

Hi!

Here's some general info you'll want to have to be ready for Physics this semester. Sorry for the length!

0. Books:

As you'll note at <https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/pogobooks.html>, older editions of the book are OK! Today, I saw that Amazon had copies as low as \$20. Since the books are so inexpensive, I urge you not to buy an electronic or pirated copy. When you use an electronic copy, you have to split your screen space into the book, your notes or lecture content, and your homework working space (i.e., CAPA). Having a paper book allows you to work faster since you aren't switching around so much. While I'm ranting about that, it reminds me that laptop users have been measured to be *far* more time effective when they use a real mouse rather than a touch pad or even worse, a touch screen. If you want to increase your productivity, buy a \$5 mouse and keep it with your laptop! Or, if you like being slow and inefficient, just use your touch screen anyway.

1. Web Browsers

Course content will be posted on the course homepage rather than Canvas... so there's a lot less clicking and hunting needed: <https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/GeneralI/GeneralI.htm>

Bookmark that page so you don't have to keep going back to Canvas (or this letter!). Also, homework is online, so bookmark the CAPA page, too (<http://capa.geneseo.edu/>). Generally, you get ten tries for each homework question, and you get full credit whether you get it right on your first or on your tenth try. On that site, you should print a paper copy of your assignment (using the pdf which has been nicely formatted to fit on a single page) to keep with your homework log.

Many of you have accepted your browser's default setting of "every time I reload any website, please auto-submit any answer in any input box that this website possesses". If you have not turned it off, then it is already turned on! If you have this option turned on, you should turn it off. For one, it's a security hazard. For another, the resubmitted data will count as one of your attempts to answer homework questions in the CAPA system! **When this happens to you, don't even bother to tell me**, because I don't have the authority to change your browser settings. This is for **you** to fix!

2. Office Hours/Discord

Office hours will use Discord; see the syllabus for when I'll be available. My discord "server" for office hours is: <https://discord.gg/GjkWREU>. Discord will allow you to speak, listen, post screen captures or other electronic images, and post text. Discord maintains a log of all the "written" stuff that we talk about (but not any audio content), so you can read through prior "discussions"... even discussions from past years!

You should *practice* using Discord before the semester begins, especially the audio capabilities. Audio doesn't work well when you merely run Discord in a web browser... install the actual app! You'll need to authorize Discord to access your microphone... that won't happen by default. Also, you might want to set up Discord to make sure you fully log out when you're done (as opposed to just minimizing Discord to the background). For Discord beginners, click on the gear (near the lower left), then go to App Settings/Windows Settings, and turn off all the options you see there.

You will get a (small) grade for using office hours: you must ask at least one relevant question in at least two separate calendar months (August, September, etc.). So, technically, you might complete 100% of this requirement by September 6.

Office hours are “first come first served”, but each student may only ask one question whenever other students are waiting patiently. After asking a question, you’ll have to wait until your turn comes around again while others get a turn. Office hours are not course-specific; in any sessions, there will probably be students from various classes there at the same time.

3. Workload

Did you know that the course number or level (e.g., PHYS 113 is a “one hundred” level course) has NOTHING to do with how difficult the course is? Course levels are ONLY about the number of pre-requisites for a course. Since this course has no other college courses as a pre-req, it’s a 100-level course. But according to New York State Law (<https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/Education.pdf>), 100-level courses are supposed to be *exactly* as hard as 400-level courses, and everything in between. Surprisingly, this law even applies to private colleges! As you see in the linked document, “difficulty” is measured by your minimum investment of time each week to be able to pass. Specifically, for any 3 credit class at any college in New York, you are supposed to do at least 6 hours of work per week, not counting attending class. Teachers who assign less work than this in any class can be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Going to Medical School/Letters of Recommendation

Geneseo does an excellent job of preparing students to get accepted into medical school, and to complete medical school once you’re there. To be accepted, you’ll need multiple letters of recommendation. But if you’re like most people, you have no clue what that means. For example, did you know that the best letters of recommendation don’t mention grades? I’ve spoken with dozens of med school acceptance administrators and industrial hiring officers, and they all agree about that. This document shows some of the things I would like to include in a letter for you someday... if they are true for you. Keep these items in mind as you struggle through each of your classes: <https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/Recommendations.pdf>

Good luck this semester!

Dr. Pogo