

Physics 380 Syllabus – Practicum/Problem Solving

Instructor: Michelle Creech-Eakman, Ph.D.

Campus Office: Workman 357

Office Hours: See website/door or make appt

Phone: 575-835-5809

Class Hours: Mon, 2-4 pm, Workman 310

E-mail: mce@kestrel.nmt.edu

Text: None, various handouts throughout semester

Class work: This class is designed to do the following three things: 1) to orient you about your own learning style and therefore help you identify problem solving strategies that you will most likely be effective with; 2) to practice/add different “tricks” to your problem solving repertoire for help in a variety of situations, like doing order-of-magnitude calculations; 3) to practice some strategies that will help you with the GRE, qualifier exams, or other exams ahead in your career. Consult our class website for an up-to-date schedule of activities:

<http://kestrel.nmt.edu/~mce/phys380.html>

(Anyone without web access should notify me immediately as it is a critical form of communication for the class.)

Points and Grading: The class is graded P/F, and is here primarily for your own benefit. Grading is based on attendance and participation in the class, as there will be very little (*but not zero*) outside work. The attendance policy is that you must attend 85% of all class meetings (i.e. approximately 11 of 13 classes) to pass, and exceptions to this will only be made in unusual circumstances that include demonstrable proof (i.e. illness needs a physician’s/student health note, etc.). Class participation requires: 1) being awake (I’m not joking....), 2) participating in discussions/brainstorming-sessions/small homework exercises, and 3) generally being a pleasant person to take a class with – don’t be a detractor!

Overview for the semester: (exact activities TBD – will be announced on website)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Starting date</u>	<u>Chapter</u>
1	Jan 25	No class – Prof AWOL
2	Feb 1	Discussion of class activities and learning/teaching styles
3-5	Feb 8—Feb 22	Some “tricks of the trade”
6	Feb 29	General test taking strategies GRE/qualifier – <i>LEAP DAY</i>
7	Mar 7	First GRE test handed out; grad school discussion
8	<i>Mar 14</i>	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>
9	Mar 21	Discuss GRE questions & hand-out 2 nd GRE
10	Mar 28	Discuss 2 nd GRE and hand-out 3 rd GRE test
11	Apr 4	Prelim/entrance exam tricks, review
12-13	Apr 11-18	Brainstorming discussions – what do we know?
14	Apr 25	More general problems and wrap up.
15	May 2	No class – Prof AWOL