

Fall 2021

STS 349-001: Electronic Music in Practice

David Rothenberg

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STS 349

COMPUTER MUSIC: Composition and Performance

Prof. David Rothenberg

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Tuesdays and Thursdays **1pm-2:30pm**, Cullimore 311

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we will learn the history of electronic music and how it began with experimental composition and made its way into the backbone of popular music. We will combine our study of this history with practical music-making experience, using our own laptops with easy-to-learn software called Ableton Live.

REQUIRED SOFTWARE:

Ableton Live or Ableton Live Intro

Versions 9, 10, or 11 are adequate. **You should run it on your own laptop which you should bring to class. You can't use other software that you might already know, sorry.**

You can get Ableton Live Intro for \$99.

It is perfectly adequate for this class.

<https://www.ableton.com/en/shop/live/>

The full version at the educational discount is \$269.

<https://www.ableton.com/en/shop/education/>

You can download a trial version that works fine for thirty days, however it is difficult to keep doing this after the first month. **Don't try to use the free version for class purposes, you will not succeed. Several people have failed the class because they have tried to do this, because after a while the program won't let you save your work.**

You might want to get a head start by downloading the software now and starting to learn how it works.

I do not recommend that you steal the software for this class. That is just wrong. (Many of you are studying computer science and hope to find work as programmers—think about that.)

We will learn how to record and produce music using this software, not focusing on the popular song format, but trying to put electronic music in the widest musical context and especially learn how to play live, together.

ONLY THOSE STUDENTS who take the time to learn the software and want to come to class consistently should take this class.

If you have a problem with any of this, please contact me directly.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS. All of these are worth reading and I may give you some pdfs from them during the course:

Curtis Roads, *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic* (Oxford)
V.J. Manzo and Will Kuhn, *Interactive Composition: Strategies Using Ableton Live* (Oxford)
Dennis DeSantis, *Making Music: 74 Creative Strategies for Electronic Music Producers*
Adam Harper, *Infinite Music* (Zero Books)
Joanna Demers, *Listening through the Noise* (Oxford)
David Toop, *Ocean of Sound* (Consortium/Serpent's Tail)
Greg Milner, *Perfecting Sound Forever* (Faber)
Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, eds. *Audio Culture* (Bloomsbury or Continuum)
David Rothenberg, *Bug Music* (St. Martins)
David Rothenberg, *Nightingales in Berlin* (Chicago)
John Cage, *Silence* (Wesleyan)

RECOMMENDED LISTENING:

I will create some playlists of musical examples for you to listen to soon. These will include classics of electronic music, and improvised music. Your suggestions for these playlists are most welcome.

RECOMMENDED FILMS:

Rip: A Remix Manifesto
One Perfect Day
Modulations
The Reach of Resonance
People Who Do Noise
The Heart Is a Drum Machine
The Sound of Metal
808: The Movie
Moog

all available on various streaming sites.

And look, just found this compendium of older stuff:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWlqwXzikEuBZ-Edcr1_knBLU_AWBzHW

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance in class in person is mandatory. If this is a problem... drop the class now. However, if the virus situation changes and we need to alter the rules on this, we'll follow whatever the university recommends.

There will be regular composition and performance assignments, some which will involve collaboration between several students. There may also be occasional writing assignments.

See you Thursday Sep. 2nd at 1pm in Cullmore 311.

Any questions, feel free to email me, terranoval@highlands.com or Rothenberg@njit.edu