MP 340 – MULTITRACK RECORDING TECHNIQUES

Instructor:  T. Paduck, J. Largent
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Office: Room A-17, 150 Mass Ave.  Office Hours: ________________

Course Chair:  Rob Jaczko

Description: Emphasis on recording techniques including microphone placement, console and signal flow, editing, and live recording. Discussion and utilization of limiters, compressors, noise gates, digital delay, and other signal processing equipment used in the multitrack recording process. Recording projects will be required. Audio ear training will be available outside of class.

Course Objective: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will have knowledge of the principles presented sufficient to apply them to practical situations, and will have completed at least two multitrack recording projects.

Required Text(s):
- Pro Tools 8 Music Production, Recording, Editing and Mixing, Mike Collins, Focal Press
- Facilities info. and other required resources now reside at the MP&E website (mpe.berklee.edu).

Homework, Quizzes, Projects, Out-of-Class Preparation: Details of midterm and final project requirements will be found below. Written assignments may be issued occasionally and collected the following week. Occasional quizzes may also be given. A final proficiency examination is also required. In order to maintain satisfactory standing in this class, approximately two hours per week of out-of-class preparation are recommended.

Midterm: Week of October 26 - 30, 2009
Final: Common Final Exam: Monday, December 14, 2009 from 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Grading: General information on grading is contained in the Student Handbook. If an assignment, quiz, or exam is missed, a grade of F will be entered and averaged. The mark “I” (Incomplete) will only be available in emergency situations; see Student Handbook for policy.

Grading Criteria:
A (93-100)  C+ (77-79)
A- (90-92)   C (73-76)
B+ (87-89)   C- (70-72)
B (83-86)    D (60-69)
B- (80-82)   F (below 60)
**Final Grade Determination:** Your final grade will be determined by considering the following components at indicated weights:

- 25% Attendance, attitude, participation, homework and quizzes
- 15% Recorded projects
- 30% Midterm exam and proficiency
- 30% Final exam

**Attendance Policy:** You are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester. If your 2nd unexcused absence occurs after the "W" deadline (see below), a course grade of “F” may result. Withdrawal is not automatic. It is your responsibility to initiate withdrawal proceedings prior to the "W" deadline.

**Deadline for Course Withdrawal:** 5:00 p.m. Friday, November 6, 2009.

You may withdraw from this class by completing a *Student-Initiated Withdrawal from a Class* form at the Office of the Registrar. The withdrawal form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the end of the 9th week of classes in Fall and Spring semesters, or the end of the 8th week in the 12-week Summer Session. If you submit the withdrawal form by the deadline, you will receive a grade of “W” for the class. Withdrawing from a class cannot be done after the deadline.

The instructor will **not** withdraw you from the class for any reason (including absence) or submit the form for you. It is your responsibility to withdraw from the course.

If you withdraw from this class, you continue to be financially responsible for the class and are not eligible for a tuition refund or replacement course. Please be aware that withdrawing from a class may affect scholarship, financial aid, and/or international student visa status. If you receive financial aid or veterans’ benefits, your eligibility for aid may be reduced by withdrawing. If you are an international student, you may jeopardize your F-1 visa status.

In case of doubt about your status and options, ask the instructor, department chair and/or the Counseling & Advising Center.

**E-Mail Communication**
All official communication in the MP&E department will be conducted through your assigned berklee.net email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that emails delivered to your Berklee student account are received, read, and acted upon in a timely fashion. You may choose to forward your berklee.net email address to another account, but you are still responsible for maintaining access to this account, checking it and regularly keeping space available for new email deliveries. Please ensure that your berklee.net account does not exceed its allotted storage space. The department is not responsible for your missing communications delivered to berklee.net email accounts.
Class Start and End Time
All classes begin promptly on the hour, and end at ten minutes to the hour.

TOPICAL COURSE OUTLINE

1. Survey of Berklee’s Multitrack recording facilities: basic signal flow for recording.
2. Session planning: room acoustics; arrangement of instruments; micing techniques.
3. Console and recorder setup: levels; establishing the monitor mix.
5. Console signal flow for recording and overdubs.
6. Cue mixes and track assignment.
7. Bouncing and overdubbing.
8. Signal processing for recording: limiting; compression; gating; reverb; delay; effects.
9. Close micing approaches: single vs. multiple micing; avoiding phase interference; characteristics of various microphones; mic placement for proper tone and minimum leakage.
10. Distant micing approaches: standard stereo micing; recording room sound; close/distant combinations.
Recording Sessions: The MP 340 curriculum involves frequent use of recording facilities, including both in-class demonstrations and assigned use of lab time during evenings and weekends. In-class sessions will sometimes utilize the preceding studio hour for set-up. Students who are available at this time are encouraged to help.

