

COURSE OUTLINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES**1. Course Information**

Course Number(s): Physics 2950Y/Physics 3950Y/Physics 4950Y

Course Name: Undergraduate Seminar

Academic Term: 2024-2025

Prerequisites: N/A

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean's Designate (Department/Program Counsellors and Science Academic Advisors) to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2. Instructor Information**Instructors**

Prof. Eugene Wong (Fall)

ewong4@uwo.ca;

Prof. Amir Mirzaei (Winter)

amirzae7@uwo.ca;

Communication

OWL (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home>): The course OWL platform will be primarily used for hosting course materials and resources by instructors.

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses on the above platforms as well as when contacting their instructors by email.

Office Hours

Instructors will be available to answer questions during the weekly meetings or via email.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- (1) Build a supportive and inclusive community for the undergraduate Physics and Astronomy student population.
- (2) Develop transferable professional skills.

The above two objectives are designed to meet Program Learning Outcomes tied to the Physics and Astronomy modules.

Structure

The undergraduate seminar will meet for *one* hour *once* a week in person or, should it be necessary to transition to an online mode, on Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>). There will be no more than 15 minutes on average of outside work expected per class.

Typically, each *one*-hour session will have 10-20 mins of presentation and 30-40 mins of interaction/activity by the students. Each topic will be self-contained, though individual topics may extend over a few sessions.

Schedule

Potential Topics (exact topic and schedule to be determined with class input):

- Diversity & equity in the academy - what differential challenges do individuals face? What does it mean to be an ally?
- Procrastination & productivity - discuss strategies for time management
- Communications - practice and develop facility with public speaking & clear writing
- Teaching & outreach - training for assisting 1st year students in problem help sessions, performing demos for outreach
- Career options - external speakers and alumni to visit and talk about their career paths, and the value (and gaps) in physics and astronomy training
- Science policy - how do the structures that support science affect its practice? How is evidence incorporated into decision making?
- Grad school & grant applications - help with writing, thinking about resume
- Research scrums (2 per term) - invite ~3 faculty to briefly (!! ~5 mins each) talk about their research, and then students ask questions face-to-face
- Project management - backward planning to achieve long-term goals
- Self reflection - e.g., exploring personal strengths and identifying areas to develop
- Professionalism - including appropriate use of social media, ethics, attribution, etc. while maintaining a professional online presence
- Scientific integrity - principles and practice
- LinkedIn - how to set up your LinkedIn profile?
- Mentoring - recognizing and establishing mentoring networks for career development and success
- Open science - what does it mean? why is it important?
- Visioning - where will physics & astronomy be in 5 years? 10 years? 25 years? Impact on career choices.

Key Sessional Dates

DATES	DETAILS
September 5 th , 2024	Fall classes begin - no seminar
September 12 th , 2024	First seminar meeting
October 12-20, 2024	Reading Week - no seminar
December 5 th , 2024	Last week of Fall classes - no seminar
January 9 th , 2025	Winter classes begin - no seminar
January 16 th , 2025	First Winter seminar meeting
February 15-23, 2025	Reading Week - no seminar
March 27, 2025	Last seminar
April 4, 2025	Winter classes end

4. Course Materials

Course Materials

Any additional course materials will be uploaded to OWL.

Students are responsible for checking OWL on a regular basis.

If students need technical assistance, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical questions related to the OWL site.

Technical Requirements

In the event this course has to transition to an online format, students must meet the following technical requirements.

- (1) Access to a desktop or laptop with a working microphone and/or webcam
- (2) Stable internet connection (Note: Stable connectivity can be ensured if students are using one of the campus computers.)

5. Methods of Evaluation

Undergraduate Seminar is offered on a pass/fail basis. This course is required for all modules in the program, and so attendance and participation are mandatory. A passing mark will require students to attend and participate in 75% of the meetings. Participation will be evaluated each class in various ways, including via electronic forms that will be linked from OWL.

Students who have a timetable conflict with Seminar will make individual arrangements with the instructors for how they will meet their obligations. Options include volunteering for first-year help sessions (PASA), outreach events (e.g. Western's Fall and Winter term Open Houses), attending departmental colloquia, contributions to organizing department events such as the Physics Undergraduate Conference (PhUnC) and/or the Laird Lecture. An additional option (new this year) is to work with another student who also has a conflict and submit a report on OWL.

Based on <https://welcome.uwo.ca/what-is-western-like/presentations-events.html>

Fall Preview day is on Sunday, November 17, 2024, and

Spring Open house is on Saturday, March 22, 2025.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf,

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course.

When a student *mistakenly* submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

6. Student Absences

If you are unable to participate in the seminar and do not have a course timetable conflict, there are no specific opportunities to make up those marks. The 75% participation threshold to pass this course is designed to provide flexibility to accommodate for any absences.

7. Accommodation and Accessibility

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

8. Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Clickers: iClicker will be used for polling and tracking attendance. Your clicker responses will be tracked with your name and Western email address. Anonymous information collected by the polls may be shared outside the classroom, but no student's name or email address will be disclosed. Student's privacy will be held with utmost regard. Since clickers are used to track attendance, and students are required to attend 75% of the seminars, each iClicker account cannot be used by anyone but the student. Using another student's iClicker account is considered cheating and constitutes an academic offence.

9. Support Services

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Counselling webpage for information on

adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning-skills counsellors at the Student Development Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Last updated: September 3, 2024