Digital Audio Syllabus

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Wall High School
2025-2026

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Teacher: Michael Montalto

Extra Help: "A" Day Lunch

Marking Period Schedule

Marking Period 1 9/4/2025 - 11/5/2025	**Marking Period 3** 1/27/2026 - 3/31/2026
Marking Period 2 11/10/2025 - 1/16/2025	**Marking Period 4** 4/1/2026 - 6/10/2026
Midterm Exams 1/20/2026 - 1/26/2026	**Final Exams** 6/11/2026 - 6/18/2026

Course Description

This full-year elective course introduces students to digital audio production using GarageBand and/or Logic Pro. Students will learn audio theory, music composition, recording, mixing, sound design, and podcast creation. The curriculum emphasizes critical thinking, collaboration, technology literacy, and interdisciplinary applications.

Units of Study

Unit 1: Introduction to Digital Audio & GarageBand
Unit 2: Audio Recording Basics
Unit 3: Music Composition with MIDI
Unit 4: Audio Editing & Mixing/ Portfolio Development for Midterm
Unit 5: Sound Design for Media
Unit 6: Podcasting
Unit 7: Artificial Intelligence in Music
Unit 8: Capstone Project & Final Portfolio

Classroom Expectations

-Come to class with a fully charged chromebook (if needed).
-Students will be assigned to a DAW station.
-Students should treat all technology with respect.

Materials & Available Resources:

Garage Band/ Logic Pro

Grading Breakdown

Each quarter grade is based on a percentage model; the following grading formulas have been established.

Marking Period Category Percentages

Category	Percentage
Major Assessments	30%
Minor Assessments	20%
Homework/Classwork	50%

Course Grading

Category	Percentage
Marking Period 1	20%
Marking Period 2	20%
Midterm Exam	10%
Marking Period 3	20%
Marking Period 4	20%
Final Exam	10%

Marking Period 1*

Big Ideas	Topics/Themes/Concepts	Activities & Assessments	Timeline (Estimated Number of Class Periods)
Introduction to Digital Audio & GarageBand	Students explore the basics of digital audio by engaging with GarageBand. They will understand fundamental terminology, navigate the interface, and produce a basic loop-based composition to demonstrate familiarity with digital audio concepts.	Use one or two loops to create a rhythm track Use the midi keyboard to "trigger" a virtual sound ie Bass Drum Formative Assessments: GarageBand interface scavenger hunt Summative Assessments: Create a 30-second loop-based composition Common Benchmark Assessments: Loop Composition Alternative Assessments: Annotated screenshot walkthrough	15
Recording Basics	This unit introduces students to the foundational skills of capturing high-quality audio. They will gain hands-on experience	Use different mics and placements to compare sound Write a script for the voice over track	20

	with microphones, input settings, and GarageBand to produce clean voice recordings and understand recording principles.	Formative Assessments: Microphone type identification activity Gain and input level practice logs DAW walkthrough on how to set up a new vocal recording track

Summative Assessments: Record and edit a spoken word piece: Record and edit a 30–60 second clean voice-over or vocal sample using proper gain staging and mic technique

Common Benchmark Assessments: Recording project with rubric In-Class presentation with peer review and/or feedback Teacher feedback

Alternative Assessments: Design and present a visual diagram of an ideal home podcast/recording setup, labeling each component and its | |

		function	

Subject to revision

Marking Period 2*

Big Ideas	Topics/Themes/Concepts	Activities & Assessments	Timeline (Estimated Number of Class Periods)
Unit 3 Title: Music Composition with MIDI	Unit Summary: Students will explore MIDI technology and its role in modern music production. Through GarageBand or Logic Pro, they will compose music using virtual instruments, edit tracks, and understand key musical concepts like tempo, harmony, and quantization.	Take preexisting tracks and edit in AAB song form (blues) Model original track by importing a session to parody

Formative Assessments: Create a drumbeat with MIDI Periodic checks for understanding throughout instruction Teacher Feedback Student Reflection

Summative Assessments: Compose an 8-bar melody with accompaniment Common Benchmark Assessments: MIDI Composition Rubric | 20 |

