

Syllabus for PHYS 1310

Undergraduate Seminar

Spring 2025

Course Information

CRN 13970
Location 316 Old Engineering Hall
Time Wednesday 12:00 – 12:50 pm

Instructor Russell Clark, Ph.D.
Email ruc2@pitt.edu
Office hours Monday: 10:30am – 11:30am
Tuesday: 2:30pm – 3:30pm
Wednesday: 2:30pm – 3:30pm
Thursday: 8:30am – 9:30am
Friday: 7:30am – 8:30am

Other times by appointment: <http://tinyurl.com/Russell-Clark-Appointments>

Course Objectives

Basically, this class is intended to help you see the bigger picture. Most of the courses that you have taken so far as a Physics and Astronomy major have focused on developing analytical problem-solving skills, or lab skills. However, communication is also important whether it be in the form of peer reviewed articles, posters, talks, or engaging with your peers. The writing intensive course in the major that you are required to take will help you to develop your writing skills, and this course will focus on the other means of communication. In addition, invited speakers to the class will encourage you to think about your path beyond graduation.

- Develop communication skills by preparing and presenting a talk on a topic in physics and/or astronomy.
- Develop communication skills by preparing and presenting a poster on a topic in physics and/or astronomy.
- Learn to engage your peers by participating in class discussions on various topics.
- Learn about career opportunities available to Physics and Astronomy majors.
- Learn about the process of applying to graduate school.

Course Requirements

The following are requirements for the course.

- ✓ You must complete all the assignments and activities by the assigned dates.
- ✓ You must participate in all class discussions and activities.

Schedule¹

Date	Topic or Activity	Description
01–08	Introduction and icebreaker	Professor Dave Turnshek
01–15	Class Discussion	Networking Professional etiquette
01–22	Class Discussion	Elements of a good presentation
01–29	General Discussion	Talk about whatever
02–05	Group Presentations (2)	
02–12	Emil Sanielevici Research Lecture	Allen Hall 321
02–19	Group Presentations (2)	
02–26	Class Discussion	Elements of a Good Poster
03–05	NO CLASS	Spring Break
03–12	Group Presentations (2)	Submit posters for printing
03–19 Mandatory	Undergraduate Poster Session	O'Hara Student Center Dining Room
03–26	Group Presentations (2)	
04–02	Dr. Robert Devaty	Graduate Admissions
04–09	Dr. John Holmes	Medical Physics
04–16	Ingrid Beute	Career Center (Zoom)

Grading

Assignment	Description	Points
Attendance	Attend each of the class sessions. Note that you can skip one or two sessions, but attendance for certain class sessions is mandatory.	300 (25 each)
Participation	You will receive 10 points for each class in which you contribute to the discussion. The maximum for the semester is 100 points.	100 (10 each)
Presentation	Group presentation on a topic within Physics and/or Astronomy.	300
Poster Prep	Prepare a poster for the UG Poster Session on March 19 th .	150
Poster Present	Present a poster at the UG Poster Session on March 19 th .	150
		1000

¹ Schedule is subject to change.

The maximum number of points for the semester is 1000. Letter grades will be assigned according to minimum cutoffs in the table below.

Grade	Points	
A+	970	97%
A	900	90%
B	800	80%
C	700	70%
D	600	60%

Presentations

The students in the course will be divided into groups of 2 or 3 and each group will be responsible for giving a presentation on a selected topic.

- You will select your own topic within Physics and/or Astronomy.
- Each presentation should be 20 minutes long, including a few minutes at the end for questions.
- You are free to choose the format of their presentation (chalk board, PowerPoint, etc.).
- You should practice your presentation before giving it in class.

No Use of Generative AI Permitted

Intellectual integrity is vital to an academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work completed and/or submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the University's [Guidelines on Academic Integrity](#). You may not engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI applications at any time.

Disability Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Health and Safety Statement

It is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. These rules are intended to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with current requirements could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>.

Statement on Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Email Communication

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Title IX:

Legal text: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” As a professor, I am a mandatory reporter and I am required to report violations of Title IX that I observe, or am made aware of, to the Title IX office. Title IX violations include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual violence and verbal or sexual abuse. Within the classroom, behavior in violation might appear as suggestive jokes or innuendos, inappropriate touching, and unwanted sexual behavior or advances, but my capacity and obligation to report does not end at the classroom.