

## Soundscape journal and Writing #1 – Due T Sep 10 / Th Sep 12

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Complete these activities by the second week of September. You will turn in your journal along with Writing #1.

Repeat these activities as many times as you like in different places and at different times of day, but do each at least once.

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### **Soundscape/Listening Activity #1: Take a sound walk.**

We begin with a simple exercise that can be done anywhere, by anyone. **WRITE DOWN ALL THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR.** Where are you? What time of day is it?

Repeat this activity in different places and at different times of day.

### **Soundscape/Listening Activity #2: Distance of sound.**

Find a real life situation with many moving sounds (a street corner is a good example). Go there and stand quietly for 7 minutes with your eyes closed, listening to all the sound movements.

Notice what sounds are happening close to you, and which are happening far away from you.

The soundscape expands or shrinks according to the amount of activity in it. This is generally true for vision, also. Tall buildings limit our view, while in the country we can see and hear over greater distances. Listen for the most distant sound you can hear. What is it? Can you imagine its distance from you?

### **Soundscape/Listening Activity #3: Distinguishing sounds.**

Find another (or the same) real life situation with many moving sounds. Direct your attention to one category of sounds only (car horns, feet on the sidewalk, barking dogs, typing), and become acquainted with the entire soundscape. You will hear many of the category of sounds you've chosen, and no two sound produces sound exactly the same. How many different types do you hear on your street corner? Describe their different sounds.

### **Soundscape/Listening Activity #4: Ambient sounds.**

Enter various shops or buildings (at least 3 over the course of the week).

Which one has the quietest ambiance?

How many shops have music playing? What kind of music?

What other kinds of sounds can be heard that are special to certain establishments?

### **Soundscape/Listening Activity #5: A sound diary.**

Pay attention to the sounds you hear over the course of the day.

- What was the first sound you heard upon waking?
- What was the last sound you heard before sleeping?
- What was the loudest sound you heard today?
- What was the most beautiful sound you heard today?

**Soundscape/Listening Activity #6: Sound scavenger hunt.**

Take a walk and find as many of these different kinds of sounds as you can:

- The loudest sound you heard
- The softest sound you can hear
- A soft sound destroyed by a loud sound
- The highest-pitched sound you heard
- A sound that moved past you
- A sound that moved with you
- A sound you heard from above
- A sound that changed direction as it moved
- A sound made in response to another
- The ugliest sound you heard
- A sound you heard twice—and only twice
- A sound made by something opening
- The most remarkable or memorable sound you heard
- A sound with a distinctive rhythm
- The most beautiful sound you heard
- A sound that came from far away
- A sound that either slowly rose or fell in pitch
- A sound you would want to eliminate from this soundscape
- A sound you missed that you would have liked to have heard

**Soundscape/Listening Activity #7: Preservation.**

What sounds do you hear that are disappearing from the soundscape? Imagine you were recording it for preservation in a museum collection. What information would you want to accompany the recording?

**Soundscape/Listening Activity #8: Historical soundscapes.**

Find a work of literature or a visual document (novel, story, painting, photograph) and write down all the sounds it contains.

**Soundscape/Listening Activity #9: The soundscape of now.**

Make a list of all the new sounds that have entered the soundscape within the past year or two.

## Writing #1 prompt

Your first writing experience in Mu 101 will be a kind of writing called a reflection. In writing, a reflection is an open-ended opportunity to think about the significance of an idea, an experience, or a topic. In the process of committing our ideas to paper, we often discover what we want to say, and we discover insights we didn't know we had. There is no research involved in a reflection, and reflections are often highly personal, although yours does not have to be.

Along with several six other writing experiences, you'll be returning to this piece of writing several times over the course of the semester:

Oct 7-13 (due online Oct 5)	Peer critique #1 – sharing a paragraph from Writing #1 or #3 or #4 with your section of Mu 101
Nov 4-10 (due online Nov 2)	Peer critique #2 – sharing an excerpt (any length) from any Writing with your section of Mu 101
Due T Dec 9 / Th Dec 11	Refining all Writing Experiences and creating an overall course reflection in your Writing Portfolio

### Requirements (3)

(1) Prompt. Using your soundscape activities as a guide, your Writing #1 will be a *reflection* on your soundscape experiences. You do not have to respond to all of these prompts (and it would likely result in an unfocused, rambling piece of writing if you did!), but do take one of them as a starting point:

- Why did you choose the locations and soundscape experiences that you did? What would you do differently if you had the opportunity to do more soundscape activities?
- How did the process of completing soundscape activities feel different from your normal daily life?
- What were the most interesting things you noticed, observed, or learned in the process of completing your soundscape activities?
- What have you learned about listening, about yourself, or your world in the process of doing your soundscape activities?

You can take these questions in a lot of different directions—they're open-ended and broadly framed on purpose. Think especially about your identity (who you are in terms of personality, past experiences, or cultural/social groups), your career (your past academic challenges, your academic and professional goals, your strengths), and how both of those inform, relate to, and will draw upon your experience in Mu 101.

(2) Broadening the scope. Whatever direction your reflection takes, make sure it includes this final feature. Show how your ideas are relevant *beyond* the scope of your reflections on the soundscape—what's the point of your ideas beyond just responding to the prompt? You could

show how the ideas you've mentioned are controversial, you could rebut potential criticism of your ideas, or you could show how your ideas connect to other experiences, disciplines, or knowledge outside of this class.

