

1st Semester Exam

The first semester exam will be, as usual, in two parts. The first part will be about the concepts you have learned, and is based on the essential questions listed in each contract. The skills portion will be similar to the skills tests at the end of each unit.

In addition to the two parts of the exam, I would like you to write me a reflective letter which is required but will be ungraded. Details follow below.

The exam will be held in H316. You will need to bring your equations sheet, a calculator, and pens or pencils. No sharing of any materials will be allowed during the exam. The test period is 90 minutes, and you will have to stay the whole time, so be prepared to do something quietly should you finish early.

First Semester Reflective Letter

I'd like you to write and tell me about your experience in this class so far. This letter is *required* as part of the exam, but it will not be graded. I've listed some of the possible topics you could write about below. Please read through them and then *put them away* before starting to write. I do not want a question and answer format - simply write about what it has been like for *you*.

Do you think you have benefited from the structure of this class? Has it helped you to learn and express yourself? Are you a more independent learner than you were at the beginning of the year? Think about the contract system, the tests, the study groups, demonstrations and labs, problem sets with helpful hints, etc. What specifically has worked well for you? What has not? Are people taking advantage of the freedom built into the course or are they using it well? Do you have any suggestions about how this course could be improved?

Is Physics what you thought it would be? What has surprised you about the course? What was your favorite experience? Has the pace been too fast or too slow? Has your interest been steady, or have there been times when the course seemed boring? Do you feel we are working as a community of learners, or are you pretty much on your own? Do you talk about what you are learning outside of class, say with your family? Do you look forward to coming to class or is it just another part of your day? Do you feel you are treated with respect? Are you getting the support that you need to be academically successful?

There is no minimum length for this letter. Just tell me what you think, be honest and straightforward, and please make any criticism constructive so that I can learn more about what we should be doing together. And please word process the letter. It will be due Monday, January 31st. Thanks.

The Tests

- Did the Concepts Test assess the essential questions? (Check out the contract)
- Did the Skills Test assess the essential skills?
- Did the test questions seem consistent with the homework and practice problems we did in class?
- Were the questions clear? Did you have trouble understanding what was being asked of you?
- Was the test a fair assessment of the material you learned? How could the tests be improved?

The Course

- Were there enough opportunities to practice the skills you need? In class? At home?
- Was the homework helpful/sufficient in learning the material? Did the “helpful hints” help with the problems? Should there be more or less homework or is this the right amount for everyone to be successful?
- Is the course structure (peer tutors, study sessions, teaching assistants, etc) helpful in “sharing the wealth”?
- What could we do to improve the success of everybody?

You

- Were you surprised by the questions? Did you know what you did and did not understand going into the test?
- Did you do enough optional contract work in the areas where you needed more practice? Did you make good choices in contract items?
- Did you take advantage of the support structures available (study sessions, etc)?
- What could you as an individual do to improve your success in this class?

Note: If you are going to retake the skills test and/or resubmit the concepts test, please word-process a response to the above questions about “you”.