoustics:**

Compulsory Readings:

Benjamin Steege, “Acoustics” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 22-33

Andrew J Eisberg, “Space” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 193-207

Carolyn Birdsall, *Nazi Soundscapes: Sound, Technology and Urban Space in Germany, 1933-1945* (UChicago, 2012), pp. 119-139

Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity* – Chapter Six: “Electroacoustics and Modern Sound, 1900-1933,” pp. 229-294

Optional Further Reading:

Georgina Born, “Introduction – Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience” in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience* (Cambridge, 2013)

Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th Century French Countryside* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1998) – Chapter 2: “The Abductors of Bells,” pp. 45-73

**January 9 – Silence:**

Compulsory Readings:

Michel-Rob Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Beacon Press, 1995) – Chapter 3: “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event,” pp. 70-108

Miguel Cardina, “To Talk or Not to Talk: Silence, Torture and Politics in the Portuguese Dictatorship of *Estado Novo*” in *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2013) pp. 251-270

Mara Mills, “Deafness” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 45-55

Optional Further Reading:

Ana Maria Ochoa Gaultier, “Silence” in Novak & Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*, pp. 183-193

Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (New York & London, Verso, 1995) – Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 50-100

**January 16 – [[[Final Paper Due]]]**