(3) Revise. Don't turn in a first draft. Writing takes time. Do a little bit each day. Ten minutes a day over the course of a week is more effective than an hour crammed in the night before a due date. Give yourself time to mess up and recover. Schedule time in your calendar to just write without distractions—no friends, no music, no TV, no Internet, no phone, no multitasking.

### **Formatting and submission**

In general, written college assignments are typically typed using 12-point font, double spacing, and using 1-inch margins. I won't penalize you for not following these norms, but your doing so does make my grading process significantly easier.

The only requirement I do have is that if you need to email me a file because you will miss class, you must name it like this: LastName, FirstInitial – Reflection 1 (Example: Jones, A – Reflection 1). If you send me any other file name, I will not accept it. The only file formats I will accept are .doc, .docx, or .pdf. Attach your file directly to your email; I will not accept a link to a cloud service (e.g, OneDrive, Google Drive, iCloud).

### **Grading**

This assignment will be graded on a scale of Credit/No Credit. If you do not submit an assignment, it will be marked "No Credit." If you know that you will be absent, make arrangements to submit your work *before* it is due—send it via email, send it to class with a friend, or drop it off in my mailbox.

If you submit your assignment and it is marked "No Credit," you can resubmit it as many times as you like until it receives "Credit." Each new version must include the previous version and a "Process Letter" in which you explain what you've done differently in this revised version and what you've learned in the process.

*Late assignments.* Every student may have one extension for any assignment in the "Supporting your growth" category, no explanation necessary—life happens. Request an extension in person or via email at least 24 hours before the scheduled due date and set your own new due date. Whatever the due date (or if you do not request an extension), late assignments lose one point per day, up to two weeks, and will not be accepted after 14 days. An assignment that is submitted late and receives a grade of No credit may still be revised; the final grade will reflect the number of days the first submission was late.

There is no length requirement for this assignment. I am only looking for good writing...

### **Good writing, or "What earns a grade of 'Credit' in Mu 101?"**

#### Dr. J's favorite editing suggestions:

1. Imagine your writing is your side of a conversation with another person. If you were telling someone this story, would you do so in the order you used in your first draft?

2. Your best editor is an imaginary, insatiable three-year-old who says “How do you know” or “Why does that matter” after every single sentence. Does the narrative you’re telling pass the “three-year-old test”? If not, then there’s still more critical thinking to be done in order to fully flesh out your ideas (and make them toddler-proof!).

You may organize essays in this class however you like. You won’t see any formulaic 5-paragraph essay topics in this course (although you can certainly write one of those if that’s comfortable for you!). The important thing is that your essay displays the features of good writing:

Good writing contains interesting ideas. This is the most important aspect of good writing—are you saying something new, exciting, provocative, and that’s not predictable?

Good writing expresses those ideas clearly. Clarity is one of the most difficult things to master as a writer—have you stated your ideas in such a way that the reader understands where you are coming from, has all the pieces, and receives information in a logical order? This means supporting your ideas with specific, vivid examples—musical details from a specific song, an anecdote or brief story, or a detail that brings your idea to life and grounds it in reality.

Good writing is engaging. The most enjoyable things to read feel like a conversation between the reader and the author—as you read, you have a sense of the person writing, their sense of humor, their personality, and the things that make them unique, and this makes you want to keep reading. This comes through in their word choice, their style, how they convey their ideas (e.g., what imagery, metaphors, similes they choose to use), and the artfulness of their presentation. Sound a little vague? That’s because we’re talking about the *art* of writing, and art, as you know (even after only a week or two in this class!) is subjective.

Good writing follows through. Building on the concept that good writing expresses interesting ideas in a conversational manner, keep in mind that good writing also impels the reader to keep thinking about the subject in a new way. Your essay can do this by answering questions like: “Why does it matter?,” “So what?,” “What happens next?,” or “How does this relate to the world or the bigger picture?” Be aware of the implicit questions your writing raises, and don’t just leave them hanging there, unanswered.

Good writing isn’t repetitive. This is the trickiest thing for many young writers coming out of high school! We’re often taught to reuse whole phrases from the introduction to form topic sentences or to restate the introduction as the conclusion of our essays, for example. Practical, formulaic, easy to teach—but BORING! Uninspired! Unexciting! Another trap is redundancy, or saying the same thing with different words (see what I did there?). As you reread your drafts, watch out for the habit of saying the same idea multiple times or in multiple places in your essay—pick the strongest version and get rid of the others!

Read the assignment prompt. Begin every assignment by reading the essay prompt all the way through, making sure that you understand everything that’s expected of you. Return to this step throughout the writing process—it’s your job to make sure that you’re fulfilling the assignment requirements!

The four basic techniques of editing (“ARMS”):

1. *Add*. Show why you think what you think. Provide examples.
2. *Remove*. Remove anything (it could a word, or a sentence, or a half a page) that doesn't actually address your main point. Remove repetitious ideas or redundant statements.
3. *Move*. Try to imagine someone reading this for the first time. What would be confusing about the order that things are presented in? You can change the order of paragraphs or of sentences within a paragraph and end up with a completely different essay.
4. *Substitute*. Try a different anecdote, a different example, or even a different word.