

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS**

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| Course #: | PHYS 3280 CRN 23641 |
| Course Title: | Physics Seminar |
| Credit Hrs: | 2.0 |
| Term: | Spring 2021 |
| Course Meetings & Location: | ONLINE |
| Instructor: | Dr. José Leo Bañuelos |
| Office Location: | Virtual meeting info to be provided |
| Contact Info: | Phone # : (915) 747-7535 |
| E-mail address: | jlbanuelos@utep.edu |
| Fax #: | (915) 747-5447 |
| Emergency Contact: | (915) 747 5715 |
| Office Hrs: | Online, Hours to be announced, and by appointment |
| Materials: | Links to free online resources to be provided |

Course Description straight from the catalog (<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/course-descriptions/phys/>): “A course designed to **learn oral presentation skills**. Students will do **oral presentations** and prepare a **formal written paper** on **topics** from **the physics literature** or from **undergraduate research projects**.”

Course Objectives (Learning Outcomes):

The official description above hints at a more fundamental course objective. This course hopes to bring to your attention the importance of gaining *effective scientific communication skills*, and of putting them into *meaningful practice*. Gaining such skills is an ambitious goal for one semester; in fact, becoming a prolific scientific communicator is a lifelong process.

In this course, we will start with the basic premise of “why do we communicate”, and “what constitutes good communication?” We will review different modes of scientific communication, in which we consider critically the audience whom we are addressing. We will analyze instances in which we provide either too much, or too little, detail in communication. We will review and discuss acceptable, outstanding, and poor examples of writing. We will analyze elements in oral communication and written communication which critically affect the perceived quality of the communication. For example, poor writing causes the reader to slow down their engagement with the writing, misunderstand key points, become frustrated, and eventually stop engaging with the communication. In this course we will track the progression of written communication and presentation skills using a variety of activities. Activities geared toward different audiences will be carried out, and class participants will develop critical writing and presentation evaluation skills by evaluating their peers, as well as examples of communication from professional settings.

Tentative Schedule, Grading Policy and Due Dates

| Spring 2021 - PHYS 3280 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|---|---|----------|--|--------|
| Week # | Week of: | Topic | Assign | Due Code | Due | Points |
| 1 | 18-Jan | Overview, introductions, discussion & expectations, research topic | C,D,G, I, J,K | | Pre-Course Survey | 20 |
| 2 | 25-Jan | Communication & Effective Storytelling | video | | | |
| 3 | 1-Feb | Research, Literature searches, Communication Structures from grants, papers, etc. | analyze white paper (A) | | comments on video (200-400 words) | 30 |
| 4 | 8-Feb | Communication Structures from grants, papers, etc. Part II | analyze research article (B) | A | white paper analysis | 50 |
| 5 | 15-Feb | Brainstorm topics & discussion models for HS students | | B | research article analysis | 50 |
| 6 | 22-Feb | Presentation: Communication in writing | | C | research topic, short summary + draft outline | 100 |
| 7 | 1-Mar | SMART goals | SMART goals adapted to writing plan (E) | D | Proof of confirmed date for visiting w/HS physics/astronomy/ science students* | 20 |
| 8 | 8-Mar | Presentation: Oral Communication, speech, visual aids, body language | elevator speech (F) | E | SMART goals, adapted to writing plan | 50 |
| 9 | 15-Mar | No School -Spring Break | | | | |
| 10 | 22-Mar | 2-minute "elevator speeches" | | F | elevator speech | 50 |
| 11 | 29-Mar | review of COURI UG student talks (tentative) | carry out evaluations of assigned drafts (H) | G | Written Draft due to peer group and professor | 75 |

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|----|--------|---|---|-------|--|-------------|
| 12 | 5-Apr | Break out with peer writing evaluators (groups of four) | | H | Written Draft peer evaluation due (each student reviews 3 drafts) | 75 |
| 13 | 12-Apr | Open, maybe interviewing skills?, resumes/CVs? | | | | |
| 14 | 19-Apr | Practice Oral Presentations with peer evaluator group | | I | Deadline: submit visual aids used w/ HS students (3-10 slides) and/or a 1/2 - 1 pg summary of discussion | 80 |
| 15 | 26-Apr | Student Presentations | L | J,K,I | (J) Final Written report, (K) presentation, (L) peer evaluation | 150 |
| 16 | 3-May | Last lecture-Student Presentations | L | K,I | (K) presentation (150pt), (L) peer evaluation(100pt) | 250 |
| 17 | 10-May | Final Exams Week- Student Presentations | L | K,I | (K) presentation, (L) peer evaluation | |
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| | | | | | Total Points for course: | 1000 |
| | | * extra credit of 5% given for any additional HS science class virtual visits | | | | |

Make-up Policy:

An extension of the due date for the homework as well as the make-up of missing exams will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. Late homework will be penalized at a rate of 8% of the maximum score for each day it is late.

Attendance Policy: You are expected to arrive to class on time, and participate in all exercises.

Academic Integrity Policy:

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at El Paso. More specifically, students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an

examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Please see: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> for more information and the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures: <https://www.utep.edu/vpba/hoop/>

Civility Statement:

Cell phones and pagers should be turned off during class time.

When absences occur, it is your responsibility to obtain handouts and notes from your peers.

When possible you will complete the activities you have missed.

Academic integrity is to be practiced at all times.

Disability Statement:

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, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East Building, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>. The student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any accommodation letters and instructions.

Military Statement:

If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester.