

## **GAME DESIGN M.A.**

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**IULM University of Milan**

**2nd Semester**

**Dates: 3hrs February 2019**

### **Course Description-**

#### ***How to Listen to A Cave- the Sound and Music of Kentucky Route Zero***

This extended workshop will focus on exploring and reflecting on the process of creating music and sound design for the recently completed episodic game *Kentucky Route Zero*. I will explore the ways in which my approach evolved across the nearly seven year development period and identify some of the inevitable challenges encountered throughout, while also highlighting some technical and creative strategies that evolved over the course of working on it while placing an emphasis on autodidactic learning and exploration through experimentation and trial and error. In addition, I will attempt to contextualize my approach to sound and music in KRZ within a broader cultural and historical framework that includes sound in film and other media.

### **Learning Outcomes-**

- A deeper understanding of sound design techniques and compositional approaches to music in games by treating *Kentucky Route Zero* as a case study.
- A more thorough sense of what the creative possibilities as well as the challenges are when working with a small team on a large-scale game project across a long period of production.
- An introduction to (or revisiting of) some fundamentals of sound design, foley and field recording techniques that will include sound editing in Audacity, the creative applications of Ableton Live, and basic audio implementation in Unity.
- A greater critical understanding of the relationships between sound/music in games and sound/music in other media by connecting the specifics of my work on KRZ to a broader cultural context through discussion of the included texts.
- A chance to work one-on one with students during studio time to help them strategize their own approaches to developing sonic and musical identities for their games.

## **Bibliography and Tools-**

Texts will be provided as PDFs by me and include excerpts from:

*Game Sound* by Karen Collins (MIT Press, 2008)

*Acousmatics*, by Pierre Schaeffer from *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* Edited by Christopher Cox (Continuum, 2004)

*Audio-Vision: Sound On Screen* by Michel Chion (Columbia University Press, 1990)

*Footsteps With Character: the Art and Craft of Foley* by Benjamin Wright (Oxford University Press, 2014)

Tools used will include Audacity, Ableton Live, Unity, and a Zoom H4 Field Recorder

## **Description**

### **The Sound and Music of Kentucky Route Zero**

A sprawling overview of the sound design and music in Kentucky Route Zero, beginning with the establishment of a palette of sounds and a musical aesthetic set forth in the first episode, and moving through the rest of the game in an attempt to chart its evolution as well as its many divergences resultant from such a long production schedule and such an open-ended process.

We will focus on a handful of defining moments in the sound and music in KRZ and explore those in greater depth while also investigating the ways that those helped to create a sense of place, specificity, and emotional potency for the player. I will also go into greater detail about a few of the most challenging sound design sequences in the project, and how I arrived at the final result. This session will also include some demonstrations of the Foley, field recording and sound editing techniques that I used in KRZ that can be applied by the students in their own projects.

The final part will focus on identifying and putting forth some of the things that I learned from going through this process, and how that informed my thinking and approach to sound design and composition currently as I look toward future projects. This will include unpacking the practical limitations created by a three-person team, as well as the creative limitations that the episodic form included for me. This session will also make an attempt to think more broadly and critically about sound and music in games by engaging with excerpts from texts on sound in games as well as other forms of media including film and sound art. The session will conclude with a period of open studio time that allows more informal one-on-one discussion and/or consultation on student projects.

