

ONLINE WEB COURSE FAQ

VERSION 4/30/2017

Please read through this document **BEFORE** emailing your instructor to ask questions about the class. There's a good chance your question has been asked before (and answered here), so reading this may give you an immediate answer. If not, then email the instructor. Also, this is a general FAQ file used for multiple ONLINE courses, such as Physics (PHYS101 WA/WB) & Statics (ENGG201 WA), so some questions/answers may not apply to your specific course.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: How are exams handled in the Physics 101 or ENGG 201 online course?

A: All exams are "proctored". You have two options - complete the exam on an NCC campus (at an NCC Library Testing Center) -OR- at a pre-approved testing site (visit this link for more info and to request testing off-campus: <https://www.northampton.edu/catalog-and-academics/online-classes/testing-requirements.htm>. *If the link isn't working, then search on "proctor" on NCC's website*). Exams **must be taken during the timeframe indicated on the respective Assignments page**. Exams are typically taken in the library of the Main and Monroe campuses. However, if you do not live in the vicinity of these campuses, you must follow the alternate instructions for other locations given below.

- **If You Live in the Vicinity of NCC's Main Campus** - You do not have to call to schedule an appointment to take your exams except for the final exam. You will need to call and schedule an appointment for your final. You will be advised of the dates you can call and schedule an appointment for the final.
- **If You Live in the Vicinity of NCC's Monroe Campus** - You must call the Monroe Library to schedule an appointment to take all exams during the semester including the final. You will be advised of the dates you can call and schedule an appointment for the final.
- **Other Locations** - If you do **NOT** live in the vicinity of either NCC campus, you may request to take the exam with a proctor at another location. You are responsible for paying any fees charged by the proctor. The proctor must be PRE-approved by your instructor, and you must make arrangements **AT LEAST TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF THE EXAM**. It is recommended that you make these arrangements upon beginning this course (see link above for more info on off-site testing).

Q: Do i have to log in everyday?

A: No, but you should log in periodically throughout the week to view changes, announcements, and/or updates. The Announcement Page, plus email, is the method of communication between you, your classmates, and the instructor.

Q: What online course management system does NCC use?

A: All NCC online courses use Blackboard to administer classes.

Q: What if I have trouble logging in, or with Blackboard?

A: Call the Computer Help Desk on the main campus with all computer and/or technical problems with Blackboard or this course. They can be reached at 610.861-5413.

Q: What do i do once i login?

A: Read EVERYTHING, and I mean EVERYTHING - Announcement Page, Course Information, current Class, next Class, etc. If you've already read through that, then check the Announcement Page. Reading through all this should answer any questions you might have and

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explain what is expected from you.

Q: Blackboard is 'down' and I can't access the course. Now what?

A: There are times when Blackboard will be unavailable due to maintenance, power outages, etc. Some we problems we know about that are scheduled, some just happen and throw a wrench into everything. Understand that NCC personnel do everything they can to keep Blackboard 'up'. However, if BB becomes unavailable, please check back later in the day. Many times it's just down for an hour and you'll be able to access it again soon. If BB is down for a longer period of time, NCC will notify the instructor. If this adversely affects your ability to complete assignments by the deadline, then your instructor will make adjustments. But understand that if BB is down on a Friday for an hour, that an assignment due on Sunday or Monday is still 'due' then.

WHAT'S NEEDED FOR THIS COURSE

Q: Do i have to purchase a calculator?

A: You will need a calculator to solve problems, and for taking exams/quizzes. You do NOT need to purchase an expensive, "does everything", graphing one. But at a minimum (besides basic math - addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), it should do square roots, exponents, scientific notation, and trig functions (sine, cosine, tangent). These are readily available, and fairly cheap. But the one you got for opening a new checking account probably won't be good enough. Also, PHONE calculators are NOT allowed.

Q: Where is the lab kit needed to do the experiments (physic 101 WEB course only)?

