

MSI210 CREATIVE WRITING AND RESEARCH IN VIRTUAL MUSIC CULTURES

Week 1 Lecture

Dr D Ferrett

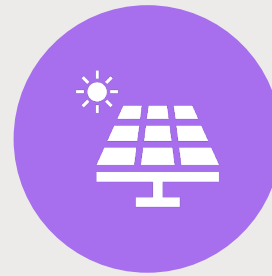
Associate Professor in Music, Sound and Culture



IN THIS MODULE LAUNCH WE WILL DISCUSS..



1. The module and its aims



2. The assessment



3. The module schedule



4. The Module Themes and Questions

AIMS



To develop a critical awareness of professional digital media contexts for writing and research;



To develop the creative writing and research skills required of contemporary practitioners;



To develop the ability to apply skills and knowledge in 'real world' and 'virtual' professional contexts.

MODULE SCHEDULE

Research, Writing & Critical Thinking

- Weeks 1-10 Lecture Series
- Weeks 1-12 Seminar Series

Website and Creative Digital Content

- Weeks 2-4; 7-8 Creating Online Presence Workshops
- Weeks 9-10 Directed Practice (Digisuite)

Formative Feedback and Tutorials

- Week 3-5 Writing and Research Drop Ins
- Week 7, Sign Up Tutorials
- Week 8, 11, 12 Writing and Research Drop Ins

Further Support

- You can [book a session with Rosie Enys on your research](#)
- You can [book a session with Gareth Price or ASK on writing](#)
- You can [book a digital skills session](#)

Key Dates: week 6: submission idea form; week 13: deadline for submission

LECTURE SERIES

- Week 1: Module Launch: Critical questions and concepts about the future of Music and Sound (Dark Sound, Identity and the Environment)
- Week 2: Utopian or Dystopian Futures for Musical Identities (DF)
- Week 3: Utopian or Dystopian Futures for Musical Skill and Performance (SM)
- Week 4: Utopian or Dystopian Futures for the Music Business (SP)
- Week 5: Utopian or Dystopian Futures for Creative Practice: AI and Audio-Visual Composition (SW)
- Week 5: Utopian or Dystopian Futures for DIY and Independent Self-Promotion Online (PS)
- Week 7: Utopian or Dystopian Futures: TBC
- Week 8: Utopian or Dystopian Futures for Song writing: AI and Songwriting (JL)
- Week 9: What can we learn about the future from music and sound?: Deploying Technology Creatively (a case study) (WP)
- Week 10: What can we learn about the future from music and sound?: Deploying Technology Creatively in Music and Sound (a case study) AS



SEMINARS

Guided seminars will give us the opportunity to:

- Pick up on lecture, reading and module themes
- Consider critical questions related to module themes
- Consider the research challenges in relation to module themes
- Guidance for approach to the written and research elements of the module

ASSESSMENT TASK (100 % PORTFOLIO)

WRITTEN WORK

1. **Introduce and explain** the practical element of your work and the rationale for doing what you have chosen to do. Make a case for how the website and any creative digital content/use of social media is representative of your identity and how it shows creativity, critical thinking and research. (300-400 words and reference sources)
2. **Write a 2500-word essay** on what you think about the future of music (as a specific genre, form, style, or profession) in the context of the digital age. With this and the module themes in mind answer either: a) Is the future of music and sound utopian or dystopian? OR b) What does music and/or sound tell us about the future? In either case, ensure your examples are related to the module themes and reference according to the Falmouth Harvard style guide.

CREATIVE WEBSITE

- Create a website that represents your work and corresponds with some of the module themes. Think about the design of the website and how it constructs your online presence. All websites should include an appropriate and effective biog. Think about how the work you make corresponds with the virtual context appropriate to your practice.
- **Any video/audio content should not exceed 15 mins and remember to use the written explanation to explain your process and thinking.**



MODULE THEMES

- Music/Sound and its relationship to technology, primarily digital technologies and the internet.
- Music/Sound and its relationship to online media and content
- Identity as a music and sound practitioner (online)
- Music/Sound and its relationship to the 'real' and the 'virtual'
- Music/Sound, Identity and Artificial Intelligence /Virtual Reality technologies
- Speculating on the future of Music and/or Sound

ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES AND CRITERIA

Learning Outcomes

LO #	Learning Outcome Name	Assessment Criteria Category
1	Creativity: Demonstrate a creative and innovative approach to ideas, materials, and methods	Creative writing is demonstrated in both the text itself and the context of the web page. Creativity develops from comparisons (compare and contrast) within your field as you reach for innovation through various materials and methods of approach. What you ultimately submit should be a refined approach to your creative submission that shows contextual awareness, your imagination and ingenuity.
2	Critical Thinking: Think critically about concepts, contexts and practice, evaluating these through scholarship, and/or self-reflection.	Apply your critical understanding of concepts, contexts and practice as developed through the module and pursued independently through your focus on a key area. Your web submission should demonstrate critical thinking as it informs creativity and the content and form of your language. The formal report requires the formal representation of concepts, analysis, evaluation and self-reflection.
3	Research: Produce informed work through the use of appropriate research methods	Thorough and well-developed understanding of underpinning research should be evidenced in your submissions. The web submission provides the opportunity to demonstrate research creatively and the report offers you the opportunity to demonstrate research in a formal and structured way. 'Appropriate' research methods are measured by the focus, depth and specificity of your submission. Take the module themes and readings, then independently pursue key relevant themes to develop this focus. Harvard style list of resources to be included in the report.

MSI210- SOME KEY CONCEPTS

REAL/REALITY

a : having objective independent existence/unable to believe that what he saw was real

b : not artificial, fraudulent, or illusory : genuine real gold also : being precisely what the name implies a real professional

c(1) : occurring or existing in actuality /saw a real live celebrity/a story of real life

- (2): of or relating to practical or everyday concerns or activities left school to live in the real world
- (3) : behaving or presented in a way that feels true, honest, or familiar and without pretension or affectation
- ... That was the tragedy of Nurse Jackie ... Great nurse. Flawed human being, and an irreparable one. That's also what made her real, and relatable, and what Falco brought so fully to the role ...—
Verne Gay

VIRTUAL/VIRTUALITY

- 1: being such in essence or effect though not formally recognized or admitted a virtual dictator
- 2: being on or simulated on a computer or computer network/print or virtual books/a virtual keyboard

such as

- a: occurring or existing primarily online/virtual shopping
- b: of, relating to, or existing within a virtual reality/a virtual tour
- 3: of, relating to, or using virtual memory
- 4: of, relating to, or being a hypothetical particle whose existence is inferred from indirect evidence/virtual photons

RESEARCH QUESTION AND CHALLENGE
PRESENTED BY THE MODULE:

a) is the future of
music and sound
utopian or
dystopian? OR

b) What does
music and/or
sound tell us
about the future?

