



PHYS 595, 01W: RESEARCH LITERATURE

COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructors: Dr. Robynne Lock, Dr. William Newton

Office Hours: Consultations scheduled as needed

University Email Address: william.newton@etamu.edu,
robynne.lock@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **Email**

Communication Response Time: 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required: no required textbook

Course Description

Research Literature and Techniques. Three semester hours. A course designed to acquaint the student with the role of research in the initiation, development, and modification of concepts and theories in physics. Articles in professional journals in the field will be assigned for review, especially in areas in which theories are in a state of flux. The student will be encouraged to devise experiments through which clarification of concepts may result.

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. Student will be able to select a relevant topic of significant interest to the community
2. Student will be able to write a concise, informative abstract
3. Student will demonstrate ability to organize the content of the paper clearly and logically

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

4. Student will demonstrate ability to select relevant literature from a wide variety of valid sources
5. Student will be able to synthesize information from the literature and construct a logical, well supported argument.
6. Student will use appropriate language and style for a research paper

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The class involves conducting a literature review on some topic in physics or physics education; the topic should not be too broad or too narrow. The literature review paper is the sole product of the class, and your grade is based on the paper, graded according to the rubric under the course contents in D2L. The literature review paper should be 20 pages long (double spaced, including figures, tables, equations and references). We can provide some small guidance about the choice of topic, but you will be expected to come up with topic ideas yourself. We will provide a reasonable amount of help with the writing of the paper. You can reach us all over email: robynne.lock@tamuc.edu and william.newton@tamuc.edu

The first thing you should do is to select your research topic. To get started, pick a particular area of research in physics or physics education, and search for literature on the topic.

Google scholar is a good place to start. If your topic is in the field of physics education, some good places to search are the ERIC database (<https://eric.ed.gov/>), Physical Review PER (<https://journals.aps.org/prper/>), the American Journal of Physics (<http://scitation.aip.org/content/aapt/journal/ajp>) and ComPADRE (<http://www.compadre.org>). For a physics topic, NASA's ADS database is the go to place to get research papers (http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abstract_service.html) (it covers all of physics, not just astrophysics). Inspire-HEP is also good, though skews toward High Energy Physics (the HEP in the title) (<https://inspirehep.net>).

If you want to run the topic by us to see if it is suitable, please email **Dr. Newton and Dr. Lock**.

Here's a link to a number of webpages giving detailed advice on preparing a literature review:

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<http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/literature-review/>

http://depts.washington.edu/psych/files/writing_center/litrev.pdf

<https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html>

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/research/literature-review>

Sometimes it is easy to accidentally plagiarize. Here is some information to help you avoid plagiarism: <https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/academic-writing/avoiding-plagiarism-paraphrasing>

We have an app built into D2L to check for plagiarism on the instructors' end, but there are some websites that do it for free if you want to look yourself before you submit, such as: <https://www.grammarly.com/plagiarism-checker>

You should also avoid self-plagiarism. This means that you should not reuse a paper or portion of a paper that you wrote for another class.

You may use any citation system you like as long as you are consistent. We often use the citation style of the Physical Review journals, but education journals more often use APA. Physical Review PER (<https://journals.aps.org/prper/>) is open access, so you can look at any of their papers for examples.

You can find an example of an excellent paper from a past student and the rubric under the course content in D2L.

Programming skills in Python.

GRADING

Grading is based on the rubric on D2L. Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 18-20

B = 15-17

C = 12-14

D = 10-11

F = 9 or below

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

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Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/onestopshop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

<https://inside.etamu.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesprocedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

<https://inside.etamu.edu/academics/graduateSchool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

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Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Student Disability Services](http://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/)

[https://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/](http://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#)

document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

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Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all ETAMU campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at ETAMU, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI use policy

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

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In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty