



MUS 311

Digital Music: Performance, Remixing and DJ-ing

S2 Day 2014

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Adrian Renzo

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Y3A-155

By appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This practical-based unit addresses the tools and techniques to perform and remix music for a live audience. It develops the necessary skills for DJ-ing and laptop performance across a range of musical genres such as hip-hop, ambient, and electronica. The broad objective is to develop students' critical awareness of the challenges and creative possibilities presented by the use of electronic music tools in live performance and to develop practical skills via lectures and production lab workshops. The unit caters to a variety of skill levels with both beginning and advanced students welcome.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Use mixing technologies.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Mix Critique	20%	16 Sept (draft); 19 Sept
Worksheets	25%	Weekly
Live Performance	30%	Weeks 9-11
Ableton Arrangement Project	25%	4 Nov (draft); 7 Nov (final)

Mix Critique

Due: **16 Sept (draft); 19 Sept**

Weighting: **20%**

Assessment Outline

For this assessment, you are required to write an analysis of a recorded DJ mix. (A link to the recording will be available on iLearn in Week 3.) An important aspect of DJing and remixing is the ability to listen critically. Therefore, this assessment task aims to develop the skill of analysing how music has been arranged, edited, or otherwise manipulated.

Requirements

The critique should be between 600 and 700 words, and should address the following aspects of the recording. The most important items are marked with an asterisk.

- What are the overall strengths and weakness of this mix?
- Compare at least one of the featured tracks with the original version of the track. Identify three aspects of the track which have been changed for the purposes of the mix.*
- Analyse one segue (that is: a transition from one track to the next). Which elements of the segue are gradual and which elements are abrupt?*
- Which elements of this recording do you think would encourage people to dance (or discourage them from dancing)?

Assessment Criteria

Your critique will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Ability to compare a track in its original form with its appearance in the mix.
- Ability to clearly and concisely describe salient aspects of the mix from a DJ/producer's perspective.
- Precision of analysis.
- Evidence of constructive feedback on your peers' work (noting the strengths of each task)

and making helpful suggestions for improvement).

- Level of prose, grammar, and syntax.

Submission Instructions

A hard copy draft of this task must be submitted within the first 15 minutes of your tutorial on Tuesday 16 September (Week 7). The drafts will be peer-reviewed in class. The final copy of the assignment is due on Turnitin by 5pm, Friday 19 September (Week 7).

Extensions and Late Penalties

Extensions will only be granted if you have submitted a Disruption to Studies form.

No late drafts are accepted because the drafts are necessary for the peer-review process. If you miss the deadline for the draft (i.e. the first 15 minutes of your Week 7 tutorial), you forfeit the marks for the draft. You are not permitted to attend a different tutorial than usual in order to submit your assignment.

Final versions up to one (1) week late will receive a 10% deduction of the total marks possible. Final versions up to two (2) weeks late will receive a 20% deduction of the total marks possible. Final versions submitted more than two (2) weeks late will not be accepted.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.

Worksheets

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **25%**

Assessment Outline

Worksheets will be distributed in a number of tutorials. The worksheets will give you the opportunity to practise the skills discussed in lectures, and will help you to begin preparing for your Live Performance assessment and your Ableton Arrangement Project. Some worksheets will require you to evaluate your peers' work. Worksheets are to be submitted at the end of your tutorial. If you need more time to complete the work, you may submit the worksheet by 5pm Friday in the week during which it was issued. Any worksheet received *after* the week in which it was issued will not be marked.

Requirements

- Worksheets should be completed and submitted by the end of the tutorial. If extra time is needed, you may submit the sheet by 5pm Friday in the week in which it is issued.
- The tasks on each worksheet must be completed to a satisfactory standard.
- Where worksheets involve peer evaluation, you must provide constructive feedback on your peers' work, following the guidelines which will be provided in class.

Assessment Criteria

The worksheets will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Evidence that all tasks have been completed.
- Evidence of constructive feedback on your peers' work (noting the strengths of each performance and making concrete suggestions for improvement).

