Physics 208 & WebCT

Instructions for taking and turning in Homeworks, Quizzes and other Practice Exams

Physics 208 uses the WebCT system to both administer taking and turning in quizzes and assignments, as well as posting your grades. On WebCT you will take a free “warm-up” quiz before turning in any assignments. You will then take Math and Physics 218 Review Quizzes, turn in your Homework and take Homework Quizzes and Mini-practice Exams. We begin with a description of each. Instructions on how to use WebCT are at the end.

Math and Physics 218 Review Quizzes: Experience has shown that students with insufficient mathematical background do very poorly in Physics 208. In addition, there are a few important concepts from physics 218 that we assume you are familiar with as we begin this course. For this reason there are a set of quizzes on both which are designed to help you overcome any potential weaknesses in the areas of mathematics and mechanics which might impede your doing well in this course. The questions in the quizzes are meant to remind you of concepts that should be familiar to you and which are going to be used repeatedly throughout the semester. Your professor and TA will assume that you are proficient with these types of problems at the outset. There are ten separate Math quizzes which cover the mathematical skills that are necessary to successfully complete the course. Each quiz consists of ten short math questions (you are allowed 10 minutes to take each) and is graded on a pass/fail basis with a 10/10 being the only passing grade. You are provided with immediate feedback after you hit the submit button for each quiz. If you are well prepared mathematically for this course they should be quick and easy. If not, you are allowed an unlimited number of attempts so that by the time you have received ten perfect scores you should have the necessary skills to complete the course. In parallel to these math quizzes, you will also be required to take and pass five additional quizzes which review key concepts from Physics 218. Each of these 218 review quizzes will be composed of two mechanics questions for which you are allotted 10 minutes to complete. You must get a perfect score on each of these five review quizzes to complete this part of the course. Given that we will be using this material very early in the class, you are strongly urged to complete all the quiz assignments within the first week of class, but certainly no later that the week before the first scheduled exam.

Homework: Homework assignments are an integral part of Physics 208. Experience has shown that students that do all of their homework in a timely manner, in addition to earning the homework points, do well in other aspects of Physics 208 such as exams and recitation quizzes. The WebCT based homework grading system is designed to reward you for doing your homework diligently and to give you immediate feedback on your problem solving skills. Each homework assignment is divided into three separate pieces and individually graded.

   The homework portion of the system works on the assumption that you have completed all of your homework problems on paper in formula form **before** you attempt to submit your answers on WebCT. Before trying to turn in your HW, you should plug in the numbers from the problems in the textbook and check the answers in the back of the book or on the web. After you are confident you have gotten all problems correct you should bring your textbook, a calculator and your solutions with the final answer **highlighted and in formula form** (if possible) to the computer that you will use to access WebCT. Once you log in, you will need to select your particular homework assignment. The problems are virtually the same as those in the book but the numbers or parameters have been changed (this is done to prevent you from succumbing to the temptation of copying the solution from the back of the book and also to show the value of obtaining final solutions in formula form so substitutions are easy to do).

   **Example:** If the book Ch.1, Prob.1 asks "What is the time taken if the distance traveled is 35miles and the speed is 70mph?" your solution should read:
   \[ t = \frac{x}{v} \Rightarrow t = \frac{35\text{miles}}{70\text{mph}} = 0.50 \text{ hours} \]
   You then should CHECK your answer with the back of the book (for odd numbered questions) or the web solutions for even numbered questions: [http://hepr5.physics.tamu.edu/208_ans/ans_03.htm](http://hepr5.physics.tamu.edu/208_ans/ans_03.htm). Once you are done with the entire assignment, you can log into WebCT and the question will likely read:

   **Ch.1 Prob.1** "Suppose the speed is now 60mph, what is the new time in hours?"

   Since you already have the correct formula above, all you need to do is substitute 60mph for v. You would enter the answer (0.58, no units!) in the answer box.

All three parts of the HW are always available to you, and you can do them in any order and have as many attempts for each as you like. Each time you submit your HW the automatic grading system will immediately show you the questions you answered correctly and incorrectly. There is a 20-minute time limit for each submission. Be aware that there is a significant advantage to being careful when turning in your HW as each time you try to submit your HW a new set of numbers for each problem is generated.
Note: If it takes you more than four attempts to get all of the homework problems in a particular part of the homework correct, either you are not doing enough preparation before attempting to turn them in, or you should get help from your TA or Help Desk. This is a common problem among 208 students.

Homework Quizzes: For each homework there is an associated quiz, consisting of two problems which are similar to the HW problems. The quizzes are designed to reinforce concepts learned during the homework and give you feedback on whether you have really mastered the concepts and problem solving skills from that chapter.

Mini-practice Exams: As a way to see if you are prepared to take the in-class exam, WebCT also provides a mini-practice exam utility. However, you will have to earn the privilege of accessing it before the exam. Specifically, you must have gotten a 90% on all the associated homework, but have a perfect score on all Math Quizzes, the five Physics 218 Review Quizzes and the homework quizzes. When you have, the mini-practice exam will automatically appear. You may take as many practice exams as you like.

Getting started with WebCT

- To use WebCT you will need a NEO account. Instructions for activating your NEO account can be found by going to the URL https://webct.tamu.edu/logininstructions.html. These instructions are available both as a webpage and as a PDF for download. They may also be found on https://webct.tamu.edu.
- Once you are registered with WebCT, you can begin submitting homework from any campus computer with internet access. For off-campus computers, you must either have a TAMUinet modem connection or have a VPN (Virtual Private Network) client running (e.g. If you have a cable modem or DSL connection.) For more information about VPN and TAMUinet, please refer to the CIS support staff at (979) 845-8300 or link to their URL at https://hdc.tamu.edu/gethelp/connectivity/.
- To turn in homework, or take a quiz, etc. you need then to log on to WebCT by going to the URL https://webct.tamu.edu and clicking on the link myWebCT logon. You will be prompted for your NEO user name and password. Once you have successfully logged in and entered WebCT, you will then be taken to a courses page. Click on the link to Physics 208 to reach the materials for this class.

Checking your grades with WebCT: You can also use WebCT to review all of your recitation, lab, exam, homework and quiz scores by choosing the “View Scores for Quizzes” option on the Physics 208 course page.

Contact Information:

If you are having trouble getting into WebCT, need technical assistance (registration/lost passwords etc.), or believe that there is a WebCT problem please contact WebCT directly by filling out a request for assistance form at https://webct.tamu.edu/requestassistance.html. The WebCT helpdesk should respond to your request within 1 hour any time of the day or night. If you have any questions regarding the physics or math content, or don’t understand the homework grading system, you can email Prof. David Toback (toback@physics.tamu.edu). There is extra credit for students who help finding bugs in the system.

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