A: For *PHYS101 WEB (physics 1)*, purchase the lab kit from the main campus bookstore. The cost is determined by the bookstore. The kit contains everything you will need to do the experiments at home. If you live far from the main campus, call them directly to see if they'll mail a kit to you. Understand that you are responsible for checking the equipment, so make sure everything works (especially the thermometer if it is digital) and is IN the kit before leaving the bookstore.

Q: What if I can't pickup the lab kit from the bookstore in time to complete the first few labs?

A: For *PHYS101 WEB (physics 1)*, deadlines will not be extended for those not having the lab kit 'in time' to complete assignments. I suggest that you first read the lab file (PDF, downloaded within Blackboard) to see if you might already have the basic equipment needed for the lab (e.g. the first lab requires the use of a stopwatch, a measuring stick (meter or yard?), etc). Plan B would be to contact another student through the email function in Blackboard and see if you can either borrow from someone or work with them on the lab if they live close enough. Read through everyone's introduction in the 1st Discussion Board, as most will list where they live.

Q: I don't have an item needed to complete a lab assignment (physics courses only), what should i do?

A: If this is a lab kit issue, then contact the bookstore directly. They handle all things lab kit related. If it's an item for the lab (but not lab kit), which rarely occurs, first, email the rest of the class to see if you can either borrow it, or work together with them on it (or visit a bike shop or park to get the measurements if it's the Torque lab in question, which is typically the case). Do this early enough so you are not waiting on them and miss the deadline. Contacting me the day the assignment is due is too late, and the deadline will not be extended.

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Q: Is there a lab manual for this online course? They are selling one at the Main Campus bookstore!

A: For PHYS101 WEB (physics 1), you only need the lab KIT that the bookstore sells. Do NOT purchase the PHYS 101 lab manual that is available at the bookstore. This paper manual is only for the on-campus courses. For the online labs you will be able to download the lab sheets online.

ASSIGNMENTS

Q: How do I submit/upload lab assignments into Blackboard (physics courses only)?

Locate and download the lab assignment PDF file:

1. Within that Class you are working on, click on "View/Complete Assignment: Lab Exercise X" link for that Class.
2. Locate the Assignment Files section for the "FILLABLE" PDF file. It should be directly below the Instructions.
3. "Right-Click" on the PDF file link and select "Save Target As".
4. Rename the file and save onto your personal computer.
5. Locate the file on your computer, then Double-Click to open it. If you have Adobe Reader installed on your computer, the file should open. If you don't, then DOWNLOAD IT (it's free @ <http://get.adobe.com/reader/?promoid=BUIGO>).
6. Enter your name in the name field, and all the data, etc, into the spaces provided.
7. Save the file by File->Save As. You may need to give it a new/different filename.
8. Re-open the new file with your data to verify that everything was saved.

Submitting Labs Assignments to Blackboard (physics courses only):

1. Once you have completed the lab and are ready to submit it, log back into Blackboard.
2. Go back to the same Class as in Step 1, and click on the same link.
3. Scroll down to "Attach Local File" and click on the Browse button.
4. Locate the complete lab file on your personal computer and select it.
5. Click the Submit button.
6. Check the online grade book for a "!" for that assignment. This will mean that the file was uploaded.

Things NOT to do when submitting assignments:

- Do NOT click on any SUBMIT or PRINT buttons within the PDF file. These will not submit the file to Blackboard
- Do NOT email me a Word Document (or any other type of file) unless you are specifically instructed to do so by the instructor. Unsolicited files emailed will not be accepted nor graded.
- For LABS, only upload the fillable PDF file (after you fill it in and complete your work). Do NOT put your lab into a Word Document and upload instead of the PDF.
- Note that newer versions of MS Word (ones that create a .docx file) sometimes do NOT open within Blackboard, and therefore will not be readable.

Q: What do i have to hand-in for this class?

