

## CMNS2130: Sound Production

Newcastle City Precinct  
Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA

*The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others. The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.*

## OVERVIEW

<b>Course Description</b>	In this course students will develop skills in studio and location-based sound production techniques applicable to radio production, video production, sound production, multimedia and other related communication operations. The course examines the practices of producers, engineers and sound designers beginning with basic acoustics, microphone types and techniques, various applications of mixing desks and signal paths, and moves on to the importance of monitoring and mixing and the use of signal processors. The course applies this knowledge to stereo and multi-track recording and editing techniques using a variety of sound equipment and software. It develops knowledge skills and techniques applicable to a variety of storage formats and recording systems common to media practice.
<b>Academic Progress Requirements</b>	Nil
<b>Requisites</b>	You cannot enrol in this course if you have successfully completed CMNS1130.
<b>Assumed Knowledge</b>	CMNS1100 Foundations of Media Production and CMNS1240 Commercial Social Media Production.
<b>Contact Hours</b>	<b>Newcastle City Precinct</b> <b>Lecture</b> Face to Face On Campus 1 hour(s) per week(s) for 5 week(s) starting Week 1  <b>Tutorial</b> Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 11 week(s) starting Week 2
<b>Unit Weighting</b>	10
<b>Workload</b>	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

# COURSE OUTLINE

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# CONTACTS

**Course Coordinator**     **Newcastle City Precinct**  
Dr Stuart Mcbratney  
[Stuart.McBratney@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Stuart.McBratney@newcastle.edu.au)  
+61 2 4055 3107  
Consultation: Meetings (online or on campus) can be arranged by email.

**Teaching Staff**             Allan Brady [allan.brady@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:allan.brady@newcastle.edu.au)

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# SYLLABUS

**Course Content**             Topics covered include:

1. Functions of producers, engineers and sound designers;
2. Acoustics;
3. Microphone type and usage;
4. Mixing desks and signal paths;
5. Stereo and multitrack recording and editing techniques;
6. Use of digital software for sound production;
7. Recording on location and in studio environments;
8. Monitoring and Mixing;
9. Signal Processing;
10. Storage formats and systems

**Course Learning Outcomes**     **On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Apply media and communication concepts to sound production problems faced by professional practitioners;
2. Select and use appropriate sound recording and post-production processes for professional sound production;
3. Demonstrate operational proficiency with recording and sound production facilities.

# SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	Acoustics and Sound Design.	Lecture and tutorial	
2	4 Mar	History of sound recording. Functions of Sound Designers	Lecture and tutorial	Form groups of 3-4 for assessments 2 & 4
3	11 Mar	Microphones	Lecture and tutorial	
4	18 Mar	Mixing overview	Lecture and tutorial	
5	25 Mar	Multitrack Recording	Lecture and tutorial	Individual Production Brief Due. Commence pre-production for Major Project.
6	1 Apr	Monitoring – Location and Controlled Studio Environments.	Tutorial	Competency Quiz - assessed in groups
7	8 Apr	Characteristics of sound	Tutorial	Commence Major Project
<b>Mid-Semester Recess</b>				
<b>Mid-Semester Recess</b>				
8	29 Apr	EQ and Panning.	Tutorial	
9	6 May	Signal Processing - Introduction to Reverb, Delay, Compression etc.	Tutorial	
10	13 May	Revision	Tutorial	
11	20 May	Editing and Mastering	Tutorial	Individual mixes of Audio Files Due.  Commence mixing Major Project.
12	27 May	Soundtracks, Broadcasting and Podcasts	Tutorial	
13	3 Jun		Tutorial	Major Project Due
<b>Examination Period</b>				
<b>Examination Period</b>				

# ASSESSMENTS

This course has 4 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Quiz	In class of Week 6 Wednesday 3 & Thursday 4 April	Individual	10%	3
2	Production Brief	In class of Week 5 Wednesday 27 & Thursday 28 March	Individual	25%	1, 2
3	Mix Audio Files	In class of Week 11 Wednesday 22 & Thursday 23 May	Individual	25%	2, 3
4	Major Project	In class (specific location) Week 13 Friday 7 June	Group	40%	1, 2, 3

## Late Submissions

The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

## Assessment 1 - Quiz

### Assessment Type

Quiz

### Description

To assess the Major Project group's competency is setting up, using and packing down location recording equipment. Students will demonstrate, working in their Major Project groups, that they can adequately assemble the location recording equipment, they are sufficiently proficient with the operation of the mixing desk to route signal via groups to the recording device, they understand signal path sufficiently to register signal at one track on the record device, are sufficiently proficient with the operation of the monitoring system to route signal to the headphones and the headphone junction box and observe OH&S requirements in doing so. They will be required to pack down equipment as well.

### Weighting

10%

### Length

Approx.30mins

### Due Date

In class of Week 6 - Wednesday 3 & Thursday 4 April

### Submission Method

In Class

### Assessment Criteria

For detailed Rubrics see 'Assignments' on Canvas.

### Return Method

In Class

### Feedback Provided

In Class - Marked Rubric will be handed to group at end of session.

## Assessment 2 - Production Brief

### Assessment Type

Professional Task

### Description

To assess individual pre-production planning and skills. Students will individually prepare a Production Brief outlining the conceptual, pre-production, production and post-production phases of a recording process. The document will be written as though the entire production will occur in the professional world. In doing this, students will also outline the responsibilities of the producer, engineer and assistant engineers, in each of these phases.