MSI210 FURTHER KEY CONCEPTS

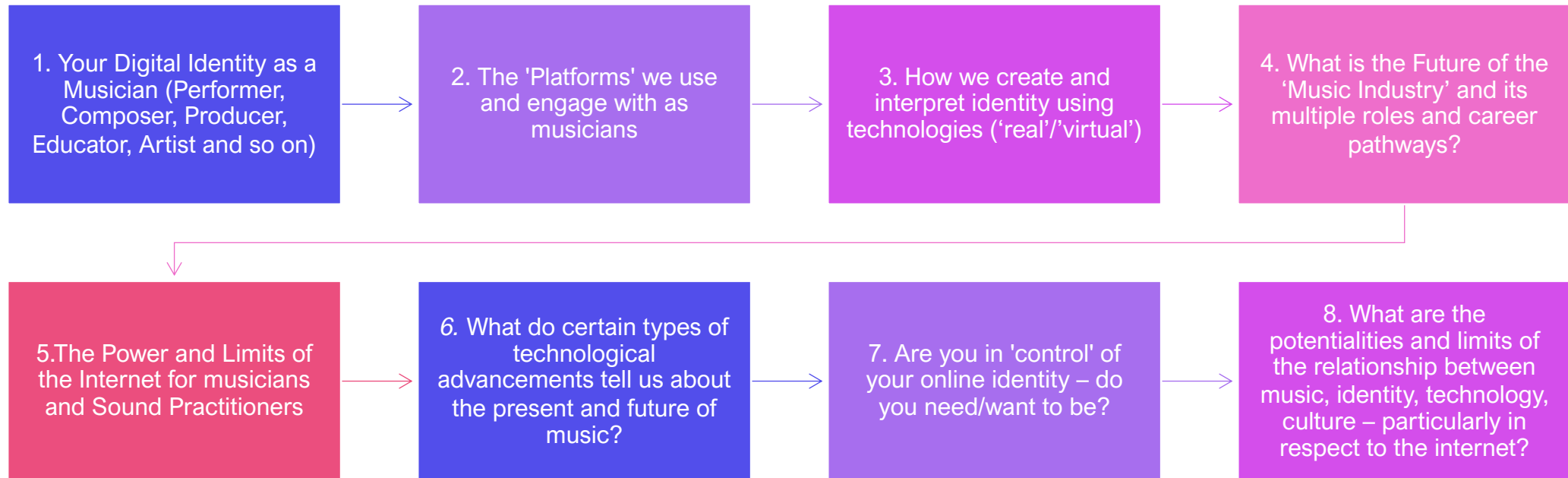
UTOPIA

- a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions
- An ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects.

DYSTOPIA

- An imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression, or terror.

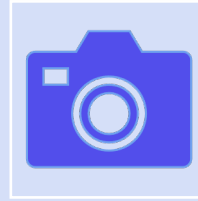
RESEARCH FOCUS



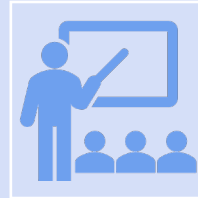
YOUR ASSIGNMENT TASK

You will submit a portfolio (100%) electronically via the learning space that contains:

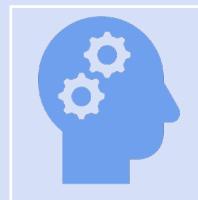
- Website & Creative Digital Content that represents your professional and/or artistic identity (in response to an 'online' context and culture)



Your Creative Research Challenge for the 'Website & Digital Content':



Research other musicians and their presence online with the view of questioning impact, understanding context and cultivating creative ideas for your own digital content.

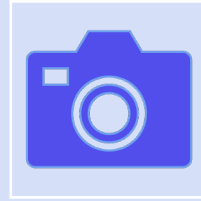


Be creative with appropriate context in mind and develop digital skills to allow for creative (and critical) voice to come through in what you submit

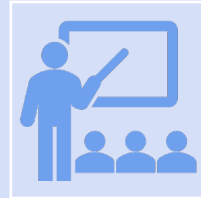
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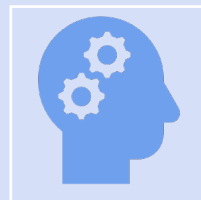
- Written Research Task 1 & 2



Your Challenge for the Written Research:



Explain and account for your website choices and content with regards to the module themes and research.



Drawing on module lectures, seminars, readings and independent research, develop a written response to the essay question.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR MODULE LEARNING

SET AND GUIDED LEARNING

- View the talis aspire reading list and aim to do the essential reading in advance of the lecture and seminar if possible and by the end of each respective week.
- Take notes during lectures, seminars and workshops.
- Sign up for feedback and support

INDEPENDENT STUDY



Research for your digital content



Develop digital skills in relation to development of your ideas



Taking the module themes into account, research and organize your own reading lists and resources



Taking lectures and seminar tasks into account, develop ideas and research to prepare for your responses to these tasks/questions.

QUESTIONS, ANXIETIES AND CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES
WHAT IS AT THE ROOT OF ANXIETY ABOUT THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MUSIC/SOUND AND
TECHNOLOGY?



LONGFORM
**Will AI Lead to New Creative
Frontiers, or Take the Pleasure Out
of Music?**

Can we now train machines to play and write music that goes beyond mere mimicry—but does that mean we *should*?

By Philip Sherburne
May 24, 2022



If you make your
living in music, the
job you have today
will probably not exist
in five to 10 years

"We can now train machines to play and write music that goes beyond mere mimicry—but does that mean we *should*?" Philip Sherburne, Pitchfork May 2022

KEY OPENING QUESTIONS FOR THIS WEEK...



