

Hi class,

Some (most?) of the information you asked about the the PCA o (about the class structure) are provided in the syllabus and in the commit to study contract and I recommend that you read it carefully. But, I do want to answer your questions though ... so here it is:

PCAs

Are due before every class. The only exceptions are days before exams.

The goal of the PCAs is to hold you accountable for reading and to help you figure out what you understand and what you don't. Therefore I don't expect you to be able to get 100%, but I do want you to practice reflecting on your understanding and coming up with questions. The grading is done the following way:

I will add 30% to whatever percentage grade you have (IF you answered the JiTT part of the PCA). So, if your "PCA problems + JiTT question" grade is greater than 70%, I will give you 100% in that assignment. This is usually enough so that everyone who tries gets full credit, but you are welcome to email me if you feel that you tried hard and still didn't get the 70%.

Notes

If you took 11A last semester with me you remember that the chapter notes were mandatory, but now that you are in 11C I am giving you more choice and you can decide whether to do them or not. If they helped you learn, and/or helped you during quizzes, I suggest that you choose to do notes as part of your comitt to study contract (read more about that further down).

Another change in the notes is that I decided to give you more time to complete them. My strong recommendation is that you write notes *before* we start a new chapter and then edit them as you learn more about that content. One student made a suggestion which I really like: also make a note card (like the one you will be allowed to use on exams) from your reading and use it when doing PCAs, HW, or quizzes. Then keep editing it to make it more and more useful as you get a deeper understanding of the content.

The notes should be shown to your LA sometime before we start to cover a new chapter. The first day of a new chapter is acceptable.

There is a link to a sample of good notes in the syllabus. If you feel the LA isn't fair you are always welcome to talk to me.

Commit to Study Contract

This is an extra-credit opportunity designed to help you keep up with the class. I am offering an incentive of 3% on your final course grade to encourage you to get organized so that you are successful. You are welcome to do all of the options but I/we will only keep track of the one option you choose. You may change that option once during the semester but then must stick to it.

The (one) worksheet listed is mandatory. It is also designed to help you with your study habits.

Participation

LAs will keep track of attendance and that will be worth half of your participation grade.

I will offer several participation opportunities - surveys to be completed online, and problems to be finished at home are some examples of such activities. If an activity takes too much of your time I may make it worth more points.

Let me give you an example:

A student attends 35 out of the 44 days of class this semester: his/her attendance grade will be $(1.1 \times 35 / 44 = 87.5\%)$.

This student also completes participation activities and got 46 out of the 62 points I offered: his/her participation grade will be $(1.1 \times 46 / 62 = 81.6\%)$.

The final participation grade for that student will be $(87.5\% + 81.6\%) / 2 = 84.5\%$

Other Questions

What if I miss a PCA?

I will drop your two lowest PCA grades. So, you can't turn them in late, but your grade will only suffer if you miss it more than twice.

What if I miss a Homework assignment?

Late homework is accepted (with a penalty). You may need to complete more problems to get 100 points because of that penalty.

What if I miss something on my commit to study contract?

Come talk to me. If this is an isolated incident I will come up with something to help you make it up.

What if I miss an exam?

Your final exam grade will be worth 30% instead of 20%.

Do you curve?

No. But even though I don't curve I always have a healthy number of students with As.

Will there be midterm corrections?

I don't know. Let's see how it goes.

What are your office hours?

Check out the syllabus for my office hours and my schedule.

Are you on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays?

Most Tuesdays yes. Most Thursdays no.

What are the LA office hours?

These will be determined and announced soon.

Why do you teach in this flipped way?

Well, there is a very long answer for that - and I will be happy to talk to you about it if you come to my office - but the short and most important point is that there is a lot of research (including my own) showing that the great majority of students learn much more this way.

Will we keep the same groups for the entire semester?

Yes.

Will we have the same LA all semester?

No. And if you have any problems with any LA please come talk to me.

Do you use powerpoint?

Nope. But I make scans of everything done in class and post it to the Google drive.

Is reading optional?

No! It is really important that you read the textbook,

What should I write for the JiTT question if I don't have questions?

Tell me what you think other students will struggle with. Or tell me what you first struggled with when you learned it.

How can someone keep a solid track record and be successful with the commit to study contract?

It really isn't that hard. I've used it in past classes and it works pretty well. If you think it will be hard than you probably need some help getting organized.

How do the quizzes work?

You take the quiz by yourself, turn it in, and then your group works together to try to get a better grade. If your individual quiz grade is more than 50%: you will get the group grade if it helps you (if group grade is greater than your individual grade). **Note that I had it set up a little different where you would get the average between your individual grade and the group grade but I decided to be a bit more generous with this.*

Other Grading Related Questions

Why do I need to pass the lab if it is only 10% of the final course grade?

The most important part of the class are the physics concepts but you must also be able to execute experiments. Passing the lab is necessary but not enough to pass the course.

Do you drop the lowest lab grade?

Lab grading is done completely independently by your lab instructor.

What if choose the option for 120 points in the homework and get 119 one week?

Just talk to me and I will come up with a way to help you get that extra point.

One student who took 11A suggested that I should show you how grades are calculated to help make the point that exam grades are not as important as you may think. I think it is was a good idea, so here it is. Student 1 is a typical student in my class. Student 2 forgets that exams alone won't cut it.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Student 1</i>	<i>Student 2</i>
<i>PCAs</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>HW</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>70%</i>
<i>Quizzes</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Attendance & Participation</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>70%</i>
<i>Laboratory</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>90%</i>
<i>Midterm 1</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>90%</i>
<i>Midterm 2</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>85%</i>
<i>Midterm 3</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>40% -> 70%</i> <i>(lowest exam gets replaced with the final if it helps)</i>	<i>85%</i>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>85%</i>
<i>Commit to Study Contract?</i>	<i>3% extra-credit</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>
		<i>84.5%</i>	<i>74%</i>

Use this [grade calculator](#) to estimate your own grade.