

## PHYS 2420 Introductory Mechanics (CRN 25349) with Open Educational Resources (OER)

**This document last updated: February 3rd, 2020**

Term: Spring 2020  
Lecture: TR 3:00 pm – 4:20 pm in UGLC 220

Workshops: W 8:30 am – 9:20 am in Education (EDUC) 309 (CRN 25418) (TA: Armando Garcia)  
W 10:00 am – 10:50 am in Old Main (MAIN) 306 (CRN 25419) (TA: Armando Garcia)  
W 1:00 pm – 1:50 pm in Education (EDUC) 301 (CRN 24388) (TA: Christopher Ibarra)  
R 1:00 pm – 1:50 pm in Physical Science (PSCI) 220 (CRN 22827) (TA: Adrian De la Rocha)

MLC: M 12:15 pm – 2:15 pm (Tutor: Blanca Rangel)  
W 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
F 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

The Physics Tutoring Center located in PSCI 217 is staffed Monday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm. No appointment needed, just show up with your homework and questions.

Prerequisites: MATH 1411 may be taken concurrently.  
I do not use capriciously complicated integrals and derivatives in this course. That being said, physics is about finding patterns and relationships in nature, and the most economic and enlightening way of expressing these is with calculus.

Instructor: Jorge Muñoz  
Office: PSCI 312C  
E-mail: jamunoz@utep.edu  
Office hours: M 10:30 am – 11:30 am, R 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm, by appointment (<https://jamunoz.youcanbook.me>)

Lead TA: Armando Garcia  
Office: PSCI 217E  
E-mail: agarcia86@miners.utep.edu  
Office hours: W 1pm – 2 pm

TA: Adrian De la Rocha  
Office: PSCI 312A  
E-mail: adelaroch@miners.utep.edu  
Office hours: T 9:30 am – 10:30 am

TA: Christopher Ibarra  
Office: PSCI 132  
E-mail: caibarra5@miners.utep.edu  
Office hours: R 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Lab Coordinator: Karla Carmona  
Office: PSCI 317  
E-mail: kcarmona@utep.edu

Miner Learning Center (MLC) Tutor: Blanca Rangel  
Prospect Hall (between Fox Fine Arts and Quinn Hall) 3rd floor  
E-mail: barangelrod@miners.utep.edu

## Grading Policy

In-class exams	30 points (3 exams, 15 points each, worst score is dropped)
Homework	14 points (14 sets, 10 probs/set, 3 probs selected randomly to grade, 1 point max. per set)
Workshop	28 points (14 sessions, quiz at the end, 2 points max. per session)
Final	25 points
Lab	15 points
Participation	Limited to 10 additional points
Total	There are 122 points in this class and I round up.

A: 90+ points

B: 80-89 points

C: 70-79 points

D: 60-69 points

F: 0-59 points

The maximum number of points you can get is 122, so there will be no curve.

Alternative1

If both your homework average (14 problem sets) and in-class exam average (3 exams) are equal to or higher than 90%, you will earn an A in the class, no need to take the final. Last semester, in a class of similar size, 8 students got an A this way.

Alternative2

If you get an A on the final, you get an A in the class. Last semester, in a class of similar size (minus the students who got an A via Alternative1), 7 students got an A on the Final, although all of them had enough points in the course to get an A anyways.

The distribution of grades in relevant sections of PHYS 2420 that I taught shows that a high proportion of students get an A in the course. This gives you opportunities to be wrong, a critical part of learning. (The percentages below do not include students who dropped the class – about 10%.)

Fall 2018

A: 31% of students

B: 31%

C: 15%

D: 8%

F: 15%

Fall 2019

A: 39% of students

B: 20%

C: 17%

D: 7%

F: 17%

Bottom line – this is not going to be an easy class, you will need to put in the time and effort to understand concepts in physics and their applications. My team and I will give you all the support you need, with your effort and ours, you will learn a lot and you will also get a good grade.

## Objectives

In accordance with the UTEP Catalog, in this course you will learn dynamics of particles and rigid bodies using vectors and calculus, conservation of energy and momentum, and kinetic theory. These concepts are foundational in the physical sciences and most branches of engineering and if you are taking this class, chances are you will continue to apply these concepts during the rest of your college career and in your professional career. Putting some effort into this class will pay off.

