Tuning in: reading and listening to public spaces

Joint studio

For IDV students: [ARTG 6330 Information Design Mapping Strategies](https://wl11gp.neu.edu/udcprod8/bwckctlg.p_disp_course_detail?cat_term_in=201410&subj_code_in=ARTG&crse_numb_in=6330) (4 SH)

For Architecture Students: [ARCH 7130 Master’s Research Studio](https://wl11gp.neu.edu/udcprod8/bwckctlg.p_display_courses?term_in=201610&one_subj=ARCH&sel_subj=&sel_crse_strt=7130&sel_crse_end=7130&sel_levl=&sel_schd=&sel_coll=&sel_divs=&sel_dept=&sel_attr=) (6 SH)

### Instructors:

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Chris Ryan (Arch) [x.cryan@gmail.com](mailto:x.cryan@gmail.com)

Sam Auinger (GSD / Artist in Residence Northeastern)

### Dates:

Mondays 1:35-5.00, Ruggles Studio (for Architecture Students; voluntary for IDV)

Thursdays 1.35-5.00, West Village F room 114 / Ruggles Studio

Workshop weekends with Sam Auinger Oct 1-5 and Oct 8-10.

### Partners

Center for the Arts, Goethe Institute Boston, MBTA, City of Boston, Harvard GSD

## Course description

Space is not a container, but a product of human experience and practices. In this course, we will investigate how to read and represent public space, especially from a hearing perspective. Using the complex transitory spaces in and around South Station and Ruggles Station — their structures and flows, social practices, sensory and auditory qualities — the project is based on a *thick mapping* approach: an approach to cartographic representation that is not limited to the representation of a given data set, but also reflecting on the process of collecting these data.

This joint studio between Architecture and Information Design and Visualization investigates different approaches to read and represent a complex informational environment, through observation, listening, and critical cartography. The studio incorporates methods from environment-behavior research, human geography, design research and sound studies.

Core of class is a workshop (meeting on two weekends during the first half of October) with the sound artist Sam Auinger and his collaborators Bruce Odland and Katrin Emler. Auinger, who has dedicated the past twentyfive years of his work to the “sonic commons” and to helping architects and designers to better understand auditory phenomena and their importance for health, sense place, and spatial behavior. “

Auinger will join us from October 1st - 15th, participation in the workshop is mandatory.

## **Course Work**

The studio is divided into three projects and four stages:

1. Analysis and mapping of the human geography of South Station and its surroundings, focusing on a single salient phenomenon in all its manifestations. **Deadline Sept. 24**
2. Mapping the auditory space of Ruggles station and its influence on the function of the space.  
   **Deadline Oct. 15**
3. Developing a concrete intervention and experimental setup based on the previous projects  
   **Deadline Nov. 12**
4. Synthesis - develop all three projects into a publication - ready format  
   **Final presentation Dec. 10**

**You are expected to keep a research journal**, in which you keep note of your research progress, your observations, your sketches and reading reflections. Reading reflections should not be a summary of the reading, but reflect on how the text is (or is not) relevant for your own work. The research journal should be submitted digitally at the end of each stage and will be graded. You are welcome to keep handwritten journal, but please scan pages and try to maintain legible handwriting.

The outcome of the exhibition consisting of physical and online components as well as an online publication. The outcomes of the course are also considered for a possible inclusion in an upcoming sound art exhibition in the Steward Gardner Museum in 2017

## On-site workshop and logistics

Due to the different number of course credits, Architecture students meet twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays, while the IDV students have a weekly meeting on Thursdays. Due to this split, the main meeting of the course will happen on Thursdays, while Monday meetings are dedicated to reviews, tutorials and debriefings. Although Monday meetings are not mandatory for IDV students, they are encouraged to join.

The project will include extensive fieldwork on-site, most importantly the workshop with the sound artist Sam Auinger. The workshop will take place during two weekends:

October 1. – 5.

October 8. – 10.

