

Hi!

Here's some general info you'll want to have to be ready for Physics 113 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! Many copies of physical textbooks are available for **under \$15**. 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 touchscreen or touchpad despite how slow they are. Here are some places to try searching for inexpensive textbooks. Remember to keep looking at other editions; each of these links only goes to one version out of many!

directtextbook.com

thriftbooks.com

amazon.com

1. Web Stuff & Homework

Course content will be posted on the course homepage rather than Brightspace... so there's a lot less clicking and hunting needed. Currently, it's still showing last year's info, but it won't change by much: <https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/GeneralI/GeneralI.htm>

Bookmark that page so you don't have to keep going back to Brightspace (or to this letter!). Also, homework is online, so bookmark the CAPA page, too (<https://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 always start each week by printing 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.

Also, as I'll explain in class, you'll also get extra credit for not procrastinating with your homework. The earlier you do your homework, the more extra credit you can earn.

Finally, many of you have irresponsibly accepted your browser's default setting of "every time I reload any website, please auto-submit (or "autofill") 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! See <https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/GeneralI/Browsers.pdf>

2. Surveys

Please visit this survey immediately and choose whether you want to see grade updates: <https://forms.gle/FJQD5Tm6QavZNab7A>

And please visit this other survey immediately and choose whether you want to have your lowest quiz score dropped: <https://forms.gle/uRysELxnM6djnzQh7>

3. Office Hours/Discord

Office hours will use Discord; see the syllabus for when I'll be available. 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!

My discord "server" for office hours is: <https://discord.gg/GjkWREU>.

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.

Also, like a lot of software, Discord doesn't always work perfectly with many brands of headsets. Specifically, a lot of headsets mess up the volume settings. The best solution I've found is to just use your laptop speakers instead.

You will get a (small) grade for using office hours: you must ask at least one relevant physics question in at least two separate calendar months (August, September, etc.). So, technically, you might complete 100% of this requirement by September 1.

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.

4. 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 state, 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.

5. 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. Instead, letters are about your character... whether you are honest, engaged, self-motivated, and so on. The following document shows some of the things I would like to include in a letter for you someday... but only if they are true. 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