- 1) You will learn about several physics concepts, how they are connected to each other, and how they are used in the real world. This will happen mostly in lecture.
- 2) You will learn how to setup and solve problems applying concepts and models learned in class. This will happen mostly in the workshop, tutoring sessions, by watching the videos that will be uploaded to Bb, and by doing homework problems.
- 3) You will learn to think scientifically about the world and apply ideas from the class to both experiments and current events. This will happen mostly in lecture and in the lab.

## Textbook

This course uses **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. The required textbook is *Mechanics*, by Ben Crowell, which is distributed under a Creative Commons 3.0 license. This license allows you to download it, copy it, and use in this class free of charge. <http://www.lightandmatter.com/mechanics/>

## Lecture Notes

My lecture notes largely follow the structure of *Physics for Scientists & Engineers: A Strategic Approach* 4th Edition by Randall Knight, so this book is optional to acquire. I post my lecture notes to Blackboard, so the content will be available to you even if you don't have the book.

## Homework

There will be 14 problem sets during the semester, each consisting of 10 problems. The problem sets will be posted on Blackboard on Tuesdays and are due the following week on Thursday in class (refer to the calendar below for the dates, in particular with the intrusion of Spring Break). If you cannot make it to class, leave your homework under my door (PSCI 312C) with your name and your workshop session clearly marked. The problems come from Knight, Crowell, and sometimes I invent my own problems. Physics being physics, the concepts are exactly the same in every textbook and at the introductory level, the contents are also largely the same. I encouraged to discuss the problems with peers, TAs, professor, tutors, etc. but the final write-up has to be yours. Solutions will be posted shortly after.

**Note:** In a previous edition of this syllabus the problem sets were due on Tuesday the week after they were assigned. We changed this to Thursdays to take advantage of Blanca's schedule at the Miner Learning Center.

It is unfeasible to meaningfully grade 1,300 problems every week. So your TAs will each randomly pick three problems to grade. The scheme is 0 points for no work, 0.2 points for work but incorrect answer, and 0.3 points for correct answer and work backing it up. An additional 0.1 points will be awarded if all three problems were at least attempted. This way, the maximum number of points you can get in a given problem set is 1.

**Your best bet for help with homework problems is to go to the Miner Learning Center**, ask Blanca Rangel (the tutor assigned to our course) to help you, and don't leave until your homework is finished several hours later. It is advantageous if you have already thought about the problems. During the Fall 2019 semester, one student spent 57.75 hours with Blanca at the MLC, and about 10 more students spent between 10 and 30 hours and they did really well in the class. Some of these students initially struggled with the material, but they all got an A.

## Videos

We are developing our own **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. Every week I will release a few videos of me solving physics problems that are pedagogical, insightful, and similar to your homework problems. In a big class it is difficult to actually work on problems on the board, but the videos have been well received by the students. You can fast-forward or stop it and watch it when you have time. Let me know if you want help recording a problem of your choosing, if you share it the class you can get 5 participation points.

## In-class exams

There will be 3 in-class exams: on February 27th (kinematics), April 2nd (dynamics), and April 30th (work and energy). The exams are designed by the students. I provide the structure for the exam (number of problems, difficulty, topics) and you provide the contents (which problems, concepts, etc. to test with the proviso that problems will not be identical to those in the homework). Everybody has a bad day, so the worst score will be dropped. Although the material tested on the exams is not rigorously cumulative, new concepts in physics are built on previous ones.

## Workshop

This is where you will hone your problem solving skills. There will be a non-credit pre-quiz for you to think about and take before the workshop. Your TA will go over a few problems every session, and in the last 10 minutes you

will have a quiz which will be similar to the pre-quiz and some of the material explained in the same workshop session. The grading scheme for quizzes is: 0 points for not present, 1 point for work but incorrect answer, 2 points for work and correct answer.

### **Final**

The final is on Monday May 11th from 1:00 pm to 3:45 pm in UGLC 220 and it is cumulative.

### **Lab**

The lab is independent of the class, but there is synergism. Karla Carmona is the Lab Coordinator. There is 1 laboratory, the one on momentum, that you will have the same week that we see the topic in class, but otherwise the lecture is ahead of the lab.

