CDM: Audio Assignment
2/3/16

Make a **3-4** minute soundscape using footage you and your classmates record. You have two main goals here. 1. Learn how to produce and capture usable footage, taking advantage of the increasing ease of recording digital sound. 2. Explore sound's benefits and drawbacks as a medium, paying particular attention to how sound can convey a sense of place.

Here are some things to consider as you start composing: What places do the sounds you're working with belong in? How can you conjure place (and space) for a listener? How might you give a sense, for example, of which things are closer or farther away? What sort of progression or narrative can you develop over the course of 3-4 minutes? You don't need answers to all of these questions before getting started (you probably shouldn't have them, in fact), but you should have some sense of the soundscape you want to make.

Guidelines

- You or your classmates must record at least ¾ of your sound material. You must use at least one piece of audio a classmate has recorded and one piece that you yourself have recorded.
- You must layer at least four pieces of audio at least once in your soundscape.
- You must in some way convey a sense of place.
- The soundscape is due **Sunday, 2/28 by 11:59PM**. You should upload it to your individual Box folder as an .mp3 file, titled in this way: CDM_lastname_soundscape.mp3.

Audio Portfolio

You'll produce several things alongside the soundscape itself, which will also count toward your grade on this project. They are: a preview, a reflection, and a sound tutorial.

The **preview** is a description of one piece of audio you've recorded and how you plan to use it in your soundscape. It should be **at least 300 words,** and is due **Sunday, 2/21 by 11:59PM.** Post it to the blog, tagged with "audio preview," and embed the audio piece you're describing.

The **reflection** is an account of how the project actually went, due **Sunday, 2/28 by 11:59PM,** and should be **500-600 words**. It should also include **3 screenshots** taken at various stages of your composing process (with one showing your moment of 4 layered audio tracks). Upload it to Box as a .doc or .docx file. Some guiding questions:

- What place anchors your soundscape, and how do you communicate it to your listener?
- How did you go about composing your soundscape? What moments are you making visible with screenshots, and why are they interesting or important to your finished product?
- How does your original vision differ from what you're turning in?
- What's your favorite part of your soundscape? Least favorite?
- Are there things you wish you'd done but didn't or couldn't? What are they? Why couldn't you do them?
- If you revise your piece, what might you do?

You don't have to answer all of these questions, but you should give me a sense of the work that went into your soundscape and whether it accomplishes what you wanted it to.

The **tutorial** is a description of one sound-related trick or skill you learned over the course of this project. It should include step-by-step instructions and screenshots (or be in video format), and is due on the blog **before class Wednesday, 3/2**. Tag it "tutorial."

Resources
Audio Recording Technology
Your phone and computer likely have built-in microphones, but they may not be sensitive enough to record with the quality you'd like. You can rent a limited number digital recorders and USB microphones from English's Digital Media Lab on a weekly basis. Full information here:
http://www.english.pitt.edu/digital-media/digital-production-equipment

You can also rent sound production equipment from CIDDE. Available equipment listed here:
http://www.cidde.pitt.edu/classroom-services/available-technology/

You need instructor permission to rent from the DML or CIDDE, so be sure to figure out what you need and inform me well before you actually plan to record.

Audio Editing Software
Audacity – a free, open-source audio editing program – is available on all campus computers. It runs on all operating systems, so you can also download it onto your own computer from here:
http://www.audacityteam.org/download/

If you have experience with a different audio editing program like Adobe Audition/Soundbooth or GarageBand, you're welcome to complete this project using them. I will only be providing technical support for Audacity, however.

Tutorials
Audacity has an extensive user guide, including tutorials, available here:
http://manual.audacityteam.org/o/index.html#using

As a student at Pitt, you have free access to Lynda, an online service that hosts a ton of useful technology tutorials. Go to http://lynda.pitt.edu, log in, and search for Audacity.

If you're having a specific problem, try searching Google or YouTube for "Audacity how to ____." If that doesn't work, email me and I'll see what I can figure out.

See Also
Links to further resources (including lists of recording tips, audio archives, and a tool for making your own beats) are available on our course site:
http://www.klcameron.com/cdm/resources/