

Hi!

Here's some general info you'll want to have to be ready for Physics Lab this semester. Please note that our first meeting is next week (September 4, 2024).

0. Books & Equipment

Although there are no books, you have to get both a lab manual (from the bookstore), and a quad-ruled, string bound lab notebook. Quad ruled means "graph paper". You need to have a laptop (i.e., not a Chromebook) with Excel installed. The college already paid for it for you! You need a calculator.

1. Web Stuff

There are eight sections of this lab (we are section 7) Because many of the labs have student TAs, Dr. Freeman controls the "Brightspace" site for *all* of them, including ours. However, the information on Brightspace generally does NOT APPLY to our section! I urge to avoid going there this semester. Course content will instead be posted on the course homepage rather than Brightspace... so you'll find it faster and easier to use anyway: <https://www.geneseo.edu/~pogo/GeneralILab/Phys114Lab.htm>

Bookmark that page (right now!) so you don't have to keep going back to this letter.

Also, you should watch the two tutorial videos as soon as possible. The Excel video is about 12 minutes long; the Tracker video is about 5 minutes long.

2. Surveys

Please visit this survey immediately and choose whether you want to see grade updates anonymously displayed on the course homepage. <https://forms.gle/7xuPFnGU3g9bQv5m6>

3. Assignments (including stuff that's due on the first day!)

On most weeks, you'll have three things due at the beginning of lab:

- 1) a paper worksheet from the previous week,
- 2) a copy of your Excel from the previous week, submitted electronically via Google, and
- 3) a paper take-home quiz about the lab for that day.

You have a paper take-home quiz due on September 4! As with all these quizzes, answers will require you to read and use some info from the lab manual about the current lab. You can either print the quiz out from the homepage, or you can come to my office and grab one (ISC 228D). Generally, I will give you paper copies of the *next* quiz at each lab.

Instructions for using the Google submission (including a direct link) are available on the course homepage. You must be logged in to Google with your college account, not a personal account.

Also, three times during the semester, you'll also submit a half page report about the previous week's lab. Due dates are September 25, November 6, and November 20.

Also, three times during the semester, I'll meet with you *during the lab* to review and grade the status of your lab notebook, to make sure it's complete and up-to-date.

4. 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.

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 question in at least two separate calendar months (August, September, etc.). So, technically, you might complete 100% of this requirement by September 2.

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.

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. The following 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