### **Participation**

It takes time to get good at physics, and time is in short supply for everybody. Before each in-class exam, I will request volunteers to hold student-lead review sessions (5 participation points), and if you attend a student-led review session, you get 2 extra points. It could be on campus or off campus, and both leads and participants have in the past found this enjoyable and useful. You can also get 5 participation points for recordings of problem solving that is made available to the whole class.

### **Attendance**

Attending lecture is encouraged but not required. I value your time and I will try provide new perspectives and intuition on physics and its role in technology, society, etc. You are paying for this. Attending the workshop has a more direct impact on your grade because of the quiz and because the problems on the exams will be similar to the ones your TA will go over during the workshop.

### **Collaboration**

Discussing the problems with peers, tutors, etc. after attempting to solve them on your own is encouraged, but the work you turn in has to be your own.

### **Winning strategy**

The class is structured so that if you put in the effort, you will pass with a good grade. During the lecture, I will put things in perspective for you (this is the education part). The other part of the class (training) involves the homework and the workshop. You are free to collaborate on the homework and you should take advantage of the resources available to you (tutoring, office hours, dark web, etc.) Ask questions during the lecture (you can yell if necessary) and during the seminar. If you take your homework seriously, you will do great on the exams. This is your class and your opinion matters, talk to me. Finally, try to enjoy the class. Understanding and exploitation of physical phenomena has revolutionized our way of life in the past few centuries, but what really attracts me to physics is that it tells us the most about the origin and the fate of the Universe.

Week	Lecture Dates	Notes	Topics
1	Jan. 21, 23		Concepts of motion
2	Jan. 28, 30	HW1 due Jan. 28	Kinematics in 1-D
3	Feb. 4, 6	HW2 due Feb. 6	Vectors and coordinate systems
4	Feb. 11, 13	HW3 due Feb. 13	Kinematics in 2-D
5	Feb. 18, 20	HW4 due Feb. 20	Force and motion
6	Feb. 25, 27	HW5 due Feb. 27 1st in-class exam Feb. 27	Dynamics – motion along a line
7	March 3, 5	HW6 due March 5	Newton's third law
8	March 10, 12 March 16 – 20	HW7 due March 12 Spring Break	Dynamics – motion in a plane
9	March 24, 26	HW8 due March 26	Work and kinetic energy

10	March 31, April 2	HW9 due April 2 2nd in-class exam April 2 Withdrawal deadline April 3	Interactions and potential energy
11	April 7, 9	HW10 due April 9	Impulse and momentum
12	April 14, 16	HW11 due April 16	Oscillations
13	April 21, 23	HW12 due April 23	Rotation of a rigid body
14	April 28, 30	HW13 due April 30 3rd in-class exam April 30	Newton's theory of gravity
15	May 5, 7	HW14 due May 7	Quantum Mechanics in 1-D
16	N/A	Final exam on Monday May 11th 1:00 pm – 3:45 pm	

### **Missed exams and other eventualities**

Since the worse score is dropped, there are no make ups for exams. If you experience a situation that affects your long-term performance in the class, let me know and show appropriate documentation.

### **Mentoring**

Feel free to approach me for mentoring about your career, research ideas or opportunities, letters of recommendation, etc. I work for you and I like to do a good job, take advantage of that. Also take advantage of your peers. These people go along with you in life.

### **Blackboard**

All the homework problems (the day they are assigned), solutions (after the due date and definitely before any relevant exams), slides (sometimes before class but not usually), reviews (after the review), videos, and other materials will be uploaded to Bb. You can also check your grades for the different components of the class.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>. Accommodations might include but are not limited to note takers, readers, or extended time on exams and assignments. Please take care of this as soon as possible and before the first exam.

### **Academic dishonesty**

Science is incompatible with cheating, and will not be tolerated. I have sent students to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for the more serious offenses and I do it to protect our learning environment. When cheating becomes widespread, students become discouraged from studying, working on homework problems, etc. because they don't want to earn a lower grade than someone who cheated. And who would? There are enough points in the class to be wrong and make mistakes and learn and still get an A. Just don't cheat. I mean it.