

End of Days

by Rhiannon Coppin

The Final Stretch of ENSC340, the Project Course that Refuses to Die

T-5 Friday

Another group drops out. Theoretically, nine of nine groups of four or five should be finished their engineering projects by December 19. It is now December 14, and no one appears to be near done. I am working in the lab and receive news of a death in the family. I refuse to confront my mortality at first, but ultimately end up crying.

What does 340 matter? I'm going to die one day! How will I feel then if, before my chest heaves its last, I am granted moments to realize that I wasted a whole healthy week for something I'm not even getting paid for? I realize that all I can truly hope for is that death comes suddenly if and when it does...

Why is it so hard for my group to all be in the same place at once? I'm staring to think that my group has only 3 members: one of us leaves the room and changes skin and clothes and returns as the fourth.

T-4 Saturday

It's still snowing. The helicopter guys can't test. Someone was mixing food colouring to simulate what water looks like after you add other-chemical stuff to try to determine its PH. Or something. My stomach hurts. The thought of never finishing this stupid project makes me cry, and rant, and yell at Bon. Bon is a good friend. Bon is also nearing completion of his project and therefore I hate him.

T-3 Sunday

Fizzle! Crash, Bang. End of the world as we know it. Our chips blew up. Or the LCD display? Who knows. All of a sudden nothing continues to work. It continues to not work for the rest of the day. I take a break in the evening to watch an old movie with my boyfriend. I'm a little un-perky with the sense of dread that 340 brings to me.

T-2 Monday

I hate my life. Score Stobor: 3 – 340: 0.

Had a chat with another nth year taking this. He tried to take this before and his group ended up just looking around in wonder, as if a ghost was speaking, in the 3rd or 4th week into the course whenever he spoke: apparently no one had told him he had been phased-out two weeks earlier to make way for a friend of theirs.

Someone seriously needs to tell us where to get free parts. And replaceable ones. Why did I find out today about Maxim? Or Semi? Why? Oh, I remember: It is too late to make use of them, that's why.

I decided that when people do this course again, they need to form pairs. Then the pairs are randomly assigned with other pairs. That way, everyone gets at least 1 person to work with of their choosing, but there is a better chance that the wealth of talents and personalities are spread more equitably. That way your project isn't as dependent on who you know, and rather on how hard you can work.

T-1 Tuesday

Managed to order the part we need. 15 of them. Anyone need a PIC16F?

Talked to Steve. Score Stobor: 4 – 340: 0

Momo brought cookies. Momo is a good friend. But, she is finished exams and all course work which is unfortunate, because now I must secretly resent her as well.

3 am: Some members of my group are playing "assembler roulette". Seriously – they are taking bets. I'm a little scared.

There are three "Eric"s within a 5m X 3m space. This makes team communications interesting, if not challenging. I hear swear words followed by moments of intense silent anguish. I hear moments of intense silent anguish followed by bouts of swearing. Around 5 or 5:30 am, a bunch of guys were pronouncing a particular 4-letter word in tandem rounds. It was almost musical, and very much like the all-male Finnish shouting choir (for those of you who are familiar with their works).

0 Wednesday

I can't believe this is a 3 credit course still. Then again, how hard would everyone work if it were 4, 5, or 6 credits? People won't do the same amount of work as they do now – they will up it! If the term consisted of everyone taking ENSC100, ENSC305, and ENSC 340, maybe with one elective like KIN or ECON, then perhaps it may be manageable. Forget taking 383, 327, 325 – what are you trying to pull?

I'm supposed to finish today. Well, we changed our demo to tomorrow and it looks hopeful that we might finish! Let's see...

Post-Mortem

Well, we didn't finish. We stayed up all night again and our last chip fizzled at 9 am. We haven't been able to order more and won't be able to until January 1st. Don't let this happen to you. I was supposed to be done Wednesday. It is now Thursday, the day I'm meant to spend all of with my boyfriend. I go to sleep at 10am and wake up at 2pm, in a very depressed state. Bon and Momo convince me to go look at kitchen stuff with them. (It takes my mind away from constantly thinking of myself as pathetic anyways.) Call my boyfriend. Call him again later. Fight. Next day: fight more. Next day: fight more plus breakup. I get dumped. Now I have all the time in the world and no one to spend it with. I pity myself. I write things for ENSCquire.

Do I blame 340 for my current state of affairs? Yes. It makes one unable to handle simple every-day situations. I broke down into tears quite frequently, which is a feat I haven't managed for quite some time. The fact that I was accused by my boyfriend of being 'in pain' too often, I confess, leads me to point the blame at 340, which is the Source of All Earthly Pain.

All this for 3 credits!? 3 stupid credits!? Whatever!

Still not finished,
Rhiannon Coppin