How do humans experience the realm of sound? What is the difference between hearing and listening? What is the relationship between hearing and other sense perceptions? This course explores these questions through an interdisciplinary study of sound, hearing, and listening. We will investigate the various ways in which human societies and communities experience sound, paying attention to how gender, race, religion, age, ability, and language shape how people hear and how they listen to and participate in the making of various sounds (for example: noise, speech, music, technology, etc.). We will examine case studies of diverse practices of hearing, listening, and sounding that show how listening is historically and culturally specific in contexts such as Papua New Guinea, Jamaica, Morocco, and Brazil. We will also pay attention to the relationships between the soundscape and environmental sounds, to how sound shapes our experiences of space and place, and to how we might listen to and hear the past, present, and future.

Required Texts and Tools:
All required readings for this course are available on the course website. You should print out, read and annotate all readings as part of your preparation for the class (see “Participation” section below). [PLEASE NOTE: Much of the material available through the course website for this course is subject to copyright restrictions; it is made available exclusively to students enrolled in this class and only for instructional purposes. For the details of “fair use” of copyrighted materials, see: http://library.uvm.edu/services/reserves/ereserveguide.php ]

In addition to the above texts you must also have access to a digital audio recorder. This could be your cell phone, mp3 player, or laptop, or it could be a digital recorder that you purchase specifically for this course. Equipment may also be borrowed from the Media Services desk at the Bailey/Howe Library.

Assignments:
Participation: This class is dependent to a large degree on the sharing of ideas, insights, and questions about the readings. Your participation in this class is therefore comprised of two components: (1) attendance and (2) active participation in discussions. Please do all the reading before class the day it is assigned and bring your copy of the readings to class, along with your notes. Our class sessions will often begin with a writing prompt related to that day’s readings and on occasion you may also be asked to bring additional materials to class; these assignments will also be considered when determining your participation grade.

Reading Notes: You will write in a weekly journal about the week’s reading. The goal is to take note of interesting and relevant ideas or arguments, puzzle through troubling or difficult aspects of
the reading, and develop ideas for class discussion. Your notes should reflect that you are reading the assignment completely for that week, and not skimming the readings at the last minute. Your responses should have some structure, and not appear to be random or rushed. I will review them looking for evidence of serious effort and engaged thought.

In your reading notes for each week you should answer the following questions:

1. What is the text about?
2. Why did we read it?
3. Identify a key passage or quote that you find intriguing, annoying, confusing, or worth discussing and explain why you chose it.
4. Pose 1-2 questions that we might discuss in class.

(Note: During weeks in which we read more than one text you can choose to write about them together or about each text individually; that is up to you.)

The journals will be written using the Blackboard Journals tool, and you will share your journal with me (otherwise, it will be private). Individual entries should be dated and make clear what text(s) you are writing about. You should aim for roughly 750 words per week in your journal.

Submit your reading notes by midnight each Monday.

**Sound Blog:** The Sound Blog is a project where we collect, curate, and create examples of sounds that exemplify, augment, or otherwise enhance our understanding of the course texts. You will make a minimum of **TEN (10) posts to the Sound Blog** this semester—some posts will be done on an individual basis, others will be part of projects you complete in small groups. There are three components to your work on the Sound Blog: Listening Posts, Podcast Posts, and Blog Comments.

**Listening Posts:** You will post a minimum of **THREE “Listening” examples**—audio and video examples that exemplify, augment, or otherwise enhance our understanding of the course texts—to the blog. Each post must contain an audio/video file or link as well as liner notes: a 300-500 word explanation of how the example relates to a reading or class discussion

**Podcast Posts:** You will write, design and execute **THREE podcasts** this semester and post them to the Sound Blog. For each podcast you will complete a series of assignments that will lead to the final project. All podcasts will include a written component (a script, report, or rationale) and an audio component (the podcast itself). Specific instructions and deadlines for posts will be available on the blog.

1. **Audiography Project:** You will compose, record, and narrate a soundtrack of 10 sounds that convey some aspect of your daily life in sound at UVM.
2. **Sound Object Project:** You will conduct research in pairs on the history, cultural context, and conceptual implications of a given sound object (assigned by Professor Brennan). Each pair will produce a written report as well as a podcast episode on their assigned sound object.
3. **UVM Soundscape Project:** You will investigate in detail the relationships between sound, space and knowledge on the UVM campus. Working in groups of 3 you will make soundscape recordings of spaces at UVM and create a sound composition and write an essay in which you detail your findings.
Blog Comments: For each blog assignment you must comment on at least TWO posts made by other students. Your blog comments should directly engage with the content of your colleagues’ posts. By the end of the semester you should have made a total of TWENTY comments on other people’s posts. You are, of course, allowed to go beyond the requirement and make additional comments on blog posts as necessary and appropriate.