A: All assignments for this course are listed (with their deadlines) under the Assignment's page, under each Class. Information on acceptable ways to submit assignments is described under the Course Information section. Note that emailing assignments is NOT an acceptable way to submit.

Q: I submitted an assignment just a few minutes late, is that OK?

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A: No, late is late. If it is submitted after the deadline (normally midnight on the due date), then it is late and you will not receive any credit. Work ahead so that if you do run into problems, you'll have time to complete it. Deadlines will not be extended in any circumstance.

Q: Where do I find the list of recommended homework problems?

A: Under Course Documents. You will also find solutions for all the homework problems from the publisher here too.

Q: The assignment (lab) requires that I draw a diagram. How do I do that in the PDF lab files?

A: The easiest way to draw is using Microsoft Word draw option, or use Paint or similar drawing software, then save it as a JPG and attach as an additional file with your lab. Or you can draw it by hand, then scan and save as a PDF or JPG file and attach. Then in the section of the lab where you are to draw the diagram, just type "see attached file".

Q: Do i have to hand in homework?

A: No. Although i highly recommend that you work on the homework problems, you do not need to hand them in. Homework does not count toward your grade, and will not be corrected.

Q: Can i work ahead?

A: Yes. But even if you submit assignments or take exams early, understand that i will not correct them until after the deadline has passed, unless a prior arrangement has been made with the instructor. This is so I can be consistent with grading the assignments all together.

Q: Can i work with another student?

A: YES, i highly recommend it. Learning together and teaching each other is a great way to "get" this stuff. But the work that you submit must be in your own words. I realize your data on labs will be the same when working together, but you cannot write the same answers or solutions, even though you worked together.

Q: I submitted my assignment by uploading it in Blackboard, and there's a "!" for the grade. What does that mean?

A: The "!" means that your assignment has been received, but it hasn't been graded yet by the instructor. Assignments are normally graded within one week of the deadline, unless I am waiting to receive exams from Monroe or other off-campus location. Correcting all assignments together ensures fairness and consistency in grading.

Q: I submitted my assignment by uploading it in Blackboard, and there's a "1" for the grade. What does that mean?

A: If you have "1" for a grade, it means that your assignment was received, but there's a problem with the file you uploaded (it's corrupted, and/or unviewable by the instructor). Read the comments associated with that graded assignment to see how to proceed. Normally you are given a few days to re-submit the assignment to me via email. If you do not respond w/in the timeframe, you will not be given credit for the assignment.

Q: How can I know if my assignment uploaded?

A: If Blackboard received your uploaded assignment, there will be a "!" for a grade, meaning it is waiting to be corrected.

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Q: How long should I keep a copy of my assignment on my personal computer?

A: It is highly recommended that you keep copies of your assignments (labs, papers, etc) on your personal computer for the duration of the course. If that is not possible, then keep them until they have been graded. If there is a problem opening your assignment when they are graded, you may be asked to resubmit the assignment, so having a copy will be beneficial.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR/STUDENTS

Q: How do i reach you (the instructor) if needed?

A: Email is the best method to reach me. i try to check it at least once per day, even when traveling overseas (which happens during the summer, every few years). During the fall/spring semester, you are welcome to call my office (610.861-5556), but i only return calls when i'm in my scheduled office hours (so it may be a day or more before I contact you, or after the weekend if you call on a FRIDAY). In most cases, I will respond via email (even if you leave a phone message). During the fall/spring semester you may also stop by my office or lab, but understand I may already be busy with other students, so it is recommended that you make an appointment via email before just stopping by. But again, email is the best method.

Q: When can i expect to hear back from you if i email?

A: I will normally respond within 48 hours, if not sooner, to correctly addressed email (subject line includes the course name, number & section). Please understand that what you are asking in your email may not be a 1 minute answer, which means I won't answer it right away. A thoughtful response may take longer, which is why i say 48 hours. Note that you shouldn't expect an answer to a question on the day an assignment is due. Plan and work ahead on assignments.

