

Rough draft of score due at the start of class on Tuesday, March 15.

Final score and parts due at the start of class on Tuesday, March 22.
Have a full set of parts plus a copy of the score.

Computer notation is not required but is strongly encouraged; it makes it easier to revise later and will save you much time copying out parts.

Readings: Time permitting, we will set aside classes for reading through the projects, but this may not be possible. If the class has interest, we may look to schedule some readings outside of class meeting times.

General guidelines for either option (A or B)

- The idea of the model-composition approach is for you to be creative and have fun as you learn a technique or style. There is nothing quite like imitation to learn something from the inside out. Follow the technical procedures carefully as explained in the individual project instructions, but don't view the stylistic aspects of a project as a "laundry list" you must fulfill. Use your imagination.
- The rough draft will receive an independent score as a component of the overall project grade. Drafts are to help you plan your time and receive helpful feedback. A high grade on a draft does not promise a high score on the completed project.
- Your final draft must include detailed articulation, dynamic, tempo, and other expressive indications.
- Pieces should include the following, as applicable: title (and movement) indications, composer name (you), lyricist, and clear indication of instrumentation.
- Check all notation for correctness. The Gerou and Lusk text *Essential Dictionary of Music Notation* (Alfred Publishing) is an excellent guide.
- All final scores must be submitted in hard copy. No exceptions! But save any computer files as well.
- Unexpected problems with technology are routine. Therefore, problems are to be expected. The advantages and disadvantages of computers are a fact of modern life. Plan appropriately, back up your work to **your own** media (not the lab computers) and/or the cloud, and do not depend on things working smoothly at the last minute.

Assessment:

Substantive rough draft, completed on time	15 pts
Score and parts neatly and correctly notated, and on time	20 pts
Follows all required project parameters	30 pts
Scope of effort & aesthetic interest	20 pts
Clear, informative analysis	15 pts
Total	100 pts

Project 1 option A: Impressionist Prelude

Models: Debussy *Préludes*, esp. bk. I no. 2 “Voiles” & no. 10 “La cathédrale engloutie”; Messiaen *Prélude* no. 1, “La colombe”

Instrumentation: piano solo **OR** piano plus one other instrument drawn from the class (oboe, violin, alto sax, trumpet, trombone, violin, viola, classical percussion, guitar, voice)

Duration: circa 2-5 minutes, circa 2-10 pages

Form: at least three clearly distinct sections with at least one clear sectional contrast. This could be ABA (like “Voiles”), ABAB (like “La colombe”), or you can employ a more involved, possibly more nebulous form (as in “La cathédrale”).

Modal structure: Each section will be based on a distinct mode.

- If your piece is ABA, the “A” section will use one mode, the “B” section another. If your piece has a more complex form, each section or distinct phrase will stay within a certain mode.
- The modes should contrast clearly (i.e. not have too many pitches in common), but some overlap of pitch content makes for effective transitions.
- The modes should be used fairly strictly. You may use notes outside the mode as passing or neighbor tones (as in “Voiles”) or for occasional variety, but not so much that the modal identity is obscured.
- You may use traditional and/or “synthetic” modes. Debussy most often used the Church modes and the pentatonic, whole-tone, Lydian-Mixolydian, and octatonic scales.

Harmony: If you follow the instructions above, your harmony will be more *modal* than *tonal* or *chromatic*. In addition, the following harmonic devices are typical of Debussy:

- Parallelism (planing): triads, dominant 7th chords, and other harmonic structures in parallel motion, sometimes doubling an important melody, sometimes as background. Parallelism can be *modal* (staying within the mode) or *real* (maintaining the exact chord quality, even if that results in harmony notes that are outside the mode).
- Pedal points: these can be quite long and often consist of more than a single tone: a pedal fifth, pedal chord, even a whole pentatonic scale.

Melody: Debussy often writes in very short melodic cells which repeat over changing harmony. His melodies often build up from these short units, unlike most classical melodies which sound as if they are conceived from the start as long-breathed 8-bar (or longer) periods. He often treats these cells flexibly, using varied numbers of repetitions to create different “molecules” from the motivic “atoms”.

Texture: Use the whole piano. Debussy often has three active registers sounding at once for a “3-hand” effect. Note: this does not have to be virtuosic to be effective.

Expressive indications: Impressionist music (and much 20th-C music generally) contains highly detailed expressive indication (dynamics, articulation, tempi, pedaling). Your piece must include detailed performance directions.

Impressionistic titles/instructions: Impressionist music in particular is notable for its suggestive titles and performance instructions. More often than not these are visual or pictorial. Impressionist pieces often convey a single striking mood or impression. Try to capture an idea or image in your piece and title it appropriately.

Analysis: You should include a clear and complete explanation of the modal content of your piece, section by section (or more detailed as appropriate). Also discuss any harmonic or melodic procedures that are Impressionistic. If your piece is expressive of its title, explain how.

Project 1 option B: Isorhythmic Trio or Quartet

Model: Messiaen “Liturgie de cristal” from *Quartet for the End of Time*

Instrumentation: 3-4 players, drawn from the class (oboe, clarinet, trumpet, tenor sax, violin, viola, piano, classical percussion, voice).

Duration: circa 2-5 minutes, circa 4-16 pages of score

Formal procedure: Your piece will be based on one or more isorhythmic structures. Each isorhythm should employ a *talea* (rhythmic cycle) and *color* (pitch cycle) of different lengths. At least one of the isorhythmic patterns should run through the entire movement. You may choose what elements are governed by isorhythmic cycles: it could be certain instruments (like the piano and cello in the Messiaen), or it could be certain dimensions (for example, a harmonic progression, or the notes of a certain register) that are not necessarily identified with only one instrument.

Structure: Think about the relationship between isorhythmically determined and free writing in your piece. Remember that the isorhythmic elements are not “beyond your control” just because you follow a strict procedure, because **you** determine the content of the *talea* and *color*. However, once you have set these elements, follow them strictly. If you make occasional exceptions (i.e. break the “rules” of the isorhythm) do it in such a way that the overall isorhythmic patterning predominates and is clearly discernible in the score.

You might also listen to and study the scores of Arvo Pärt’s *Fratres*, Steve Reich’s *Piano Phase*, and Ligeti’s Piano Étude No. 1 (“Désordre”) for other examples of strict constructionist processes. We will study these pieces in the coming weeks.

Texture: Think about all the instrumental combinations possible, including subsets (solos, duos), and think of the different individual textures each instrument can contribute.

Expressive indications: Give **clear, detailed** information on tempo, articulation, and dynamics.

Style: The above instructions will direct your approach to pitch, rhythm, and structure. You should **not** feel obligated to make your piece sound like Messiaen generally. However, you may want to use this project to explore some of Messiaen’s “modes of limited transposition” and/or his use of added-value rhythms.

Analysis: You should include a clear and complete explanation of the role of isorhythm, including writing out your *talea* and *color*. Explain how you chose the parameters, and point out any places where you veer from the strict implementation of the isorhythmic process. If you wish to say anything else about the piece, you may.