		Alternative Assessments: Remix a classmate's track	
Unit 4 Title: Audio Editing & Mixing	Unit Summary: Students will learn to enhance audio quality through mixing techniques. They will work with effects like EQ, compression, and automation to develop a balanced mix, while also considering creative and emotional impact in storytelling through sound. They'll also explore signal flow, dynamics, and spatial effects to refine audio projects in GarageBand or Logic Pro.	Use reverb and delay to add dimension to a track Experiment with EQ to compare different effects on a track

Formative Assessments: Mix critique exercises

Summative Assessments: Mix a 4-track composition Common

Benchmark Assessments: 4-Track Mix Evaluation Rubric

Alternative Assessments: Audio collage mix or partner remix | **25** |

Subject to revision

Midterm Exams: January 21 - January 27

Marking Period 3*

Big Ideas	Topics/Themes/Concepts	Activities & Assessments	Timeline (Estimated Number of Class Periods)
Unit 5 Title: Sound Design for Media	Unit Summary: Students explore the role of sound in multimedia storytelling by designing audio for short video segments, animations, or video games. They will work with sound effects, voice-over, foley(sound effects), and ambient sound to enhance mood, timing, and immersion. Students will also learn to sync sound to visuals using GarageBand or Logic Pro and explore basic scoring and audio-for-video techniques.	View several videos of "Foley Artists" for inspiration and ideas for FX Create a "timeline" in the DAW including memory locations Formative Assessments: Spotting session activity: Identify sound cues in a short clip Foley creation assignment: Record 3+ sound effects for a silent video Sound cue timing worksheet Teacher Feedback Student Reflection Summative Assessments: Mix and master a 1-minute track Score and design all audio (music, dialogue, SFX) for a 30–60 second video clip using GarageBand or Logic Pro. Export with synced audio and submit with an artist	25

		statement Common Benchmark Assessments: Mixing rubric + peer review Alternative Assessments: Audio-only story project: Use only sound to tell a short story (no visuals) Annotated breakdown: Describe each sound used and its purpose in a scene	

Subject to revision

Marking Period 4*

Big Ideas	Topics/Themes/Concepts	Activities & Assessments	Timeline (Estimated Number of Class Periods)
Unit 6 Title: Podcasting	Unit Summary: In this unit, students will produce their own original podcast segments, developing skills in scriptwriting, voice recording, digital editing, storytelling, and media presentation. Students will use GarageBand or Logic Pro to record and edit episodes that demonstrate narrative clarity, vocal expression, and	Research a topic or product to create a script for podcast Work with a pier to review and revise your podcast project Formative Assessments: Planning sketches Teacher Feedback Script Development Review and refining	20

	thoughtful sound design. Emphasis will be placed on tone, pacing, factual accuracy, interview skills, and audio branding. The unit culminates in a class podcast series or showcase.	Periodic teacher progress checks Summative Assessments: Completed Podcast project Teacher Feedback Peer Feedback in-class performance of podcast Student Reflection Rubric Common Benchmark Assessments: Script Development Rubric Teacher anecdotal notes Alternative Assessments: Group podcast roundtable: Students produce a live recorded discussion Reflective blog post or video on the podcasting process and lessons learned	
Unit 7 Title: Artificial Intelligence in Music	Unit Summary: This unit explores how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming music composition. Students will	Review and explore AI generated music with apps such as SONU Discuss the use of AI	**28**

	analyze, evaluate, and create AI-assisted compositions, gaining both technical and critical thinking skills.	to generate popular music and the impact it will have on the artist and industry Formative Assessments: AI Composition Project Student Reflection Essay + Ethics considerations Participation & Exploration: Tool use, group work, feedback sessions Summative Assessments: Final Track Using AI and DAW editing Final Showcase and explanation	
Unit 8 Title: Capstone Project & Final Portfolio	Unit Summary: In this final capstone project, students will compose, arrange, and produce a fully original track (1.5–3 minutes) that reflects their creative identity and demonstrates technical skill in digital audio production. Students will use MIDI, loops, virtual instruments, and effects to design a unique soundscape that communicates mood, emotion, or narrative without lyrics or spoken	Import a selection of tracks that are premade in song form to edit making changes such as rhythm track etc. for your final project Use mastering tools such as compression, stereo imaging, EQ, and global reverb. Formative	32