The preproduction document will focus on a hypothetical professional project (or the one you would like to complete for your major project) which involves the recording of a soundtrack consisting of music, narration/vox and sound FX to be used as part of a video soundtrack or radio broadcast. The pre-production document is to be based on a production piece which will be approximately 3-5 minutes in length. The production piece may be a series of discrete works or a continuous single piece.

In your paper describe and discuss the organisational factors involved, including budget, studio or location set-up (including microphone selection and placement), tracking and overdubbing procedures.

The hypothetical budget for the project must be based on real-world figures and will be attached as an appendix. It must include actual costs relevant to pre-production, tracking, any supplementary over-dubbing, mixing and mastering ready for broadcast. Also prepare and submit all necessary contracts and OH&S documents as appendices on the pre-production documents. The bibliography will also constitute part of the appendix.

<b>Weighting</b>	25%
<b>Length</b>	2000 words plus appendices
<b>Due Date</b>	In class of Week 5 - Wednesday 27 & Thursday 28 March
<b>Submission Method</b>	In Class
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Hand in during enrolled Workshops conducted in Week 5 (in Class)
<b>Return Method</b>	For detailed Rubrics see 'Assignments' on Canvas.
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	In Class
	In Class - Three weeks after submission. Feedback included in document on return.

### Assessment 3 - Mix Audio Files

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Professional Task
<b>Description</b>	To assess the individual's capabilities in Mixing Multi-track Recordings to a Stereo Mix. Students will individually hand in two complete stereo mixes – one from Set A and one from Set B (which will contain submixes). The pre-recorded multi-track material for the mixes, both Set A and Set B, will be made available to students from week 5 on. The mixes will be undertaken in the School digital mixing edit suites using Protools and the controllers/mixing desks. The mix down (or 'bounce') for both mixes will be to a stereo interleaved WAV file. N.B. Remember to back up files to your personal thumbdrive, external drive or disk (as you will be asked, in the event of a problem, to provide a back up copy).

Hand the assignment in as stereo WAV files saved to a portable USB thumbdrive (please ensure this is labelled with your name so you can collect the drive when you pick up the marked assignment). Each of the mixes, one complete mix from Set A and one complete mix from Set B, will be accompanied by a mix chart and a 500 word written document outlining the intention of the mix, that is, the intended purpose of the mix, what you were trying to achieve and an explanation of how you went about accomplishing this.

<b>Weighting</b>	25%
<b>Length</b>	3-5min WAV file. 500 word written outline
<b>Due Date</b>	In class of Week 11 - Wednesday 22 & Thursday 23 May
<b>Submission Method</b>	In Class
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Hand the assignment in as stereo WAV files saved to a portable USB thumbdrive (please ensure this is labelled with your name so you can collect the drive when you pick up the marked assignment). Each of the mixes, one complete mix from Set A and one complete mix from Set B, will be accompanied by a mix chart and a 500 word written document outlining the intention of the mix.
<b>Return Method</b>	For detailed Rubrics see 'Assignments' on Canvas.
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	In Class
	Online - One Week after Submission. Feedback included in marked Rubric on return.

### Assessment 4 - Major Project -

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Project
<b>Description</b>	To assess skills in completing a major group project. Working in three or four member production teams of producer, engineer and assistant engineers produce a completed recording, mixed to stereo and ready for mastering.

The recording will be of a soundtrack consisting of music, narration/vox and sound FX. This soundtrack is to be recorded as if it was to be used as part of a video soundtrack, radio broadcast or podcast.

The production piece is to be of 3-5 min length. It may be a series of discrete works or a continuous single work. Each separate piece must use music, narration/vox and sound FX.

Once recording is finished the production team is to complete the final stereo mix. They should mix down (or 'bounce') their mix to a stereo interleaved WAV file. N.B. Remember to back up files to your personal thumbdrive, or external drive or a disk (as you will be asked, in the event of a problem, to provide a back up copy). The production piece will then be submitted on a portable USB thumbdrive ready for mastering (n.b. it is your responsibility to collect the drive once the assessment task has been marked).

A signal flow diagram outlining the recording process, as well as mixing charts and any other paperwork such as preproduction documents, log sheets, track sheets, OH&S forms and budgets used in the production must accompany the final submission.

In addition, an individually written report (1500 words) outlining the process, the critical reaction to that process, and an objective analysis of the teamwork aspect of the project will be submitted by each student with the completed group mix and group paperwork.

**Weighting**

**Length**

**Due Date**

**Submission Method**

40%

3-5 minute audio files, Brief + 1500 word report

Week 13 – Friday 7 June

In Class

Specific Location

Hand to Course Coordinator in Studio.

**Assessment Criteria**

For detailed Rubrics see 'Assignments' on Canvas.

**Return Method**

Specific Location

**Feedback Provided**

Returned Work - Students to collect three weeks after final submission. Contact CC by email to arrange return of drives. Feedback included in marked Rubric on return.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Grading Scheme**

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

\*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

**Communication Methods**

Communication methods used in this course include:

- Canvas Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision.

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<b>Course Evaluation</b>	Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.
<b>Oral Interviews (Vivas)</b>	As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the <a href="#">Oral Examination (viva) Procedure</a> . In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the <a href="#">Student Conduct Rule</a> .
<b>Academic Misconduct</b>	All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <a href="https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35">https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35</a> .
<b>Adverse Circumstances</b>	The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or</li><li>2. the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;</li><li>3. you are requesting a change of placement; or</li><li>4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.</li></ol> Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at: <a href="https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236">https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236</a>
<b>Important Policy Information</b>	The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at <a href="https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures">https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures</a> that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.

*This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.*

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