Grading:
Reading Notes will be graded as Credit/No Credit; the remaining assignments will be graded using the standard A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc. scale. Each student’s grade in the course will be determined as follows:

- Participation: 15%
- Reading Notes: 25%
- Sound Blog: 60%
  - Listening Posts: 10%
  - Audiography Posts: 10%
  - Sound Object Posts: 15%
  - UVM Soundscapes Posts: 15%
  - Blog Comments: 10%

Course Policies
⇒ Attendance: You can miss two class sessions without penalty. After two, I reserve the right to lower your final grade; after four absences you risk failing the course. Note that this policy does not distinguish “excused” from “unexcused” absences—such a distinction puts me in a role I don’t want to play. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the relevant notes and information from your classmates.

⇒ Lateness: Please do not disrupt the class by coming late. You should discuss with me any circumstances that might result in tardiness. If you are more than twenty minutes late to class, your tardiness will count as an absence.

⇒ Preparation: Being prepared to participate in discussions is a course requirement. This entails having read, annotated, and thought about the complete reading assignment carefully before class starts. Furthermore, you must bring your copy of the assigned reading to class every day. This admonition also applies to the texts that you will find online. You should print out these texts and bring them with you along with your notes so that they can be consulted during class. If you do not come to class prepared, then you cannot participate effectively in our discussion, and I will mark you absent.

⇒ Electronic (and other) Distractions: Laptops, cell phones, iPads, newspapers, and all other items not related to our class create unacceptable distractions. Leave your laptop in your bag unless you have been asked to use it for class purposes. You should also silence your cellphone and leave it in your pocket or bag so that you will not be tempted to read or send texts. Put away any materials that are not related to this class before we begin.

⇒ Religious Holidays: Students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance are permitted to make up this work. Students should submit their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester in writing or by email to me by September 15.

⇒ Special Needs: An important part of your responsibilities as a student is to inform your instructor in a timely manner of any special needs, scheduling conflicts, medical problems, emergency situations, or other issues that may affect your ability to complete your coursework. Students should confirm that I have received a letter from the Student
Accessibility Services (SAS) office and contact me during the first two weeks of class to discuss what accommodations need to be made.

**Academic Honesty & Integrity**
All participants in this course are bound by the UVM Code of Academic Integrity not to commit academic fraud. You should do your own work and not cheat or plagiarize on any assignments. When you use the words and ideas of others in any written work you must identify direct quotations with quotation marks and indicate the source of ideas that are not your own, whether quoted directly or otherwise, using an appropriate citation format as described in class. For more information about Academic Integrity and what constitutes academic fraud, please view UVM’s Code of Academic Integrity: <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

**Course Schedule:**
Please complete the readings listed under each date BEFORE that class session.

Note: This syllabus is subject to modification during the course of the semester in the event of unexpected opportunities or unforeseen challenges encountered by the class. Any changes to the reading schedule will be announced in class and posted on the course website.

**PART ONE: CATEGORIZING SOUNDS**

**Week 1 (8/30 & 9/1). Good Vibrations**
- Stephon Alexander, “Brian Eno Plays the Universe”

**Week 2 (9/6 & 9/8). From Sound to Silence**
- John Cage, Excerpts from *Silence*
- Sound Museum of Silence

**Week 3 (9/13 & 9/15). Japanoise**
- David Novak, Excerpts from *Japanoise*
  - “Scenes of Liveness & Deadness” & “Genre Noise”

**Week 4 (9/20 & 9/22). Blurring Boundaries**
- Alex Ross, “The Sound of Hate”

**PART TWO: LISTENING**

**Week 5 (9/27 & 9/29). Energetic & Indefensible Ears**
- A. J. Hudspeth, The Energetic Ear
- Jonathan Sterne, “The mp3 as cultural artifact”

**Week 6 (10/4 & 10/6). Batá: The Drum that Speaks**

**Week 7 (10/13 & 10/15). Sound and Embodiment in Brazil**
Week 8 (10/18 & 10/20). Starship Africa
- Michael Veal, excerpts from *Dub: Soundscapes and Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae*
  - Chapter Eight “Starship Africa: The Acoustics of Diaspora and the Postcolony”

Week 9 (10/25 & 10/27). Sufism in France
- Deborah Kapchan, “Learning to Listen: The Sound of Sufism in France”

Week 10 (11/1 & 11/3). ADVISING MEETINGS
- No new readings.

PART THREE: SOUNDING SPACE

Week 11 (11/8 & 11/10). The Soundscape
- R. Murray Schafer, “The Soundscape”
- Lawrence English, “The Sounds Around Us: An Introduction to Field Recording”

Week 12 (11/15 & 11/17). Listening to the Rainforest
- Stephen Feld, “A Rainforest Acoustemology”
- Daniel Monacchi, “Fragments of Extinction”

Week 13 (11/22 & 11/24). Thanksgiving Break
- No new readings.

Week 14 (11/29 & 12/1). Lost in the Supermarket
- Jonathan Sterne, “Sounds Like Mall of America”

Week 15 (12/6 & 12/8). Personal Soundscapes
- Michael Bull, excerpts from *Sound Moves: iPod Culture and Urban Experience*