

Introductory handout

Welcome to Ph106b, where we will be continuing our study of classical mechanics for the first half of the course (taught by Steve Gubser), and then turning to electromagnetism (taught by Charles Peck). This handout pertains mainly to the first half. Your final grade in Ph106b will be the average of the grades in the first and second halves of the course.

1 Web and e-mail

The course web page is at

<http://www.theory.caltech.edu/people/ssgubser/Ph106b02/main.html>

All problem sets and other handouts will be posted on this web page.

I will sometimes send out e-mail to alert you to an urgent or time-sensitive issue. For this purpose I will maintain a list of your e-mail addresses as best I can. If you were in Ph106a and got the e-mails for that course, you're set—I've got your address. Otherwise, please send me an e-mail at ssgubser@theory.caltech.edu telling me what your preferred e-mail address is.

If you want to get in touch with me outside of office hours, e-mail is the surest and usually the quickest way to do it.

2 Evaluation

Your grade for the first half of the course will be based 40% on the problem sets and 60% on the midterm. As noted above, your final grade in Ph106b will be the average of your grades for the first and second halves.

For the problem sets, I encourage a “no holds barred” approach: you can work together, look up any reference, use any computer program, and attempt to wheedle information out of me or the TA's. Only be sure in your own conscience that you are not seeking unfair advantage; and also be sure that the final writeup of your solution is self-contained (and no Xeroxing other people's writeups). For the exams, you can't work together. Please staple your solutions to the problem sets before you hand them in: this is to your benefit since it helps prevent lost pages.

Unless otherwise stated, problem sets will be due *in class* on Tuesdays at 10:40 am, as measured by my watch (which I set by the “Official US time,” downloadable at <http://www.time.gov>). Late problem sets will be penalized by a factor $(2/3)^n$, where

$n = 1$ if the problem set is at all late, $n = 2$ if it is more than one day late, $n = 3$ if it is more than two days late, etc. You may turn problem sets in early if you wish, to Helen Tuck in 452 Lauritsen.

Extensions on a problem set can be granted for medical reasons. In such a situation I ask for hardcopy documentation signed by a health care professional. Probably the easiest is to attach a Xerox copy of such a note to your solutions when you hand them in to the graders; however, if you prefer, you can give the note to me directly. Communications from the Dean's Office are welcome if you're out for an extended period, but I will still require hardcopy documentation signed by a health care professional in order to grant the relevant extension(s). I can also grant extensions for a death in the family or other comparable tragedy. I may also grant an occasional extension to allow students to observe a recognized religious holiday. Advance warning of at least 24 hours will be required for such extensions.

I am reluctant to grant extensions for any reasons other than the ones stated above. I have *never* made an exception based on a request received less than 24 hours before the due date. Please don't bother asking for an exception unless your case is absolutely compelling. Among excuses I don't accept are the following: 1) you gave your set to someone else, and he/she turned it in late though it was done on time; 2) you were late because you were Xeroxing your set; 3) another course kept you late.

A final note: **KEEP YOUR OLD PROBLEM SETS**. For one thing, this may help you study for the exams. But the real reason is, if I make a mistake in recording a grade for a problem set, or if you belatedly realize that one of your problems was graded wrongly, then your best and only recourse is to bring the relevant problem set to me so that I can make an adjustment.