

Grande Prairie Regional College
Fine Arts Department
Course Outline

Electronic Notation

DD 2091 A2 03Q (3-0-0) Fall 2003

This course is not currently "university transfer" to other institutions.

M, W: 16:00-17:20, L201

Instructor: Geoffrey Whittall

Office: L-119, Office Hours: When my door is open, or by appointment.

Phone: 539-2823

E-mail: gwhittall@gprc.ab.ca

Course Description

DD 2091 is a course designed to give you functional skills using one tool (out of many) for creating electronic notation. This year, we are using Coda Music's Finale 2002, which is now in about its 8th or 9th generation. As such, it is a highly evolved and sophisticated program that allows manipulation of just about everything you will want, much less find time, to manipulate in a score. Despite that, it does not produce music publishing house quality without a great deal of tweaking, and so while the scores you present will initially look quite slick, they don't rival materials published by the industry, especially if you use Finale's defaults. We will be spending little if any time talking about these differences, as the purpose of this course is not to turn you into a professional engraver, but into a functional engraver, who can provide copies of music you write, arrange, import, or tidy up, for yourself or other performing musicians. Written music is still the medium of exchange between most professional musicians. While providing recordings is a useful way to share your product, it is not a useful way to provide product to musicians who will have to perform your works. Hiring engravers is expensive. Finale provides presentable copies of your work and—perhaps equally importantly—it also provides an environment in which you can work, compose, and arrange, providing the ability to manipulate your music more or less instantly, check how things sound following changes, revert to earlier versions, save and back up multiple generations, and more. If you are a poor calligrapher (like me), Finale allows you to provide readable music to yourself (if you can't for example, read your own notes with accuracy) and to others. It also allows you to resize music, make minor adjustments, improve awkward page turns, and more, literally at the click of a mouse.

This course does not pretend to be a complete discussion of Finale, or an exhausting discussion of its many features; the online manual prints out to 4 large binders full of paper. Nor does it attempt to cover the art of music engraving; that would be an entire additional class. Rather, the goal of this course is to provide you with the skills to be able to perform some of the most common tasks that I expect you may need professionally, in terms of copying/engraving.

Prerequisite: MU 1000 or ability to read music. An understanding of basic music theory will certainly make your life much easier, as we will be dealing with transposition, chords, key changes, etc.

Required Materials:

Essential Dictionary of Music Notation by Tom Gerou and Linda Lusk.
Alfred Publishing, 1996.

You will probably also find manuscript paper useful to help you sketch out musical ideas, as you can create rough scribbles faster on paper than on the computer.

Additionally, you may find blank CDs useful to burn backup copies of your work periodically; the eMacs have the ability to burn CDs, and while blanks are cheap, you can save money by burning “sessions” instead of “discs”. Nothing is so thrilling as to walk into the lab, and discover that you or someone else has accidentally deleted your work.

Progression Policy: This is Fine Arts Department policy. All students who are absent from more than 20% of this class may be told to leave the class. Students must submit 85% of the term assignments to be allowed to submit the final project. Students who are not allowed to submit the final project will receive a grade of “0” for that project.

Evaluation:

Weekly Assignments:	80%
Term Final Project	20%

Assignments will NOT be accepted late unless you negotiate the extension well in advance of the due date: i.e. you will not get an extension if you walk into class the day an assignment is due, and ask for an extension. This course is not only about being able to navigate your way through Finale, but also to use it efficiently. Learning that efficiency is essential if you want Finale to be a friendly environment for you. Copyists often work under tight deadlines (e.g. you scribble a piece for a friend who has given you a deadline for performance, you barely make the deadline, and you now have to make a readable performance copy in almost no time for the piece to be practiced and rehearsed before performance).

You will always have what I feel to be ample time to complete your assignments. Manage your time carefully, and ask for help if you need it, as soon as you recognise that need.

There is no midterm or final exam in this course. The Final assignment will be a major project that will be most easily and efficiently done if you start about 2/3 of the way through the semester. It must be submitted within one week of the last class session. Final projects will be negotiated on an individual basis with each student. For those students in DD 2391, you may consider using a project from that class. For others, we will find a project of interest to you.

The Lab:

1. Use only software specifically necessary for the classes you are taking in this lab. For example, if you are only in DD 2091, you may only use Finale. Don’t take the chance of messing up software or hardware that someone else has to work with.
2. Do not intentionally or destructively alter system, software, or MIDI settings or preferences. Not only are “altered” settings not funny, they can seriously hamper the ability of other students to work at that station. The golden rules applies here...
3. Do not remove preferences or other system files from the computers without the explicit permission of your instructor. Do NOT install ANY software in the lab.

Infraction of any of the rules listed above may be construed as “Disruptive Conduct” (see p. 40 of the Calendar) against the Fine Arts Department, and against the College and its Students.

Offences may result in your being removed from this Lab, and you may be thrown out of any classes for which you need this Lab.