The two workshops are generally kicked off during the Thursday class, and meet on-site Saturday and Sunday afternoon. A detailed, preliminary schedule can be found below.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Weekday** | **Date** | **Activity** | **Location** |
| Thu | Oct-1 | **1.35 - 5.00pm Introduction Sam Auinger, Bruce Odland** | NU |
| Fri | Oct-2 | independent activity |  |
| Sat | Oct-3 | **On-Site workshop with Sam Auinger, Ruggles Station 1.00pm- 6.00pm** | Ruggles |
| Sun | Oct-4 | **On-Site workshop with Sam Auinger, Ruggles Station 1.00pm- 6.00pm** | Ruggles |
| Mon | Oct-5 | **1.35pm debriefing (Architecture group, voluntary but suggested for IDV students)** | Ryder |
|  |  |  |  |
| Thu | Oct-8 | **1.35pm - 5.00 pm External Meeting MBTA/ BRA at Northeastern Crossing** | NU |
| Fri | Oct-9 | independent activity |  |
| Sat | Oct-10 | **On-Site workshop with Sam Auinger, Ruggles Station 1.00pm- 6.00pm** | Ruggles |
| Sun | Oct-11 | **On-Site workshop with Sam Auinger, Ruggles Station 1.00pm- 6.00pm** | Ruggles |
| Mon | Oct-12 | Columbus Day - holiday |  |
| Tue | Oct-13 | Sam Auinger will be at Northeastern to help prepare for presentation | NU |
| Wed | Oct-14 | Sam Auinger will be at Northeastern to help prepare for presentation | NU |
| Thu | Oct-15 | **Presentation at Harvard GSD (Time TBC)** | GSD |

## Equipment

### We recommend you to buy this recording equipment for your studies, but if you are unable to, please let us know ahead of time to organize devices we can lend you.

### In-ear Microphones for field recording 64$ at B&H

<http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/337638-REG/Microphone_Madness_MMBSM8_BSM_8_Stereo_Binaural_In_Ear.html>

### Digital Audio recorder with plug-in powered microphone jack e.g. Tascam D5, 69$ at Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/TASCAM-DR-05-Portable-Digital-Recorder/dp/B004OU2IQG/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1440594654&sr=8-1-fkmr0&keywords=tascam+d5>

## Readings

We will provide copies and pdfs of class readings (see below), but for our introductory reading we will start with a complete (but very thin) book. It is available in the NU library, but is reasonably to buy ($26).

Whyte, William H. 1980. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Project for Public Spaces Inc.

## Grading

You are expected to demonstrate week-to-week progress and you will be graded upon the completion of specified assignments. Assignments are due as indicated, every submission will be graded and the final grade takes into consideration the criteria and weights described below.

### Criteria:

60% project submissions at each of the four stages

30% research journal: rigor and completeness of documenting your process and communicate your research methods, techniques, changes of direction, and critically engage with assigned readings.

10% participation: how you use critical language in the class as well as during fieldwork, class discussion and critique of classmates work.

## Rules and Conditions

Attendance of all classes is mandatory. Missed classes will mean that you will miss valuable information. Absences for health or other personal reasons need to be communicated to the lecturer in advance. Frequent tardiness and unexcused absences will impact your final course grade.

A significant part of this class will be devoted to in-class discussion of lecture topics and student submissions. You are encouraged to actively participate in all activities.

Each of the 7 phases of the semester will be concluded with a submission of your work progress. All assignments need to be submitted on the day indicated on the assignment handout. Late submissions will not be accepted except if discussed with instructor before the submission date.

You are requested to abide by Northeastern University’s Academic Integrity Policy, which you can read at: <http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academicintegrity>

# Weekly Schedule

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** |  | **Project** |
| 1 | Sep-10 | **Introduction - what is public space?** | **1: South Station - mapping the different layers of public space** |
| 2 | Sep-17 | **Fonceptions of space and the production of space** |
| 3 | Sep-24 | **Critical cartography & Cartographic representation - Guest Bahare Sanaie-Movahed** |
| 4 | Oct-1 - Oct-5 | **Active listening - First workshop with Sam Auinger** | **2: Ruggles station - auditory qualities of space** |
| 6 | Oct-8 - Oct-10 | **Active listening - Second workshop with Sam Auinger** |
| 7 | Oct-15 | **Workshop presentation at the Harvard GSD** |
| 8 | Oct-22 | **Imaging and representation - Guest Lecture Robert Pietrusko / Harvard GSD** | **3: Proposal for intervention (Ruggles / South station)** |
| 9 | Oct-29 | **inquiry through intervention - Guest lecture Sarah Williams / MIT (TBD)** |
| 10 | Nov-5 | **public space by inquiry - qualitative approaches to research** |
| 11 | Nov-12 | **technologies of measurement - Guest Lecture Katja Schechtner** | **Synthesis: Preparing material for publication** |
| 12 | Nov-19 | **Publication / exhibition kickoff review** |
| 13 | Nov-26 | Thanksgiving holiday |
| 14 | Dec-3 | **Final Critique** |
| 15 | Dec-10 | **Final Review** |  |

