

Outline of Physics 150, "Special Relativity"

Course material can be found online at URL

<http://spiff.rit.edu/classes/phys150/phys150.html>

Instructor

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Class hours

Tuesday	11:00 - 12:15 PM	CAR-1125
Thursday	11:00 - 12:15 PM	CAR-1125

Office Hours

Richmond

Tuesday	1:00 - 2:00 pm	76-1274	(my office)
Wednesday	1:00 - 3:00 pm	76-1274	(my office)
Thursday	1:00 - 2:00 pm	76-1274	(my office)

There may be times when I am working from home. On those occasions, I will set up a Zoom session during these office hours, with the following invitation:

- [Zoom link for office hours](#)

However, if I am not working from home, I will not set up any Zoom session for my office hours.

Sosa

Monday:	1:30 - 2:30 PM	CAR-1220	and	Zoom link
Wednesday:	11:00 - noon	CAR-1220	and	Zoom link

You may call to make an appointment. If my office door is open, feel free to enter. I'm almost always in my office :-)

Homework

We will use an on-line system for homework. It allows you to submit answers and see at once if you are right or wrong; if wrong, you may try again a limited number of times. To access the homework system, go to [the](#)

[appropriate link on the main course web page.](#)

In order to use the on-line homework system, you need to know your login name and your initial password. Your "login name" should be the same as your last name, but with lowercase letters only; something like **richmond**. Your initial password should be the final 4-digits of your student RIT student ID, so if your ID is 456781234, the initial password would be **1234**. Include all zeroes: if your ID is 456780012, then your initial password will be **0012**. You can change your password from the default after you log in for the first time.

Answers to the homework problems will appear after the due date. Because the answers will be visible to everyone at that time, I will accept no late homework.

Grading

There are several components to the final score in this course. The list below is not definitive, but a rough guide to the importance of each component.

20	percent	in-class quizzes
20	percent	homework
5	percent	mini-test
20	percent	midterm
35	percent	final exam
4	percent	optional extra credit assignments (2 percent each)

104	percent	

Course grades are based on a total of 100 percent.

At the end of the course, I shall calculate the total score for each student. Based on the overall distribution of scores in the class, I may use the traditional means of assigning letter grades to scores ("A" for greater than 93%, "A-" for 93% to 90%, "B+" for 90% to 87%, etc.); or I may slide the grade boundaries downward to some degree.

How to request a makeup test

If you know in advance that you will have to miss a test, or if you miss a test unexpectedly, you may request a makeup test. However, make-up exams are provided only in unusual circumstances. A request for a make-up exam must be submitted in writing to your instructor. Submission of the request is in no way a guarantee that it will be approved. All requests are considered by the instructor on a case-by-case basis. Whenever possible, you must allow sufficient and reasonable lead time for a considered response to your request.

There will be no makeups for in-class material or homeworks.

Textbook

There is no official textbook for this course. However, there are several books which I recommend that you read. The books may clarify material covered in class, and they may also give you a second view which makes more sense to you than my explanations.

- When he taught this course, Professor Lindberg wrote very detailed notes, a sort of mini-textbook. You can read his notes on-line at

[Professor Lindberg's notes](#) (PDF format, 95 pages)

- Taylor and Wheeler's book *Spacetime Physics* covers all the material in this course and more. Professor

Lindberg used this book as a text when he taught the course. You can find a copy of this book on reserve in the RIT Library; it is also currently in print.

- Physicist George Gamow wrote a series of stories about Mr. Tompkins, an ordinary bank teller who has some very interesting adventures. I recommend the first of these books especially for this course. You can find the last of these on reserve in the RIT Library. You can also find these books in print at many booksellers.
 - *Mr. Tompkins in Wonderland*
 - *Mr. Tompkins Explores the Atom*
 - *The New World of Mr. Tompkins* is a set of new stories written by Russell Stannard, in which Mr. Tompkins explores space and cosmology.
 - *Mr. Tompkins in Paperback* is a collection of all the original Mr. Tompkins stories in a single volume
- There are many, many books written on the topics we will study: relativity is a very popular topic. Why not browse through the RIT Library or local bookstores or on-line sources for some which look good to you?

You will need to **purchase a pad of good graph paper** for your use in class. The paper must have 10 squares per inch.

Other resources

There is a Physics Study Center on the first floor of the College of Science. A schedule posted outside the room lists times at which someone will be available to help with questions.

The Academic Success Center provides tutors in daytime and evening sessions. [See the ASC webpages for Math and Physics tutoring.](#)

If my office door is open, please feel free to visit.

If you have any special needs, you *must inform me during the first week of classes*. Otherwise, I may not be able to make arrangements in time to help you. Please contact me after class or at my office.

RIT is committed to providing a safe learning environment, free of harassment and discrimination as articulated in our university policies located on our governance website. RIT's policies require faculty to share information about incidents of gender based discrimination and harassment with RIT's Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinators, regardless whether the incidents are stated to them in person or shared by students as part of their coursework.

If you have a concern related to gender-based discrimination and/or harassment and prefer to have a confidential discussion, assistance is available from one of RIT's confidential resources on campus (listed below).

1. The Center for Women & Gender: Campus Center Room 1760; 585-475-7464; CARES (available 24 hours/7 days a week) Call or text 585-295-3533.
2. RIT Student Health Center - August Health Center/1st floor; 585-475-2255.
3. RIT Counseling Center - August Health Center /2nd floor - 2100; 585-475-2261.
4. The Ombuds Office - Student Auxiliary Union/Room 1114; 585-475-7200 or 585-475-2876.
5. The Center for Religious Life - Schmitt Interfaith Center/Rm1400; 585-475-2137.
6. NTID Counseling & Academic Advising Services - 2nd Floor Lynden B. Johnson; 585-475-6468 (v), 585-286-4070 (vp).