EXAMS

Q: What if i miss taking an exam?

A: All exams must be taken by the deadline, no exceptions. For courses that have just a mid-term and a final, if you don't take the mid-term exam (and you didn't make alternate arrangements with me before the deadline), your access to the course will be restricted (but you will not be withdrawn), due to the weighting of that exam to your overall grade. If you are taking a course that has more than just mid-term and final exams, and you miss an exam, you will be allowed to continue in the course. However, if you miss a 2nd exam, you will be withdrawn.

Q: Do you have old exams or practice tests I can review?

A: No. it is recommended that you study the problems from labs, quizzes (if your course has quizzes), the recommended homework problems, textbook examples, and problems in the sample lectures notes (under Course Documents) when preparing for an exam. These problems will be most similar to what you will see on an exam.

Q: If I really bomb an exam, can I retake it?

A: No. If you study hard and really know and understand the material, you shouldn't 'bomb' an exam. However, if you do, then you'll need to work extra hard to do well on all remaining assignments to try and bring up that bad grade.

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Q: Is there extra credit I can do to bring up my grade?

A: No, there is no extra credit on an individual basis. Depending on the course, one lab and one discussion board assignment may be dropped (see Course Information for more on this). Also, if your course has bonus quizzes, these points are used to help improve your grade. But exams carry the most 'weight', so do well on those.

Q: Will constants and other numbers (like the radius of the Earth) be provided on the exam?

A: All constants and the like will be provided on the exam(s), usually on the first page of the exam, or within the question.

Q: Can I bring a "cheat sheet" or other info to the exam?

A: That depends on the course. See the Assignment section / Week of your exam for more information about your specific course.

BLACKBOARD RELATED

Q: I am having trouble with Blackboard, who do i contact?

A: Contact the NCC help desk at helpdesk@northampton.edu, or call them at 610.861-5413. i cannot answer technical questions regarding Blackboard, the internet, or your computer.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: I'm not very good with computers, is that a problem?

A: This is an online course, which means that all communication, instruction, assessment, etc will be facilitated online using computers. Only you can decide if your level of skill with computers will be a hindrance to your learning, but chances are it will make things more difficult.

Q: Does this course transfer to other schools?

A: The transferring school has the final say on yes or no. But we model these classes after the campus version of the course, which are similar to courses offered at other local colleges and universities, so we expect it will. But again, the transferring school has the final word, so check with them first.

Q: I hate physics

A: You are not alone. Most students that take physics "hate" physics or wish they could take Chemistry/Geology/Biology/insert-any-other-science-here instead. I believe that is due to either a bad experience with an earlier physics teacher/class, or that they have no understanding and only believe what a friend has told them about physics (and they tell 2 friends, and they tell 2 friends...). So as an instructor, i have my work cut out for me. I certainly don't expect to convert everyone into loving physics/engineering as much as i do, but i hope my passion for more-fully understanding the world around us will ignite an interest in you. And maybe someday you will be able to say, "*hey, physics wasn't that bad and i learned something..*" and i can live with that :)

HELP WITH SOLVING PROBLEMS

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Q: Where can i get help if i need it?

A: You can email/contact me. Or contact a classmate. For *PHYS101 WEB (physics 1)* I've also posted a LOT of short, 5-minute videos on YouTube that show you how to solve various problems. Search on "NCC Physics Doney". Also, NCC offers free tutoring through the Learning Center on the Main Campus. You do not need an appointment, but it is recommended as the tutors can be busy with other students when you come in. The Learning Center at times also offers online tutoring, so check with them on the availability.

SUGGESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS CLASSES:

Do all the recommended homework problems. And make sure to get help right away if you don't understand something so you don't fall behind.

Contact another classmate to do labs and study together.

Set a study schedule and stick to it. Don't fall behind!

Don't try to read the whole chapter in one sitting. Read a little, take notes, take a break, repeat.

Check out the videos on YouTube.