

Fall 2023

## **STS-349 (001): Electronic Music in Practice**

David Rothenburg

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STS 349-001

COMPUTER MUSIC: Composition and Performance

Prof. David Rothenberg

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Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-3:50, Cullimore 311

**Please read the following BEFORE class starts....**

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we will learn the basics of electronic music production with software called Ableton Live. We will also consider the history of electronic music and how it began with experimental composition and made its way into the backbone of popular music.

### REQUIRED SOFTWARE:

Ableton Live, Live Intro, or Live Lite, version 11

**You should run it on your own laptop which you should normally bring to class. You can't use other software that you might already know, sorry. You will need to use Ableton Live for class on your own computers, not FL Studio, Logic, or Cubase or anything else.**

You can get Ableton Live Intro for \$79 [on sale for \$39 right now... best price ever!]. It is perfectly adequate for this class.

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

The full version at the educational discount is \$349 [on sale for \$179 right now].

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

This version of Live Lite is actually free, see if you can get it to work:

<https://www.ableton.com/en/products/live-lite/in-app-signup/b486649b-6a7a-4870-9f9f-a9697e7df501/>

Any of these will be adequate for our class. Here is a summary of the differences:

<https://drolez.com/blog/music/ableton-live-lite-vs-intro.php>

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

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 don't feel you have the time to fully commit to the work, please consider dropping the class now, because there is a waiting list of people who want to get in.**

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

#### REQUIRED TEXT:

Dennis DeSantis, *Making Music: 74 Creative Strategies for Electronic Music Producers*

Epub copy:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eZXBY1XJYcCBGHs7G2qnRfhpyrnS\\_eeY/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eZXBY1XJYcCBGHs7G2qnRfhpyrnS_eeY/view?usp=sharing)

Pdf copy:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XTUoL26ElK3pGd-UkX9codDu4qfKCazI/view?usp=sharing>

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

John Cage, *Silence* (Wesleyan)

Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, eds. *Audio Culture* (Bloomsbury or Continuum)

Curtis Roads, *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic* (Oxford)

V.J. Manzo and Will Kuhn, *Interactive Composition: Strategies Using Ableton Live* (Oxford)

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)

David Rothenberg, *Bug Music* (St. Martins)

David Rothenberg, *Nightingales in Berlin* (Chicago)

#### RECOMMENDED LISTENING:

There are a few “STS 349” playlists on Spotify, including various pieces which we will discuss in class. We might make more.

## RECOMMENDED FILMS:

*Rip: A Remix Manifesto*  
*One Perfect Day*  
*Modulations*  
*The Reach of Resonance*  
*People Who Do Noise*  
*Eden (2014)*  
*Sound of Noise*  
*Listening to Kenny G*  
*The Heart Is a Drum Machine*  
*Sisters with Transistors*  
*A Life in Waves*  
*The Sound of Metal*  
*808: The Movie*  
*Moog*

most available on various streaming sites.

And here’s a compendium of older stuff:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWlqwXzikEuBZ-Edcr1\\_knBLU\\_AWBzHW](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.**

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

## TEACHING ASSISTANT

Ian Atkins, [iha4@njit.edu](mailto:iha4@njit.edu), veteran producer and former student in this class, will be our TA. He will set up studio times when you can come work in this room on your own as the semester progresses.

## DISCORD

This class does not use Canvas. We have a Discord server for the exchange of music and information, <https://discord.gg/zmD5qcazaq>

## SOUNDCLOUD

You will all be required to create or use an existing Soundcloud account to upload your weekly music assignments for all of us to listen to and critique.

## GRADING

**Do not take this class if you expect an easy A. That grade is reserved for the best, most attentive, and hard-working students who always come to class.**

If you show up, do a minimum amount of work on assignments, talk and engage politely with other students in class, you will most likely get a B.

If that's a problem, drop the class now. If you really want an A, you're going to have to work at it and from experience I know just a few of you will be up to the task.

**See you in class Sep. 6<sup>th</sup>.**

Any questions, feel free to email me, [rothenbird@gmail.com](mailto:rothenbird@gmail.com) or [Rothenberg@njit.edu](mailto:Rothenberg@njit.edu)