PHYS 2215 – General Physics Laboratory

Fall 2015

Instructor: Travis Merritt
Office: PELA -- 306 Robeson Hall
Email: tmerritt@vt.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment Only
Lab Portal: www.phys.vt.edu/~labs

Office Hours and Email Policy
If you have questions regarding the lab, I am available to answer those questions either during my office hours or by email. During normal business hours, I will answer emails for two hours a day, typically 8-10 AM, in the order in which those emails are received. You are responsible for all information found in this syllabus and on the lab portal. If the answer to your question can be found in either source, I will succinctly respond “See the syllabus” or “That information can be found on the physics lab portal site”

Lab Manual (Required)
Laboratory Manual can be purchased from either the University Bookstore on campus or Volume Two Bookstore. Be sure that your manual contains Labs 1 - 10, is labeled “Physics 2215,” and has the appropriate year (2015 – 2016) on the cover. You must bring your lab manual to each laboratory session since it contains material that you will submit for grading at the end of each lab session. If your lab manual is unavailable to you for a given week, you must contact Travis Merritt to discuss your options.

No additional equipment is required for PHYS 2215. There is no dress code for the lab and you are not required to purchase lab kits of any kind. The lab team provides you with a computer workstation, lab software, and any necessary sensors or equipment.

Associated Lecture
This Lab course is a companion to the General Physics Lecture course (PHYS 2205). The Lab and Lecture courses should be taken concurrently; however, you are not required to do so. Grades in the Lab are independent from the lecture. The general objective of this lab course is to give you tangible experience with experiments that utilize the theories and laws of Kinematics, Harmonic Motion, and Waves.
Lab Sessions
The labs meet once a week and each session is 1 hour and 50 minutes in duration. The labs are intended to be completed in this time. No portion of the lab may be completed outside of the lab room. Students will perform each lab in groups of 2-4. The TAs in the room may move students around in the lab room in order to maintain a productive, respectful, and educational atmosphere. At the end of each lab session, you will hand in your entire lab (with pages in sequential order and stapled together) at the end of each session.

The labs are meant to supplement your understanding of lecture material. Though, the content of some labs is not explicitly covered in the lecture. It is essential that you come to lab prepared by referencing the lecture textbook beforehand.

Attendance (Mandatory)
There are 10 laboratory sessions scheduled for Fall of 2015. A strict attendance policy is in place for this course. An absence is considered any lab session where a grade is not reported in your TA’s grade book. Absences count heavily against you. For each absence, you are docked a full letter grade and your remaining lab scores accumulate as a percentage of your highest possible score. If you miss one lab the highest possible score is a B. If you receive 90% of the possible points on the nine labs you attended then your final raw score in the course is 90% of a B (a points and percentages breakdown is provided below).

Given the strict nature of this attendance policy, you are given ample opportunities to make up missed lab sessions (See the section entitled “Lab Make-ups”). If you are more than 10 minutes late for the lab, then your TA will ask you to leave and come back for a make-up session.

Grading
The lab reports represent 100% of the possible credit for the course. Each lab report is graded out of 100pts and the scores are reported both on your returned lab report and on Scholar. The grade for a missed lab will be recorded as 0.

The TA is expected to grade a lab and post that grade on Scholar no later than the following week in which that lab took place. Your graded lab reports should be returned to you in the following session. Any disputes over grading must be handled with the TA assigned to your section. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of such disputes, you may contact the Instructor directly and set up an appointment. No points will be awarded at the end of the term for grading disputes. All disputes must be made within 1 week of having received a grade for a given lab. Furthermore, you are responsible for verifying that your Scholar-posted grades match the grades that you received on your returned lab reports.

There are 1000 possible points to be earned in the class (10 labs worth 100pts each) and letter grades (assigned to your scores at the end of the semester) are distributed in the following way:
A  95.00 % - 100.0 %
A-  90.00 % - 94.99 %
B+  85.00 % - 89.99 %
B   80.00 % - 84.99 %
B-  75.00 % - 79.99 %
C+  70.00 % - 74.99 %
C   65.00 % - 69.99 %
C-  60.00 % - 64.99 %
D+  55.00 % - 59.99 %
D   50.00 % - 54.99 %
D-  45.00 % - 49.99 %
F   00.00 % - 44.99%

Note that grade divisions are exact and the letter grade you receive is reflective of your score to the hundredths of a percentage point. Any rounding occurs at the thousandth of a percentage point and smaller. It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades throughout the semester. You should keep all returned work in the event that an error occurs in the Scholar grade book. Letter grade penalties are not applied until the week of final examinations. If you have a 0 in the grade book you will be subject to this penalty. You should pay close attention to all of the grades in this course and not just your course average.

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR PHYS 2215**

**Special Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations in the lab room, you should contact the Instructor as soon as possible. Documentation will need to be provided from the SSD office. The Instructor will do everything possible to make arrangements so as to accommodate you.

**Lab Make-ups**

**Schedule of make-up sessions**
Make-up sessions are held at the end of the term. The end of term make-up sessions are scheduled for the week of November 30th and will take place at times that labs regularly meet. These times can be found on the lab portal and following the appropriate links.

**Requesting a make-up session**
In order to attend a make-up session, you must fill out a make-up request form. This form is available at either the Physics Lab Portal or under the Resource tab on the Scholar page for the 2215 lab course. This form must be filled out correctly and completely in order for your make-up request to be considered. Upon submission of your make-up request, you will receive an automated confirmation
e-mail documenting your request. Within 24 hours or on the next business day of this confirmation, you will receive an e-mail from the Instructor indicating that your make-up request has been processed. This e-mail will contain information regarding the Instructor’s decision concerning your make-up request and, if applicable, the time and place in which you will perform your make-up lab.

In addition to your make-up request, you may be required to submit supporting documentation. This documentation must come from official sources such as medical institutions (notes from a doctor), a University Office (such as the Dean of Student’s office), etc. Failure to provide the required documentation in a timely fashion will result in a make-up designation of unexcused (See Make-up credit)

Make-up requests must be submitted within 1 week of your absence. Make-up requests that are submitted more than 1 week after your absence are considered only in extreme circumstances, such as hospitalization or other forms of incapacitation. In these cases, your request must be supplemented with supporting documentation.

Make-up credit
Each make-up request will be assessed and given a designation based upon your reason for missing a given lab: Excused, Unexcused, or Denied. You may not make up more than 2 unexcused absences during the end of term make-up sessions.

**Excused:** If your absence from a given lab is **excused**, you will be granted the opportunity to make up your lab for full credit.

**Unexcused:** If your absence is **unexcused**, you will be granted the opportunity to make up your lab for partial (half) credit.

**Denied:** Your request may be denied for several reasons:
- Excessive make-up requests
- Submitting the form after 1 week without reasonable justification
- Missing the end of term make-up sessions
- Failure to submit documentation when requested by the Instructor
- Status of your current request is unexcused (for the end of term make-up sessions) and you have already requested and been granted two unexcused make-ups.

Honor System Policy:
While partners are expected to share the effort of completing the lab, each student is required to respond to predictions and questions in their own words. Copying off of your lab partner(s) is considered a violation of the Virginia Tech Honor Code and all violations will be prosecuted