- What is the internet?
- What did it promise to be and what is it now?
- Is the internet a utopia or a dystopia?
- Do you think 'we' are in control...or 'it'?
- Does the internet help or hinder musicians?
- What is the future of language on the internet?
- Is it possible to understand technology and the internet?

THE NEW DARK AGE?

- ▶ “This is a book about what technology is trying to tell us in an emergency. It is also a book about what we know, how we know, and what we cannot know.”
- ▶ A simply functional understanding of systems is insufficient; one needs to be able to think about histories and consequences too. Where did these systems come from, who designed them and what for, and which of these intentions still lurk within them today?
- ▶ A chasm in our understanding of what technology is and means for us
- ▶ An age of crisis?



MSI210 WEEK 1 SEMINAR

**THIS MODULE IS, IN
PART, ABOUT
RESEARCHING
DIGITAL PRESENCE
AND BEING ON THE
INTERNET AS MUSIC
AND SOUND
CREATIVES AND
PROFESSIONALS IN
THE CONTEXT OF THE
'REAL-WORLD'**





QUESTIONS WE ARE CONSIDERING ...

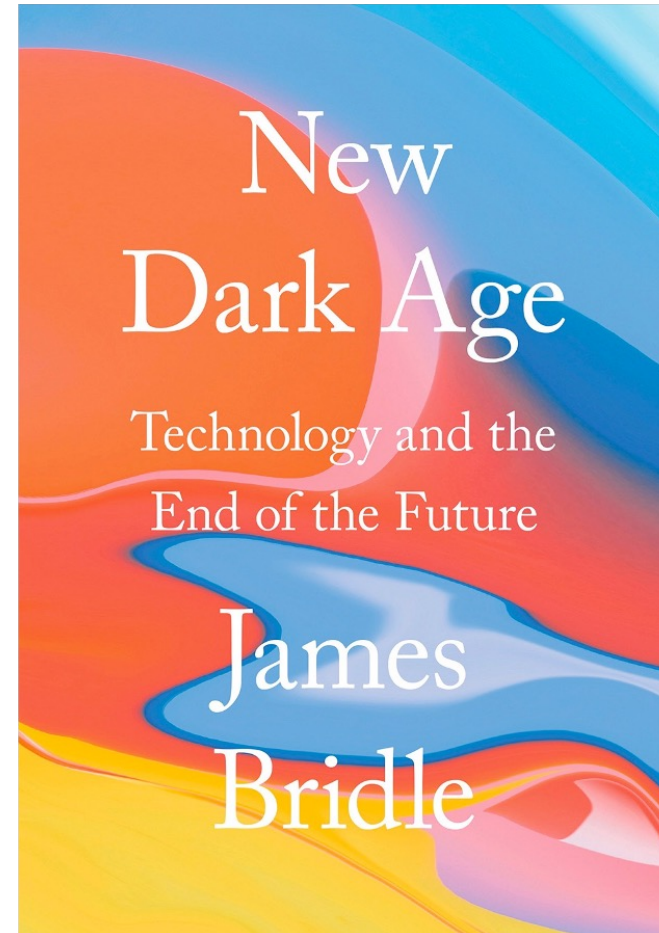
- How have technologies of the digital age, and in particular the internet and social media culture, effected the way we listen to, consume, buy/sell, commodify, represent, interpret, understand, know and make music?
- How does control/power in relation to various technologies effect repression/oppression/freedom in relation to knowledge, information, thinking and creativity?
- How have digital technologies and in particular online presence impacted on our understanding of musicianship, creativity and the roles of music and sound specialists ?



**IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND
THE INTERNET?**

HOW DO WE RECKON WITH NOT KNOWING, NOT UNDERSTANDING, THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL THINGS?!!

