



Course Overview

Course Code and Semester: Physics 4A, Class Number 40583, Fall 2026

Course Description: Comprehensive study of major topics of physics: motion, forces, gravity, energy, momentum, rotation, equilibrium, fluids, oscillations, waves, and sound. (Satisfies CoA AA/AS area 1; CSU area B1/B3; IGETC area 5A/5C; C-ID PHYS 205; transferable to CSU and UC)

Prerequisite: Math 3A

Co-requisite: Math 3B

Who should take this course?

- Intended physical science and engineering major students
- Architecture students, if required by their intended transfer institutions
- Students interested in or considering STEM majors

Physics 3A-3B, a calculus-based two-semester sequence, may be a better option for students intending to major in biological sciences. Physics 4A-4B-4C sequence is designed to cover the same topics over three semesters. Please talk to me for additional guidance.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Discuss the concepts of physics, and apply them to situations relevant to the course.
2. Develop descriptions of physical systems using mathematics and calculate measurable quantities.
3. Set up laboratory equipment safely, plan and carry out experimental procedures, identify possible sources of error, reduce and interpret data, and prepare clear written reports.

Instructor Information

Hi! My name is **Andrew Park**. The best way to contact me for course-related matters is through Canvas [Conversations](https://peralta.instructure.com/conversations) (<https://peralta.instructure.com/conversations>) tool (for non-course matters, best way is by email bpark@peralta.edu (<mailto:bpark@peralta.edu>)). You will hear from me regularly throughout the semester, usually through the [Course Announcements](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/announcements) (<https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/announcements>). If you need to talk (rather than write) to me individually, please see office hour information below.



Lab (and Lecture) Sessions

The in-person meetings for this hybrid course meet in Peralta Science Annex at 860 Atlantic Avenue (yes, this is our street address).

- **Lecture: Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.** (in ATLAN 100)
- **Lab: Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.** (in ATLAN 100)

Office Hours / Virtual Class Sessions

Below is the office hours and virtual class session schedule for Fall 2026. (*Last updated at the semester start*)

Online virtual class session (attendance-optional; most of it recorded) is held on **Fridays at 11 a.m.** A reminder with the agenda of the session is announced earlier in the day (or the evening before); the sessions are subject to occasional cancellation, and the cancellations will be announced ahead of time.

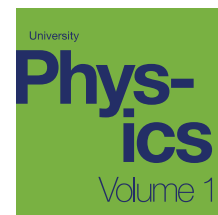
In-person office hours will be held in **ATLAN 100 (Physics Lab Room)**, **Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.** Drop by with any questions, or just to work on course content using the building WiFi. I also have office hours **Mondays/Tuesdays/Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.** (30 minutes before the start of class sessions).

For appointments outside of regularly scheduled office hours, please email me to arrange for the time. I usually respond to appointment request emails within 24 hours, and often sooner.

Course Materials

Your course materials are free and available digitally. Our primary and required textbook is *University Physics Volume 1* by OpenStax. You can read it by:

- Accessing it online on [openstax.org](https://openstax.org/books/university-physics-volume-1/pages/1-introduction)  (<https://openstax.org/books/university-physics-volume-1/pages/1-introduction>).
- Downloading the [PDF](https://assets.openstax.org/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/university-physics-volume-1_-_WEB.pdf)  (https://assets.openstax.org/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/university-physics-volume-1_-_WEB.pdf) (about 78 MB), or
- Using additional access options on [OpenStax](https://openstax.org/details/books/university-physics-volume-1)  (<https://openstax.org/details/books/university-physics-volume-1>).



Relevant textbook sections will be linked to from the Canvas pages, along with additional materials on an as-needed basis. I will frequently refer to one particular resource, [The Portable T.A. Volume 1](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/files/13469304/download?location=course_syllabus_88395&wrap=1) (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/files/13469304/download?location=course_syllabus_88395&wrap=1)  (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/files/13469304/download?location=course_syllabus_88395&download_frd=1) by Andrew Elby (posted here with author's permission).

