Unit 3: *Reflections; Setting up Voice and Sound*
<u>Jan. 22</u>

The first part of lecture was aimed at doing reflective work, individually (with students writing down things from this course that have been important to you), and then collectively in discussion.

We then took stock of the first third of the course, its aims and foundations, the intention of viewing voice from different disciplines, and the important work of developing different frameworks for conceptualizing and exploring voice.

In the second part of the lecture we set the groundwork for the next third of the course, which will carry us through different areans, including film, media studies, speech and singing, music, and song.

Two important points our next phase will work to destablize:

•Voice as a guarantor of truth

•Voice as only a channel to transmit a more important linguistic message, thus privileging content over vocal form, making voice lose its significance.

Ideologies of Voice

"Ideologies of voice determine how and where we locate subjectivity and agency; they are the conditions that give sung or spoken utterances their power or constrain their potential effects."

Amanda Weidman, "Anthropology and Voice" in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43 (2014): 45.

Mediated Voices
Voice in its capacity as a <u>sound object</u> is inherently mediated. It relies on air as a mediator to transmit sounds. But, many of the voices we encounter in daily lives

are mediated by more complicated technologies: film, radio, microphones, recording technology, digital technology.

Because of sound technologies, voices are able to circulate separately from human bodies that produce them. This is what we call:

Acousmatic sound

"A sound that is heard without its cause or source being seen."
Michel Chion, *The Voice in the Cinema* (1982), 18.

The capacity of technology to create new subjects, new publics, and new forms of authority through voice has allowed voice to project notions like authenticity, or assumptions about identities and sources of power and discipline.

Sound technologies don't just amplify, record, or transmit voices, they help shape social realities.

Important take-away

The material practices, the institutions, and the technologies through which voices become audible crucially determine how voices are understood and how they are heard.