1. The potential due to a ring of charge is given by:

$$V(s,\phi,z) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Q}{2\pi}\int_0^{2\pi}\frac{d\phi'}{\sqrt{s^2+R^2-2sR\cos(\phi-\phi')+z^2}}$$

Expand this potential in a power series to fourth order, in the plane of the ring, for $s < R$. Warning: Make sure you keep **all** of the terms up to fourth order and none of the terms of higher order. This is tricky to do and is the most important lesson from this homework problem.

Solution:

To expand this potential in a power series, it would be nice to save some effort and use the series we have already memorized (Quiz 1). Recall,

$$(1+u)^p = 1 + pu + \frac{p(p-1)}{2!}u^2 + \frac{p(p-1)(p-2)}{3!}u^3 + \frac{p(p-1)(p-2)(p-3)}{4!}u^4 + \cdots \tag{1}$$

We are looking at the potential in the plane of the ring, so $z = 0$. We can also rewrite the square root as a power.

$$V(s,\phi,z=0) = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Q}{2\pi}\int_0^{2\pi}\Big(s^2+R^2-2sR\cos(\phi-\phi')\Big)^{-1/2}d\phi' \tag{2}$$

The integrand is almost the same as equation (1) but we need it to match exactly for the power series to be valid. **Remember:** equation (1) is valid only for $|u| < 1$. We are interested in finding the potential where $s < R$, or in other words, $s/R < 1$ is a small quantity and we can *pull out* R^2 from the expression. That is,

$$\begin{aligned}\Big(s^2+R^2-2sR\cos(\phi-\phi')\Big)^{-1/2} &= \left[R^2\Big(1+\frac{s^2}{R^2}-\frac{2s}{R}\cos(\phi-\phi')\Big)\right]^{-1/2} &(3)\\ &= \frac{1}{R}\Big(1+\frac{s^2}{R^2}-\frac{2s}{R}\cos(\phi-\phi')\Big)^{-1/2} &(4)\end{aligned}$$

$$u \equiv \frac{s^2}{R^2}-\frac{2s}{R}\cos(\phi-\phi'), \qquad p = -1/2 \tag{5}$$

where in the final line I have identified our u and p for the series expansion.

Now, we need to expand the powers of u in order to find all of the fourth order terms in $\frac{s}{R}$. Yes, this is a lot of algebra.

$$p(u) = \left(\frac{s}{R}\right)\cos(\phi-\phi') - \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^2 \tag{6}$$

$$\frac{p(p-1)}{2!}u^2 = \frac{5}{2}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^2\cos^2(\phi-\phi') - \frac{3}{2}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^3\cos(\phi-\phi') + \frac{3}{8}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^4 \tag{7}$$

$$\frac{p(p-1)(p-2)}{3!}u^3 = \frac{5}{2}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^3\cos^3(\phi-\phi') - \frac{15}{4}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^4\cos^2(\phi-\phi/) + ... \tag{8}$$

$$\frac{p(p-1)(p-2)(p-3)}{4!}u^4 = \frac{35}{8}\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^4\cos^4(\phi-\phi') + ... \tag{9}$$

Using this to combine all terms with like powers in s/R, the integral reduces to

$$
\begin{aligned}
V(s,\phi) \approx \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\frac{Q}{2\pi}\frac{1}{R}\int_0^{2\pi}\Bigg\{ & 1+\cos(\phi-\phi')\left(\frac{s}{R}\right) \\
& + \left[\frac{5}{2}\cos^2(\phi-\phi')-\frac{1}{2}\right]\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^2 \\
& + \left[\frac{5}{2}\cos^3(\phi-\phi')-\frac{3}{2}\cos(\phi-\phi')\right]\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^3 \\
& + \left[\frac{3}{8}-\frac{15}{4}\cos^2(\phi-\phi')+\frac{35}{8}\cos^4(\phi-\phi')\right]\left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^4 \Bigg\} d\phi'
\end{aligned}
\tag{10}
$$

The original equation for the potential can not be integrated analytically. Now that we have expanded the integrand, we have reduced the problem to a bunch of integrals of $\cos^n(\phi-\phi')$ which we can solve by brute force. If you wish to do the integrals by hand, take advantage of the exponential form of cosine. Otherwise, Mathematica is a great option for this sort of integral.

Calculate the nasty integral

In[1]:= $$\text{Int} = \text{Expand}\Big[\int_0^{2\pi}\Big(1 + \text{Cos}[\phi - \phi_0] * \left(\frac{s}{R}\right) + \left(\frac{5}{2}\text{Cos}[\phi-\phi_0]^2 - \frac{1}{2}\right) * \left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{5}{2}\text{Cos}[\phi-\phi_0]^3 - \frac{3}{2}\text{Cos}[\phi-\phi_0]\right) * \left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^3 + \left(\frac{3}{8} - \frac{15}{4}\text{Cos}[\phi-\phi_0]^2 + \frac{35}{8}\text{Cos}[\phi-\phi_0]^4\right) * \left(\frac{s}{R}\right)^4\Big)\, d\phi_0\Big]$$

Out[1]= $$2\pi + \frac{3\pi s^2}{2R^2} + \frac{9\pi s^4}{32R^4}$$

Multiply by all of the constants to get the potential --> V= $\frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} * \frac{1}{2\pi} * \frac{1}{R}$ *Integral

In[2]:=

In[3]:= $$V = \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0} * \text{Expand}\left[\frac{1}{2\pi * R} * \text{Int}\right]$$

Out[3]= $$\frac{Q\left(\frac{1}{R} + \frac{3s^2}{4R^3} + \frac{9s^4}{64R^5}\right)}{4\pi\epsilon_0}$$

Therefore, our solution for the electric potential in the plane of the ring to fourth order in s is

$$V(s,\phi,z=0) \approx \frac{Q}{4\pi\epsilon_0}\left\{\frac{1}{R} + \frac{3}{4}\frac{s^2}{R^3} + \frac{9}{64}\frac{s^4}{R^5}\right\} \tag{11}$$

NOTE: Our solution does not depend on ϕ *and* is an even function in s. Why is that?

CHECK: Does our solution agree with the original integral equation at the origin?