

# Sound Studies and Sonic Arts

**Summer Semester 2022**

**Phase** Focus

**Module** Theory, Practice

**Course Title** Undoing/Unknowing Listening | Seminar

**Course Times and Location** Wednesdays | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | LIE314

**Instructors** Dr. Pedro Oliveira

**Email** [pedro@oliveira.work](mailto:pedro@oliveira.work)

**Office Hours and Location** upon request

## Course Description

The idea of listening as being "the opposite" of vision might be already long outdated in much of sound studies thinking. Yet historical and contemporary approaches to what it is that listening does and can do still remain closely tied to the notion of listening as a way of making the world knowable through sound. To listen – so it is thought and taught – is to comprehend and apprehend, to learn and discern, to list and make exist. Yet to think listening in this way implies an imbalanced power relationship that might seem to be forever immutable, rather than an affective encounter that is both producer and product of power, of subjects and objects, actors and agents, in constant flux. If to listen is to know the world, then we might need to rethink what it is from the world that listening (tries to) make known, as well as by whom, and for whom, and with which purposes.

This seminar interrogates listening as an extractive method, by exploring and experimenting with anti- and decolonial methodologies, poetics, and processes for sound studies. We will read mostly from sources that are not always necessarily relating to sound yet speak to modes of practicing theory as an embodied, poetic gesture – which includes listening and the sonic. We will also engage in listening sessions to help us with the task of meaning-making (or sense-making if you will) as we go along the seminar. Our collective journey will be marked by a "productive unknowing," in which the borders of what we know and what we may not know will be constantly re-negotiated. With each meeting our main goal is to leave the room feeling everything but conclusion, keeping our ears and hearts open.

This course is aimed at students interested in decolonial thinking and praxis, as well as in experimenting with the limits of what theory can do, and of what sound (art) can achieve. By the end of the seminar you should be not only (a) familiar with decolonizing methodologies in general, but also (b) acquire and develop a critical engagement with sound studies theories, while (c) being able to apply the ideas and concepts we will explore in class to your own artistic and academic practice.

## Requirements for attending

This course is limited to 15 students.

## Exam / Credit Points

**2CP (graded: Theory, Practice):**

- attendance and engagement;
- preparation and participation in class with questions and references;

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- introducing at least one of the texts we read in class, or selecting and leading discussion on listening/watching sessions 5 and 6 (these can also be done in groups of 2 upon agreement) ;
- short methodological statement (poetic-theoretical or theory-based – details tbd).

### **Consecutive assignment leading to 4CP (optional, graded: Theory, grading: mean of both grades):**

utive assignment leading to 4 CP (optional, graded: Theory, grading: mean of both grades): term paper (ca. 8000 words) or Audio Paper (no longer than 15 minutes) + 4000 words paper, both due 1 Nov 2022.

**OR**

**Consecutive assignment leading to 4 CP (optional, graded: Practice, grading: mean of both grades):** Performance-lecture (no longer than 20 minutes, delivery date: tba) + documentation (no longer than 1500 words), due 1 Nov 2022

## Schedule

### **27.4 Introduction, or ways of arriving**

**Ahmed**, Sara. "Orientations Matter." In *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, edited by Diana H. Coole and Samantha Frost, 234–58. Duke University Press, 2010.

#### **In-class Watching and Listening:**

**Mombaça**, Jota. 'Can You Sound like Two Thousand?' | *Serpentine x Boiler Room: Park Nights 2021*. Accessed March 29, 2022. <https://fourthree.boilerroom.tv/film/jota-mombaca>.

### **4.5 Undoing Listening, or the question of identities**

**Eidsheim**, Nina. "Introduction. The Acousmatic Question: Who Is This?" In *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African-American Music*, 1–37, 2019.

[https://www.academia.edu/15634119/The\\_Race\\_of\\_Sound\\_Listening\\_Timbre\\_and\\_Vocality\\_in\\_African\\_American\\_Music\\_2019\\_30\\_off\\_by\\_using\\_code\\_E18RACE\\_during\\_checkout\\_at\\_dukeupress\\_edu](https://www.academia.edu/15634119/The_Race_of_Sound_Listening_Timbre_and_Vocality_in_African_American_Music_2019_30_off_by_using_code_E18RACE_during_checkout_at_dukeupress_edu).

**Anzaldúa**, Gloria. "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." In *Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 4th ed., 75–86. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

**Fanon**, F. "The Fact of Blackness." In *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, edited by Les Back and John Solomos, Second edition., 326–35. Routledge Student Readers. London ; New York: Routledge, 2009.