All MP 340 students are required to participate in four experimental recording sessions, a mentor session guiding MP225 students through the studio and three projects in support of MP318 production students.

Guidelines involving the use of Berklee recording studios are included in the MP&E Studio Handbook. Please familiarize yourself with these regulations before your first session.

You must complete the studio tour before being allowed to use any facilities. Look for posted dates and times. It is mandatory and attendance will be taken.

Experimental Sessions: All experimental sessions must be engineered jointly by two MP 340 students. Specific blocks of studio time are reserved for each experimental session, and only the allotted times and studios are available. Students should find a partner in their own section. See your instructor for exceptions. Booking studio time should be done with both partners present. Booking is done on a first come first served basis, so don't delay if you want a choice. There is no guarantee of available time for students who book late.

Mentor Project: Each 340 student helps a team of MP225 students guiding them through one of two projects in Studio E. These projects happen in weeks 11 & 13 but booking is finished by week 3 and is first come first serve.

Projects: It is your responsibility to contact current production students who have not found engineers for their projects. A directory of students in these courses will be posted near Room B8. Midterm and final projects may be recorded without a producer only if approved by the instructor and there are no available production projects. However, there are usually more production projects available than engineers enrolled in MP 340.

In order to ensure that each MP 340 student records both a midterm and final project, all engineers must be contracted by a producer for a single project before any engineer signs up for additional productions. Any MP 340 student who has not been contracted for a midterm project by the contract deadline will be assigned a project by lottery the following day. This procedure is repeated for final projects. Engineering assignments will be posted outside the studio office on computer printout in red ink. As soon as these assignments have been posted, MP 340 students may be contracted for any remaining projects. If you are assigned to a producer, you should contact him/her immediately. Don't assume that the producer will take the initiative.

Project 1: Engineers enrolled in MP 340 must serve as assistant engineers to an MP 475 engineer on an MP 318 Live To Two Track project. Only session reports detailing involvement on these recordings will be required. Attendance and participation of the assistants will be noted by the engineers on these sessions. Failure to attend or participate will affect the MP 340 student’s grade for the semester.
**Project 2:** MP 340 students will be assigned as assistant engineers on the basic track session for the MP 318 midterm “Sound Alike” project. For the tracking session, they will be assisting an MP 385 engineer. This will be a four (4) hour session. They will then assume the engineer’s role and complete the overdubs and mix in subsequent sessions. The overdubs and mix will take place in the remaining eight (8) hours allotted for this project. MP 340 instructors will grade the overdubs recorded by the 340 student. To clearly identify the tracks to be graded, each MP 340 engineer will initial and date the tracks which they recorded on the location form track sheet. The 318 producer is expected to use the 340 engineer for the overdub portion of the project. If the 318 producer decides to do the overdubs outside the Berklee studios it is expected that the 340 engineer will still be involved observing and advising at the very least.

**Project 3:** MP 340 student engineers are responsible for engineering all basics and all overdub sessions for the MP 318 final Radio Jingle project. A total of eight (8) hours is scheduled for this project.

**Recording Agreement Form:** All MP 340 students must sign a Recording Agreement Form stating which production project they will engineer. Students who do not submit a letter to the Studio Office Manager in room B8 before the deadline will be randomly assigned to an available project. Any student who signs more than one Recording Agreement Form before the deadline will be penalized two letter grades on their project. Recording Agreement Forms must also be submitted by all engineers assigned a project or contracted after the deadline.

**Project Location Forms:** These must be submitted to the MP&E Office located in Room A-17 at 150 Mass. Ave. before 5:00 PM on the due dates below for all recordings except Experimental Session #1.

**NOTE:** All projects and letters are due by 5:00 PM or they will be stamped late.

**Late Policy:** Late projects are not accepted. Incompletes will not be given for unfinished recording assignments.

**Booking Sessions:** This is handled by the Studio Office Manager in Room B8. Office hours are posted. Keep in mind that studio time is limited, so sessions should be booked as early as possible. MP 340 students book their experimental sessions only; producers must book all midterm and final projects.

Your projects may be recorded on any engineer’s or producer’s media as long as this information is included on the Project Location form. Regardless of the location, be careful that assignments are not erased until they are graded, and that all the paperwork is available and legible. It is advisable to turn in a copy of any relevant paperwork as a safety precaution.

**Holidays, Berk-Days and Other College Closings:** From time to time the college will be closed in observance of a holiday. Most one day holidays fall on Monday and when there is more than one holiday per term, the college often reschedules Monday classes on a different day of that holiday week. We call these “Berk-Days”. If your project is affected by either a holiday or a Berk Day contact the Studio Office the week before to make sure your studio time is not disrupted. Night time studio schedules (after 6pm) are typically unaffected by either the holiday closing or the Berk Day rescheduling but you should always check with the Studio Office to be certain.