Course Introduction

Physics 2020 is the second semester of the algebra based beginning Physics series primarily intended for PreMed students. It is assumed that all students will have successfully completed the first semester (2010) and be competent in algebra and trigonometry. Any students not meeting these conditions should talk to me immediately to consider their options.

The course is based on the Cutnell and Johnson Physics 9th edition. Students are not required to buy the book, but are required to purchase WebAssign for the semester which comes with an ebook – same conditions as for 2010.

The class will consist of lectures twice a week on Monday and Wednesday from 3:00 – 4:20 p.m. On most weeks there will be one homework assignment due at midnight the day before the date listed in the syllabus. The discussion sections will discuss anything of interest to the students including, but not limited to, any homework problems already submitted (on WebAssign).

Grading

Grades will be based on three things – homework, three hour exams, and a final. The homework and each hour exam will count 100 points, and the final 200 points. The hour exams will be given during class time on September 28, October 28, and November 18 and students may use three hours (class plus discussion time) to complete them. They are closed book with no notes, cards, etc. allowed. Calculators are allowed and highly desirable. No devices with communication capabilities are permitted.

The final exam is Friday, December 18 at 3:30-5:30 p.m. in the regular class room, JFB 103. The final exam will have the same format and conditions except that the time will be limited by the final exam schedule. It will be comprehensive including all topics covered during the semester.
The homework is done on WebAssign. You are encouraged to work together on the homework, but cautioned that anyone who relies on others to do the problems will probably not pass the exams. The result is that nearly everyone will do well on the homework. Since the course is curved this means that the grades will usually be determined by the exams.

At the end of the semester two grades are considered. The first is the total score (out of 600 possible points). I look at all the scores and make the average something between a C and a B depending on how the class as a whole has done. I then decide grade break points as fairly as I can. I then do exactly the same thing for the final alone. You get the higher of the two grades.

**Strategy**

It really doesn’t matter what book you use – except for WebAssign. Pick one you like. I will frequently post notes on what we cover in class. The exams will be based on what is covered in class, not on any particular book. I will discuss the content of the exams as we come to them. Regardless of what book you pick, the best use of it is to examine the problems at the back of the chapters. I strongly recommend reading all of them. If you are sure you know how to do a particular problem don’t bother with it – there are usually many similar problems and doing ten nearly identical problems won’t help much (except as an ego boost!). However if you don’t know how to do it you should try it. In other words don’t assume that just because you did the homework problems (often in a group) you understand the topic.

Physics is different than many other courses in that how well you do is not determined by how many clock hours you spend, but rather by the quality of them. Memorizing will not help you here. You could memorize the entire book and everything said in class and still not be able to do an unfamiliar problem. What counts is understanding, which is only obtained by considerable mental effort. MEMORIZING IS NOT UNDERSTANDING!!!!! We will do everything possible to help you in this task, but ultimately it is up to you.

Please make use of the resources available to you – especially the TAs and myself. We will always be happy to help.

**Students with Disabilities**

The University of Utah Department of Physics and Astronomy seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this course, reasonable prior notice must be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Bldg, 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. You are strongly encouraged to come and talk to the instructor about your disability and necessary accommodations within the first two weeks of the semester.

**Important Dates**

Last day to add without permission code is Monday, August 30.
Last day to drop (delete) classes with no tuition penalty is Wednesday, September 3.
Last day to add classes is Monday September 8.
Last day to elect CR/NC options is September 8.
Last day to withdraw from term length classes is October 24.

Holidays: September 7 (Labor Day); October 11-18 (Fall Break); November 26-27 (Thanksgiving Break)