Submission Instructions

All tasks specified on the worksheets should be posted on the 300-level Assignments Dropbox on the MMCCS server by the end of the tutorial.

Late Penalties

Students who fail to submit the tasks for any given worksheet by 5pm Friday in the week that the worksheet was issued will forfeit the marks for that worksheet.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.
- Use mixing technologies.

Live Performance

Due: **Weeks 9-11**

Weighting: **30%**

Assessment Outline

In this assessment, you will perform a 10-minute DJ set demonstrating your ability to use Ableton Live and to interact with an audience. Students will be allocated a performance time slot by 5pm Friday 5 September (Week 5)

Requirements

- The live mix is to consist of a minimum and maximum duration of 10 minutes.
- Ableton Live's **Session View** must be used as the 'hub' for the set. Turntables, CDJs and/or other instruments may also be used as supplements.
- You will need to liaise with the people playing before and after you, to ensure that you can mix in or out of their set(s).
- All audio material used must be credited in the *Set Tracklist*. (*Set Tracklist* guidelines will be available on iLearn.) The *Set Tracklist* must be emailed to Adrian Renzo at least 24 hours prior to your performance.
- All tracks must be high-quality audio files. Lossless formats such as WAV and AIFF are preferred, although MP3s encoded at 320kbps may be acceptable. Music ripped from YouTube clips is not acceptable.

- If you choose to use your own laptop for the performance, you are responsible for ensuring that your hardware and software are in good working order.
- You may be required to attend a separate *viva voce* regarding this assignment, at the discretion of the convenor.

Assessment Criteria

Marks will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Ability to apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Level of mixing techniques.
- Competence in the use of technologies.
- Creative adaptation of sound materials.
- Evidence of constructive feedback on your peers' work (noting the strengths of their performance and making helpful suggestions for improvement).

Submission Instructions

The Live Performances will take place in Weeks 9-11. The dates are: Friday 17 October; Friday 24 October; Friday 31 October. The *Set Tracklist* needs to be emailed to Adrian Renzo at least 24 hours prior to each performance.

Late Penalties

Students who fail to perform in their allocated time need to submit a Disruption to Studies application and contact Adrian Renzo immediately.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Use mixing technologies.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Ableton Arrangement Project

Due: **4 Nov (draft); 7 Nov (final)**

Weighting: **25%**

Assessment Outline

Students are to construct a 15-20 minute pre-arranged set demonstrating their ability to design and record a complete mix using Ableton Live. The entire set must be prepared using the Ableton Live **Arrangement View** and clearly demonstrate proficiency with mix techniques and practices explored throughout the course.

Requirements

- This project must be designed in the **Arrangement View**.
- The arrangement should be between 15 and 20 minutes' duration.
- A full draft of the set needs to be submitted in the first 15 minutes of the Week 12 tutorial.
- The arrangement must demonstrate proficiency with the mixing techniques and practices explored throughout the course.
- All tracks must be high-quality audio files. Lossless formats such as WAV and AIFF are preferred, although MP3s encoded at 320kbps may be acceptable. Music ripped from YouTube clips is not acceptable.
- The submitted Live Set Project folder must include a *Set Tracklist* (see guidelines below) and a self-evaluation sheet (which will be provided on iLearn).
- You need to click 'Collect All and Save' in Ableton Live before submitting your work. If any audio files are missing, the assignment will be marked 'as is'. If the project contains no audio files, the assignment will receive zero marks.
- You may be required to attend a separate *viva voce* regarding this assignment, at the discretion of the convenor.

Assessment Criteria

Marks will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Ability to apply concepts of music design and theory to a recorded set.
- Use of varied mixing techniques and effects.
- Creative adaptation of sonic material.
- Quality of self-assessment.
- Evidence of constructive feedback on your peers' work.