## Week 1 - 9/10/2015 - What is public space?

### Introduction

How design, governance, and human behavior play together to produce public space: using the hands-on experiments of Holly Whyte as a starting point for own experiments.

Project assignment: observational study

### Videos / media:

[The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces](https://vimeo.com/111488563)

[SONIC VISTA](https://vimeo.com/84067137) O+A

Quiet is the new loud - O+A

### Readings:

Whyte, William H. 1980. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Project for Public Spaces Inc.

Milgram, Stanley. 1970. “The Experience of Living in Cities.” *Science* 167 (3924): 1461–68. doi:10.1126/science.167.3924.1461.

## Week 2 - 9/17/2015 - Spatial concepts and practices

### Spatial experience, spatial practices, representation of space

In the second week we will take a more systematic view of concepts of space - in experience, practice and representation. Readings from diverse fields i.e. human geography, art, urban studies.

### Readings:

Poincaré, Henri. 1897. “The Relativity of Space.” In *Science and Method*, 92ff. London: T. Nelson. <https://archive.org/stream/sciencemethod00poinuoft#page/92/mode/2up>

Abler, R., J.S. Adams, and P. Gould. 1971. *Spatial Organization: The Geographers View of the World*. Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, NJ. (chapter on absolute and relative space)

de Waal, Martijn. 2014. *The City as Interface: How New Media Are Changing the City*. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers. (Chapter on parochial space)

Certeau, Michel de. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. 1st ed. University of California Press. (chapter on spatial practices)

## Week 3 - 9/24/2015 - Cartographic representation

### Mapping public space

critical cartography, cartographic techniques

Guest lecture, Bahare Sanaie-Movahed / GIS specialist Northeastern Library

### Videos / media:

[Fallen Fruit project](http://fallenfruit.org)

[David Crawford - Stop Motion Studies](http://archive.turbulence.org/Works/sms)

[Humans of New York](http://www.humansofnewyork.com)

[Radical Cartography](http://www.radicalcartography.net)

### Readings:

Solnit, Rebecca, Ben Pease, and Shizue Seigel. 2010. *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*. University of California Press.

Crampton, J. W, and J. Krygier. 2005. “An Introduction to Critical Cartography.” *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 4 (1): 11–33.

Badger, Emily. 2013. “Anatomy of a Public Space.” CityLab. September 25. <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/arts-and-lifestyle/2013/09/anatomy-public-space/7003/>

## Week 4 - 10/1/2015 - Hearing Perspective Workshop

### First workshop weekend with Sam Auinger and Bruce Odland

Physics and psychology of sound and hearing. Introduction to A+O’s practice focusing on different sound installation in public urban space, how to read a site, hearing perspective and sonic thinking. Exercises and further investigations on Ruggles site.

### Readings:

Odland, Bruce, and Sam Auinger. 2009. “Reflections on the Sonic Commons.” *Leonardo Music Journal* - (December): 63–68.

Auinger, Offenhuber - tuning infrastructure, 2015

Augoyard, Jean-Francois, and Henry Torgue. 2006. *Sonic Experience: A Guide To Everyday Sounds*. illustrated edition. McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Excerpts: Introduction: An Instrumentation of the Sound Environment page 3 - page 18

guide to sonic effects: Resonance page 99 - page 111, Reverberation page 111- page 117

Truax, Barry. 2000. *Acoustic Communication*. 2 Sub. Praeger.