#### **In-class listening, reading and watching:**

**Ellis**, Jerome. *The Clearing*. (2021) / Transcribed (2020). (excerpts)

**NourbeSe**, Philip. Readings from "Zong!" (2013\2015)

#### **Recommended watching (at home):**

**Filho**, Kleber Mendonça. *Neighboring Sounds - O Som Ao Redor*. Drama, Thriller. Hubert Bals Fund, CinemaScópio, 2013.

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### 18.5 Undoing Listening, or the question of borders

**Robinson**, Dylan. "Hungry Listening." In *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*, 37–73. Indigenous Americas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

**Anzaldúa**, Gloria. "Border Arte." In *Light in the Dark =: Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 47–64. Latin America Otherwise : Languages, Empires, Nations. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2015.

#### Two artistic positions:

**Hameed**, Ayesha, and Kane Hamedine. *A L'ombre de Nos Fantômes*, 2018.

**Blume**, Felix. *Curupira, bicho do mato / Curupira, Creature of the Woods*. Documentary, Short, Mystery, 2019.

### 1.6 Undoing Listening, or the question of (sonic) archives

**Anzaldúa**, Gloria. "The Path of Red and Black Ink." In *Borderlands: La Frontera - the New Mestiza*, 1st ed., 87–97. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987.

**Robinson**, Dylan. "Ethnographic Redress, Compositional Responsibility." In *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*, 149–89. Indigenous Americas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

#### Presentation and Discussion:

**Aubry**, Gilles. *From A to OM*. December 3, 2015. <http://www.earpolitics.net/december-3-2016-opening-at-goethe-institute-bangalore/>.

**Oliveira**, Pedro. *A Series of Gaps Rather Than a Presence*. 2019.

<https://www.hoerspielundfeature.de/hoerstueck-ueber-automatische-akzenterkennung-a-series-of-100.html>.

### 8.6. Unknowing Listening, or towards matter

**Ferreira da Silva**, Denise. "In the Raw." *E-Flux*, no. #93 (September 2018). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/93/215795/in-the-raw/>.

**Eidsheim**, Nina Sun. "Sensing Voice: Materiality and the Lived Body in Singing and Listening." *The Senses and Society* 6, no. 2 (July 2011): 133–55. <https://doi.org/10.2752/174589311X12961584845729>.

#### In-class watching, listening, or artistic position:

Students' choice 1

**optional:** brief on 2 and 4 CP assignments, discussion of possible directions and ideas

### 22.6 Unknowing Listening, or towards opacity

**Glissant**, Edouard. "For Opacity." In *Poetics of Relation*, translated by Betsy Wing, 189–94. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10257>.

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**McKittrick**, Katherine. "Axis, Bold as Love: On Sylvia Wynter, Jimi Hendrix, and the Promise of Science." In *Sylvia Wynter*, edited by Katherine McKittrick, 142–63. Duke University Press, 2015.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822375852-006>.

**Moten**, Fred. "Come on, Get It!" *The New Inquiry*, February 19, 2018.

[https://thenewinquiry.com/come\\_on\\_get\\_it/](https://thenewinquiry.com/come_on_get_it/).

### In-class watching, listening, or artistic position:

Students' choice 2

### 29.6 Unknowing Listening, or against conclusion

**Rizvana**, Bradley, and Denise Ferreira da Silva. "Four Theses on Aesthetics." *E-Flux*, no. #120 (September 2021). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/120/416146/four-theses-on-aesthetics/>.

**McKittrick**, Katherine. "Consciousness (Feeling Like, Feeling Like This)." In *Dear Science and Other Stories*, 58–70. Errantries. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.

### In-class artistic positions:

Students' presentations

## Supporting Media

**Anzaldúa**, Gloria, and AnaLouise Keating. *Light in the Dark / Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Latin America Otherwise : Languages, Empires, Nations. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2015.

**Anzaldúa**, Gloria. *Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

**Eidsheim**, Nina. *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African-American Music*, 2019.

[https://www.academia.edu/15634119/The\\_Race\\_of\\_Sound\\_Listening\\_Timbre\\_and\\_Vocality\\_in\\_African\\_American\\_Music\\_2019\\_30\\_off\\_by\\_using\\_code\\_E18RACE\\_during\\_checkout\\_at\\_dukeupress\\_edu](https://www.academia.edu/15634119/The_Race_of_Sound_Listening_Timbre_and_Vocality_in_African_American_Music_2019_30_off_by_using_code_E18RACE_during_checkout_at_dukeupress_edu).

**Fanon**, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1st ed., new Ed. New York : [Berkeley, Calif.]: Grove Press ; Distributed by Publishers Group West, 2008.

**Glissant**, Edouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.10257>.

**McKittrick**, Katherine. *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Errantries. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.

**McKittrick**, Katherine, ed. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Duke University Press, 2015.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822375852>.

**Robinson**, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. Indigenous Americas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.