Submission Instructions

A full draft of the Arrangement Project must be submitted in class within the first 15 minutes of the Week 12 tutorial (4 November). Arrangement Projects will be peer-reviewed. The final version of the assignment is to be saved as an Ableton Live Project and uploaded to the 300-level Assignments Dropbox on the MMCCS server by 5pm 7 November. If you are unable to attend university on 7 November, you will need to submit your work early. The *Set Tracklist* component is to be saved as a text file and included within the Live Set Project Folder. The self-evaluation sheet (which will be available on iLearn) should also be included in the Live Set Project Folder.

Extensions and Late Penalties

Extensions will only be granted if you have submitted a Disruption to Studies form.

No late drafts are accepted because the drafts are necessary for the peer-review process. If you

miss the deadline for the draft (i.e. the first 15 minutes of your Week 13 tutorial), you forfeit the marks for the draft. You are not permitted to attend a different tutorial than usual in order to submit your assignment.

Final versions up to one (1) week late will receive a 10% deduction of the total marks possible. Final versions up to two (2) weeks late will receive a 20% deduction of the total marks possible. Final versions submitted more than two (2) weeks late will not be accepted.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Use mixing technologies.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Delivery and Resources

Delivery Mode

This unit consists of online lectures, on-campus weekly tutorials, and three evening performances scheduled for Friday 17 October, Friday 24 October, and Friday 31 October.

Tutorial Times

All tutorial times and classrooms are available on the MQ Timetables website.
<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>

Unit Requirements

In order to pass this unit students need to attend all tutorials, participate in at least two evening performances (once as a performer and once as a peer-reviewer) and submit all assignments on time.

Required and Recommended Readings

Required and recommended readings will be listed on iLearn. Readings will be available through e-Reserve or through open-access online journals.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The hard drives of the lab computers should not be considered 'back-up space'. Lab computers can be erased at any time. Do not store anything on the local drive.

At the start of each session (whether in class or in your own time), download your project from the MMCCS server or from your external hard drive, then open it from the computer's drive. (**Do not open projects directly from your external hard drive.**) At the end of the session, save your work back to your external hard drive, and make an additional back-up copy.

Required Technology

Students are required to supply their own headphones for this course. The headphones do not

need to be premium-grade DJ headphones, but they do need to cover your ears and block out a reasonable amount of noise. (The earbuds which come with iPhones will not be suitable for performing live.) Students intending to use turntables should bring their own cartridges (to fit Technics SL-1210 Mk5). Mac-compatible memory sticks or external hard drives are strongly recommended for backing up projects from the server.

Hardware and Software Compatibility

It is students' responsibility to ensure that any work undertaken outside of the MMCCS is fully functional within and compatible with the Mac version of Ableton Live currently installed on the computers in the MMCCS labs. Additional VST instruments and effects not native to Ableton Live should not be used in submitted assignments, as they will not load. (Such effects may be rendered as audio files and then included, with accompanying screenshots in the self-evaluation sheet.) It is also important that USB drives and other backup devices are tested in weeks prior to submission dates, in order to confirm that these devices can be read and accessed by the computers in the MMCCS labs.

Unit Schedule

A weekly unit schedule will be available on iLearn.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Additional information

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/departments/media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific

knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Use mixing technologies.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Assessment tasks

- Mix Critique
- Worksheets
- Live Performance
- Ableton Arrangement Project

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Assessment tasks

- Mix Critique
- Worksheets
- Live Performance
- Ableton Arrangement Project

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in

order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Critically analyse mixing technique and song selection.

Assessment tasks

- Mix Critique
- Worksheets
- Live Performance
- Ableton Arrangement Project

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Use mixing technologies.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Assessment tasks

- Worksheets
- Live Performance
- Ableton Arrangement Project

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply concepts of music design and theory to DJ performance.
- Select and deploy appropriate mixing techniques.
- Use mixing technologies.
- Demonstrate creativity through expressive techniques.

Assessment tasks

- Worksheets
- Live Performance
- Ableton Arrangement Project

Changes from Previous Offering

1. The Live Performance assessment task will now be held in a dedicated space with room for dancing. 2. The relative weight of the assessment tasks has been adjusted. 3. Lectures will now be delivered online and will be in a modular format.

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
30/01/2014	The Name was updated.