	word.The emphasis is on creativity, structure, and technical quality. Students will also document their creative process in a brief written reflection and present their work to the class.	Assessments: Project Proposal Pitch: Students submit a short plan outlining their concept, genre, instrumentation, and DAW setup Written pitch or verbal presentation Rough Track Reviews Students present in-progress work to peers for feedback Peer review + teacher comments Skill Check Activities Mini-tasks demonstrating key production skills (e.g., EQ, compression, automation) in isolation. Google Form exit tickets, DAW screenshots Reflection Journals Weekly short entries reflecting on technical challenges and artistic choices. Google Docs or journal sheet Summative Assessments: Final Track	

		(Original Composition) Complete original piece of music demonstrating creativity, structure, and technical quality. Project Documentation Brief write-up (or voiceover) describing composition process, tools used, and challenges overcome. Artistic intent, vocabulary, clarity Mix/Master Quality Judged on clarity, balance, stereo imaging, effects usage, and loudness normalization.　Based on mixing rubric Presentation or Listening Day Students present their work to the class (can include album art, title, and artist statement).　21st-century skill reflection and peer feedback Common Benchmark Assessments: Students complete a guided mini-project:	

		30 seconds of original music that includes: 3+ MIDI instruments 1+ audio recording Use of EQ, compression, automation, and panning Export as WAV and submit project file Alternative Assessments: Video Score or Game Soundtrack Compose music for a short film or video game level using original materials and sound design. Remix Challenge: Create a remix of a royalty-free song using learned techniques Live Performance Recording Record, edit, and mix a live acoustic performance in GarageBand or Logic with original arrangement. Podcast Music Package: Compose theme music and transition beds for a fictional podcast using original material.	

Subject to revision

Final Exams: June 6 - June 13

Make-up Work as per Student Handbook
- Students who are absent from class for any reason will be required to make up the work missed in each class. Completion of this work should take approximately the same amount of time as the student missed from class. In extreme cases of prolonged absence (more than five consecutive days), the Principal may grant extra time for the students to complete missing assignments. Students will receive an incomplete grade pending the submission of the missing assignments. Students will receive a zero for any work that is not completed by the designated timeline.
- It is the student's responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his/her teachers immediately upon return to school. Failure to obtain makeup work is no excuse for not completing work missed. Students have the same amount of time that they have been absent to make up the work.

Academic Integrity Policy as per Student Handbook
Plagiarism Policy
- **Freshmen**: On the first offense, the student may rewrite for a maximum grade of 55. The rewrite should be closely monitored by the teacher because, on the freshman level, we are concerned with students' understanding of the process. On the second offense, the student receives a 0 grade for the final product. (Students' offenses will be filed in the supervisor's office.)
- **Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors:** If the teacher finds that the plagiarism is flagrant or pervasive and can document the same, the assessment may receive a grade of zero.

Cheating
Students are expected to conduct themselves honestly and with integrity in their work. All forms of cheating and plagiarism are prohibited. Behavior that is unacceptable includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Copying another student's work;
- Working with others on projects that are meant to be done individually.

- Looking at or copying another student's test or quiz answers;
- Allowing another student to look at or copy answers from one's test or quiz;
- Using any other method (ie, "cheat sheets", communicating in any form) to get/give test or quiz answers;
- Taking a test or quiz in part or in whole to use or to give to others;
- Copying information from a source without giving proper acknowledgment.
- Taking papers from other students, publications, or internet sources and claiming them as one's own work;
- Academic dishonesty in any other form, including, but not limited to, tampering with computerized grade records;
- Giving or receiving answers and/or test questions to or from another student.

Violators of this policy will be disciplined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the seriousness of the violation, prior violations and other factors.

Disciplinary measures/consequences may include, but are not limited to the following:
- Redoing the assignment (see policy on plagiarism).
- Receiving a zero grade on the project, test, or quiz;
- A letter is sent to the parent and placed in the student's file.
- Detention, suspension, or expulsion.

AI Policy and Regulation
[2365 ACCEPTABLE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)](#)
[R 2365 ACCEPTABLE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)](#)