Excerpts: Introduction: page xi - page xix, Chapter 1 :Acoustic Tradition and the Communicational Approach: Energy Transfer and Information Processing page 2 - page 12

Lefebvre, Henri. 2013. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Chapter: Introduction to Rhythmanalysis

Chapter: Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities

## Week 5 - 10/7/2015 - Hearing Perspective Workshop

### Second workshop weekend with Sam Auinger and Bruce Odland

Fieldwork on site — Ruggles station and its urban context. Learning to apply what we discussed in part one, we will create a sound map and other materials to communicate the research and its outcome with others. We will conclude with developing ideas for artistic interventions and works and getting them in shape for the October 15th presentation.

### Readings:

Sterne, Jonathan. 2003. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Duke University Press.

Introduction: Hello! page 1 - page 29

Chapter 3: Audile Technique and Media page 137 - page 177

Salter, Chris, and Andrew Pickering. 2015. *Alien Agency: Experimental Encounters with Art in the Making*. MIT Press.

Part 1: Resonances page 19 - page 84

Blesser, Barry, and Linda-Ruth Salter. 2009. *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?: Experiencing Aural Architecture*. The MIT Press

Chapter 1: Introduction to Aural Architecture, page 2 - page 9

Chapter 2: Auditory Spatial Awareness, page 11 - page 66.

## Week 6 - 10/15/2015 - Midterm presentation

### Midterm, presentation of workshop results @ Harvard GSD

## Week 7 - 10/22/2015 - Learning from data

### Public space through the lens of data - Guest Lecture Sarah Williams (Tbc)

Using quantitative data, open data repositories, spatial analysis to measure public space

### Readings

Milgram, Stanley. 1972. “A Psychological Map of New York City.” *American Scientist* 60: 194–200.

Williams, Sarah. 2012. “Here Now! Social Media and the Psychological City.” In *Inscribing a Square: Urban Data as Public Space*, edited by Dietmar Offenhuber and Katja Schechtner, Vienna, New York: Springer.

## Week 8 - 10/29/2015 - Qualitative inquiry

### Public space through qualitative inquiry

qualitative methods, interviews, cognitive mapping, participant observation

Offenhuber, Dietmar, and Carlo Ratti. 2012. “Reading the City — Reconsidering Kevin Lynch’s Notion of Legibility in the Digital Age.” In *The Digital Turn - Design in the Era of Interactive Technologies*, edited by Zane Berzina, Barbara Junge, Wim Westerveld, and Carola Zwick. Zürich: Park Books.

Lynch, Kevin. 1985. “Reconsidering The Image of the City.” In *City Sense and City Design - Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch*, edited by Tridib Banerjee and Michael Southworth, 247ff. Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.

## Week 9 - 11/5/2015 - Inquiry through intervention

Learning by intervention and improvisation - the *Manila Improstructure* project as an example. Setting up public experiments; the broader concept of infrastructure.

[Spatial Agency database](http://www.spatialagency.net)

[Park-fiction](http://park-fiction.net/park-fiction-introduction-in-english/)

[Open House - Matthew Mazzotta](http://matthewmazzotta.com/artwork/3246692_OPEN_HOUSE_2013.html)

[Parking day / parklets](http://parkingday.org/archive/)

### Readings

Star, Susan Leigh. 1999. “The Ethnography of Infrastructure.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 43 (3): 377–91. doi:10.1177/00027649921955326.

Zinnbauer, Dieter. 2012. “‘Ambient Accountability’ - Fighting Corruption When and Where It Happens.” *SSRN eLibrary*, October.

## Week 10 - 11/12/2015 - Technologies of measurement

### Guest lecture Katja Schechtner

using advanced sensing and computational methods for measuring, simulating and visualizing activity in public space. Katja Schechtner, Urban Expert Asian Development Bank.

### Readings

Salesses, Philip, Katja Schechtner, and César A. Hidalgo. 2013. “The Collaborative Image of the City: Mapping the Inequality of Urban Perception.” *PloS One* 8 (7): e68400.

## Week 11 - 11/19/2015 - Publication prep

## Presentation techniques, narrative strategies - preparing publication

In this week, we will review presentation techniques for fine-tuning your analyses and their representation.

## 11/26/2015 - Thanksgiving holiday - no class

## Week 12 - 12/3/2015 - Final review

## Week 13 - 12/10/2015 - Final presentation