- “We often struggle to conceive of and describe the scope and scale of new technologies, meaning that we have trouble even thinking them. What is needed is not new technology, but new metaphors: a metalanguage for describing the world that complex systems have wrought.
- A new shorthand is required, one that simultaneously acknowledges and addresses the reality of a world in which people, politics, culture and technology are utterly enmeshed. We have always been connected - unequally, illogically, and some more than others - but entirely and inevitably. What changes in the network is that this connection is visible and undeniable. We are confronted at all times by the radical interconnectedness of things and our selves, and we must reckon with this realisation in new ways.” (p.5)



OTHER WAYS OF THINKING

▶ “We don't and cannot understand everything, but we are capable of thinking it. The ability to think without claiming, or even seeking, to fully understand is key to survival in a new dark age because, as we shall see, it is often impossible to understand. Technology is and can be a guide and helpmate in this thinking, providing we do not privilege its output: computers are not here to give us answers, but are tools for asking questions. As we will see recur throughout this book, understanding a technology deeply and systemically often allows us to remake its metaphors in the service of other ways of thinking.” (Example of the ‘cloud’ as central metaphor of internet - and Bridle critiques it).

BAD METAPHOR?

METAPHOR: ‘: A FIGURE OF SPEECH IN WHICH A WORD OR PHRASE LITERALLY DENOTING ONE KIND OF OBJECT OR IDEA IS USED IN PLACE OF ANOTHER TO SUGGEST A LIKENESS OR ANALOGY BETWEEN THEM (AS IN DROWNING IN MONEY)’

- ▶ “Downtime aside, the first criticism of this cloud is that it is a very bad metaphor. The cloud is not weightless; it is not amorphous, or even invisible, if you know where to look for it. The cloud is not some magical faraway place, made of water vapour and radio waves, where everything just works. It is a physical infrastructure consisting of phone lines, fibre optics, satellites, cables on the ocean floor, and vast ware houses filled with computers, which consume huge amounts of water and energy and reside within national and legal jurisdictions. The cloud is a new kind of industry, and a hungry one. The cloud doesn't just have a shadow; it has a footprint. Absorbed into the cloud are many of the previously weighty edifices of the civic sphere: the places where we shop, bank, socialise, borrow books, and vote. Thus obscured, they are rendered less visible and less amenable to critique, investigation, preservation and regulation.” (Bridle, p.7)

REASONS FOR OBSCURITY?

- “Another criticism is that this lack of understanding is deliberate. There are good reasons, from national security to corporate secrecy to many kinds of malfeasance, for obscuring what's inside the cloud. What evaporates is agency and ownership: most of your emails, photos, status updates, business documents, library and voting data, health records, credit ratings, likes, memories, experiences, personal preferences and unspoken desires are in the cloud, on somebody else's infrastructure. There's a reason Google and Facebook like to build data centres in Ireland (low taxes) and Scandinavia (cheap energy and cooling). There's a reason global, supposedly post colonial empires hold onto bits of disputed territory like Diego Garcia and Cyprus, and it's because the cloud touches down in these places, and their ambiguous status can be exploited. The cloud shapes itself to geographies of power and influence, and it serves to reinforce them. The cloud is a power relationship, and most people are not on top of it.” 7-8

TO CRITICALLY READ RELATIONSHIPS WITH TECHNOLOGY IS NOT ANTI-TECHNOLOGY

- Nothing here is an argument against technology: to do so would be to argue against ourselves. Rather, it is an argument for a more thoughtful engagement with technology, coupled
- with a radically different understanding of what it is possible to think and know about the world. Computational systems, as tools, emphasise one of the most powerful aspects of humanity: our ability to act effectively in the world and shape _{it} to our desires. But uncovering and articulating those desires, and ensuring that they ^{do} not degrade, overrule, efface, or erase the desires ^{of} others, remains our prerogative. (12-13)

LEARNING TO THINK...?

- ‘And so we find ourselves today connected to vast repositories of knowledge, and yet we have not learned to think. In fact, the opposite is true: **that which was intended to enlighten the world in practice darkens it.** The abundance of information and the plurality of worldviews now accessible to us through the internet are not producing a coherent consensus reality, but one riven by fundamentalist insistence on simplistic narratives, conspiracy theories, and post factual politics. It is on this contradiction that the idea of a new dark age turns: an age in which the value we have placed upon knowledge is destroyed by the abundance of that profitable commodity, and in which we look about ourselves in search of new ways to understand the world. (10-11)

CAN 'WE' DISCONNECT? DO 'WE' WANT OR NEED TO?

You Are Not Connected to the Internet

This page can't be displayed because your computer is currently offline.

Network Diagnostics can help you solve network connection problems.

[Network Diagnostics...](#)

