PHYS 2306 - Foundations of Physics I
Lab Component

Spring 2017

Instructor: Travis Merritt
Office: PELA -- 306 Robeson Hall
Email: tmerritt@vt.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment Only
Lab Portal: www.phys.vt.edu/~labs
Lab Location: 103 HHN

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 I receive those emails. 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 respond either “See the syllabus” or “That information can be found on the physics lab portal site.”

Lab Manual (Required)
The manual for this course serves as a “workbook” for the lab sessions and contains pre-lab assignments, instructions on how to perform various experiments, and questions and problems that accompany those experiments. It is necessary for you to bring your lab manual to each laboratory session since it contains material that will be submitted. You may not reproduce the contents of your lab manual by any means at the punishment of dismissal from the lab. If your lab manual is not available to you for a given week, you must contact Dr. Merritt to discuss your options.

Lab manuals are available at both the University Bookstore and the Tech Bookstore.

No additional equipment is required for PHYS 2306. 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. You should bring a calculator and pencil to the lab room with you.

Attendance (Mandatory):
There are 10 laboratory sessions scheduled for the Spring of 2017. The grade for a missed lab will be recorded as 0. For every 2 labs missed, your lecture grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter.
**grade.** 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.

**Lab Sessions:**
At the start of each lab session, you will submit your Pre-Lab assignment for the week’s lab. This assignment must be completed **before** entering the lab room. No Pre-Lab will be accepted that has been finished in the lab room. Students will perform each lab in groups of two. 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 submit all of your work to your assigned TA, including the Lab, Post-Lab portions of the manual, and any printouts from data generated during the lab session.

**The Lab Room:** Hahn Hall North 103 is organized into 4 quadrants, each of which contains 12 tables. Each lab CRN is assigned to a quadrant and each quadrant will be overseen by a TA. The quadrants are labeled A, B, C, and D, and the lab tables in each quadrant are labeled 1-12 (see the picture below). Each CRN will be assigned to a particular quad in the room. Furthermore, students will have assigned seats for the entire term. The TA will display the seating chart on the projector in each quad at the start of the lab sessions. If you do not see your name displayed, you should check every quad in the room before leaving the lab room.
Grading

Each of the 10 labs performed during the Spring will be worth 20 points. The Pre-Lab assignment is worth 5 points and the Lab write-up is worth 15 points. Each submitted Pre-Lab and Lab write-up is graded by the TA based upon grading guidelines generated by the Instructor for the lab course. These guidelines instruct TAs to grade selected questions for correctness, evaluate the quality of recorded data, and assess completeness and legibility of the overall lab. The grade for a missed lab will be recorded as 0.

Your TA is expected to grade a lab report and post that grade on Canvas 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. However, you are responsible for retrieving graded lab reports from your TA. Furthermore, you are responsible for verifying that your Canvas-posted grades match the grades that you received on your returned lab reports.

If you do not receive your graded lab report from your TA within one week of performing the lab, discuss the matter with your TA. If this does not resolve the issue, contact Dr. Merritt by email.

At the end of the term, a composite percentage score is submitted to your lecture professor or instructor. This score will be a percentage of accumulated points in the lab course and will be worth 15% of your lecture grade. For every 2 labs missed, your lecture grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade.

Disputing a Lab Score

If you believe that your lab report was improperly graded, you must first discuss the matter with your TA. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of that discussion, you may contact the Instructor directly and set up an appointment. All lab score disputes must be made within 1 week of having received a grade for a given lab. No points will be awarded at the end of the term for lab score disputes.

If a grade on one of your lab reports does not match the grade posted on Canvas, that grade in Canvas can only be changed by presenting the graded lab report to either your TA or Dr. Merritt. The deadline for disputing a missing lab grade is 5 PM on Reading Day.
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 April 24th and will take place at times that labs regularly meet. These times can be found by visiting 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 on the Physics Lab Portal or under the Modules tab on the Canvas page for the 2306 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 form 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, with the exception of the last lab of the semester (Lab 10). For Lab 10, make-up requests must be submitted by 12 PM on April 22nd). 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.

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.

Honor System Policy:
The Honor Code of Virginia Tech applies to the lab portion of PHYS 2306 as well as the lecture portion. 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.