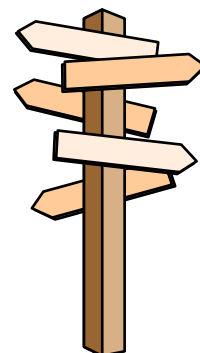


Physics First Year Experience

(Phys 120-03)

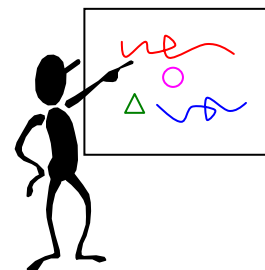
Fall 2020



What am I doing here? You are probably here because you are curious about the world around you, and are either thinking of, or already planning on, a career in physics or engineering (for which graduate school in either might be the next stepping stone for you). In this class, you should learn a little more about what “physics” is, and a little bit about how to succeed in physics. Hopefully, you will get to know your fellow classmates, the physics upperclassmen, and the physics faculty better, too.

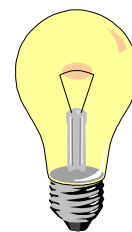
Am I really going to get a grade for this? Sort of. This class is a “pass/fail” class, meaning that at the end of the semester, your grade will merely be “satisfactory”, or “unsatisfactory”. This class is listed as “hybrid”, meaning that we’ll do some stuff in person, and some stuff online. Your grade will be determined by your participation, and by a few short assignments.

One of your assignments is a requirement to participate in at least two of the department’s weekly colloquia. Colloquia are “gatherings” of the physics students and faculty to hear about topics related to physics, often by speakers from outside of campus (typically representing graduate schools, or industries employing physicists). Colloquia are expected to be conducted via Zoom this semester, starting at 4:00pm on Thursdays. While it is rare for anyone (including faculty!) to understand everything presented in a colloquium, they are a great way to broaden your perspectives about what you might do after completing your degree. To learn about upcoming topics, visit:

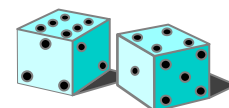


<https://www.geneseo.edu/physics/physics-colloquium>

So what’s really going to happen? Most of the time, we will investigate a particular topic in class. Sometimes, the topic will just be about being a student. Other weeks, the topic will be about succeeding in physics specifically. Other weeks, the topic will simply be a topic in physics. Sometimes we will join in a Zoom discussion with the students in the other two sections of this course, and a different faculty member may be involved. You may have to do some independent investigation, and you may have to make a few presentations in class.



At the end of this course, you should have strengthened your connection to the physics community at SUNY Geneseo, you should have gained a broader perspective about what physics is, you should have improved in communication skills specific to physics students (including writing, plotting, and presenting quantitative solutions), and you should have learned some interesting science, too.



What’s the exam schedule? There are no exams... just in-class discussions, and a few out-of-class assignments. Even though we generally meet on Wednesday afternoons from September 2 through December 16, there is no class on either September 30 or November 25. Also, because of the way these breaks (and others) have been scheduled, the college has declared that Monday November 23 will be treated as if it is a Wednesday for purposes of class meetings. So, we are meeting on that day, too!