

Music 178A: Computer Skills for Musicians

Winter 2008 / Sec. # 05009
Mon/Wed 2:10–3:00 p.m.
(Mark Phillips, Professor—on leave)

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Beginning with a basic overview of computer technology and terminology and general use, the course will serve primarily as an introduction to various software tools specifically for musicians: MIDI sequencing software, digital audio recording software, and other software useful for generating and/or manipulating music &/or sound. Lab projects will comprise the bulk of the work, with students completing several small-scale projects and one Final Project to demonstrate their ability in the main components of the course.

Course Outline (lecture topics subject to considerable modification!)

- Week 1** MIDI Lab Workstation Basics: Introduction to MIDI sequencing using MOTU's *Digital Performer* software (DP5) — recording simple MIDI sequences using General MIDI presets, adjust playback/record speed, copy, cut, paste, shift, transpose, contextual “Balloon” Help, etc.
- Week 2** More DP5 MIDI sequencing: graphic & notation editing windows, step record, loops, other “Region” menu items
- Week 3** More DP5 MIDI sequencing: click options & quantizing; conductor track; mixing board
>>>>> optional rough draft of DP5 mini-project due 1/23 <<<<<<<
- Week 4** Introduction to digital audio features in DP5
>>>>> DP5 mini-project due 1/30 <<<<<<<
- Week 5** Introduction to multi-track audio with DP5: basic file management; simple editing, importing digital audio from CD
- Week 6** Analog-to-digital recording with DP5; simple mixing; “on-board” effects;
>>>>> rough draft of digital audio mini-project due 2/13 <<<<<<<
- Week 7** Introduction to Jazz/Popular Music Production & Education MIDI software — *Band-In-A-Box* Standard MIDI File Format (importing and exporting Standard MIDI files)
>>>>> digital audio mini-project due 2/20 <<<<<<<
- Week 8** Introduction to *Garage Band* — QUIZ
>>>>> *Band-In-A-Box* mini-project due 2/27 <<<<<<<
- Week 9** More on *Garage Band* — QUIZ
- Week 10** TBA
>>>>> rough draft of Final Project due 3/12 (DP5 & /or *Garage Band*)
- Final** **Tuesday March 18, at 12:20 p.m** (regularly scheduled exam time!)
Final Project due (DP5 & /or *Garage Band*)
attendance will be required at scheduled exam time for in-class presentation of final projects

Grading Policy: Grades will be determined primarily by the quality and timeliness of the mini-projects and especially by the final project. In addition, there will be a 40-point quiz. Attendance will account for part of your grade as well. Academic dishonesty will result in class grade of F.

3 mini-projects: 50 + 60 + 40 = 150 pts. **final project:** 70 pts. **quiz:** 40 pts. **attendance:** 20 pts.
draft submissions: 10 [mini- proj. #2] + 10 [final proj.] = 20 pts. [plus extra 10 bonus pts. possible]
total points: 300 pts. [plus 10 bonus pts. for extra draft submissions]

Mini Project Guidelines

Below are some ideas to use as guidelines for the three mini-projects. These are designed to encourage experience and minimum competency with three basic types of music software. Expectations are modest. Students are not expected to master all of the intricacies and complexities of the software, but merely demonstrate an understanding of the basics of the program.

Students are encouraged to submit drafts of their work for evaluation and suggestions whenever possible. You can turn in work after any session where you've saved work towards completion of a project. In addition to receiving extra credit for these draft submissions, they will likely improve your grade on the project.

Mini-Project 1: *Digital Performer 5 – MIDI sequencing* >>>>>(optional draft due: 1/23) **due: 1/30** <<<

- Create a short multi-timbral General MIDI sequence using *DP5* and the Korg 0/5RW with...
 - >at least three tracks (more is better) using multiple instrument timbres, (drums go on MIDI ch. 10)
 - >original composition or arrangement is encouraged, but not required
 - >use “Default Patch” (or “Insert...Patch Change” in Event window) to set up all your instruments
 - >synchronized to click track with effective use of step record, &/or quantization
 - >ca. 1-2 min. duration.
 - >record audio version of project; export stereo AIFF format, suitable for CD burning.

Mini-Project 2: *DP5 – Digital Audio* >>> **due: 2/13** (draft), & **2/20** (completed) <<<

- Import some of the audio material from the “Music 178A Folder” on the hard drive.
- Import or record a small amount of your own audio (no clips longer than 30 sec. w/ prior approval)
- Make several “edits” (copy/cut/paste, reverse, gain changes, etc.)
- Create several “automated mix” event (i.e. fade in/out, pan, etc.)
- create a stereo mix of your project (“Bounce to Disk”)
- Turn in a “working copy” of entire project on CD (see next page for complete instructions)

Mini-Project 3: *Band-in-a-Box* >>> **due: 2/27** <<<

- Create a pop song “lead sheet” or use sheet music or a “fake book” — (do not use an existing song file)
 - >enter chord symbols
 - >choose appropriate style, set appropriate tempo, set up repeats
 - > record melody (*optional*)
 - >Do “Save Song” (Under File Menu) to save BIAB file of your Project.
 - >Do “Save MIDI File” (Under File Menu) to create a Standard MIDI File of your project
- Use *DP5* to “enhance” your project
 - > Launch *DP5* and Close *Untitled* (under File menu)
 - >Do “Open” (under File menu) and look for the SMF of your project; then save as *DP5* file
 - >record melody (if you didn't already do it in BIAB)
 - >add 1–2 tracks of additional material in *DP5* (improvised solo, background riffs, percussion, etc.)

Final Project: **due: 3/12** (draft) & **3/18** (final)

Choose one of the following:

- 1) a *DP5* project (an original composition or a transcription/arrangement of existing music)
- 2) a *Garage Band* project (an original composition or a transcription/arrangement of existing music)

Guidelines: (for either version)

- >longer, more elaborate, and more musically developed than mini-project 1 or 2
- >may use *Band-in-a-Box* to generate some (but not all) of the project
- >must have several tracks with different instruments set up on each track
- >should be well-synchronized to a click track (if appropriate to the style of music)

NOTE: You may use SMF format to exchange MIDI data from one program to another.