Important Notes

Grading Standards

The course letter grades are assigned on the following standards:

- **A - Excellent understanding:** After some effort, most of the topics covered in lecture make sense; student is working toward mastery of all problem-solving techniques necessary to answer most of the homework questions correctly. There are no major gaps in understanding.
- **B - Good understanding:** After some effort, a majority of the key topics covered in lecture make sense; student is familiar with different problem-solving techniques for different homework questions and is working toward mastery of at least one problem-solving technique. There may be some gaps in understanding but nothing that prevents progress in class.
- **C - Fair to Poor understanding:** After some effort, at least one or two key topics covered in lecture make sense; while the student is struggling with application of problem-solving techniques, once the "correct formula" is given, the student can plug in the numbers correctly and obtain a correct final numerical answer. The student can accurately identify areas of understanding and gaps in understanding.
- **Not Passing - No understanding or Not enough work:** The student has not completed a majority of homework assignments and, when given a list of topics to discuss, struggles to accurately identify the topics in which significant improvement in understanding is necessary.

Points and scores are not used to determine your course letter grade; any scores kept are kept for course item completion and evidence of effort only (80% weight for lecture items; 20% weight for lab items). For assessment of your course letter grade, you will tell me (in special-purpose Canvas Assignments set aside for this) what grade you think you should get, and we will attempt to come to a consensus—between how well you feel you understood physics and how much of that I see as your instructor.

Additional detail is given on course Canvas page, [Physics 4A Grading Standards](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/pages/physics-4a-grading-standards) (<https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/pages/physics-4a-grading-standards>), (may need to unlock Module requirements to access the page).

ADA Accommodation

Students who may need accommodation for their disabilities are encouraged to contact [Student Accessibility Services](https://alameda.edu/students/student-accessibility-services-sas/)  (<https://alameda.edu/students/student-accessibility-services-sas/>) as soon as possible in the semester so that reasonable (and *legally mandated*) accommodations may be made. The contact information is on the right sidebar of the SAS website (may appear near the bottom on a mobile browser; if you are in a hurry, this is their email: SAS.Alameda@peralta.edu (<mailto:SAS.Alameda@peralta.edu>)). Usual accommodations made include extended exam time and/or transcription service. Most students with a diagnosed learning disability (such as ADHD or ADD) are eligible. If you are not sure whether you are eligible, please check with a SAS counselor. The details regarding the nature of your disability are confidential and not shared with your instructor.

Instructor's personal note: In my experience, many students who SHOULD HAVE utilized this service do not use them and suffer consequences academically. The goal of SAS (and ADA in general) is that you should be judged on your ABILITY, not disability. For those students who are eligible, the ADA accommodation is what will help you express your full potential (not a special treatment or something to be stigmatized against).

Talk to a SAS counselor today; the worst that can happen is they will tell you that you are not eligible and you wasted a little bit of time.

Course Generative AI Policy

Generative AI (or simply "AI") within this policy refers to any tool that can generate texts, images, figures, and computer files at the prompting of a user. Typical examples of AI include ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and many other online tools that function similarly. This policy will describe: (1) how AI is used within the course and (2) your responsibilities if you choose to use AI.

How AI Is Utilized in the Course

Generative AI (mostly ChatGPT and NotebookLM) has been used to generate some of the online course materials you will see. In most cases, the fact that AI was used will be clear and unavoidable (you will see NotebookLM logo, for example). Sometimes, use of AI in particular aspects will be disclosed early in the semester (e.g., lecture comprehension questions were generated using ChatGPT). Any *undisclosed* use of AI is limited to summarizing course material (e.g., lecture summary slides and some lecture descriptions you will see in different places). If any portion of the course "feels AI," students are invited to ask the instructor for clarification.

Generative AI will never be used to give grading feedback. If you see grading feedback in a manually graded item, it comes 100% from your instructor, not AI. However, as part of the manual grading process, all submissions (of sufficient length) will be passed through [Pangram AI](https://www.pangram.com/) (https://www.pangram.com/) for an "AI check". Any submission that is flagged as AI will not be substantially graded by the instructor and instead a note and the link to the Pangram result will be provided.

Your Responsibilities

If you choose not to utilize AI in this class, you have the usual academic integrity responsibilities; you are not required to use AI, and you won't be "penalized" for refusing to use AI. If you choose to utilize AI in any form or for any purpose (includes translation and grammar assistance), you have the following two main responsibilities:

(1) You have a responsibility to learn. Ultimately you are evaluated on the content of your knowledge, not the polish nor the details of your submitted written work. If you are using AI to help you learn, you have a responsibility to make sure that the learning actually occurred (and not try to "fake it" through a fraudulently submitted written work).

(2) You have a responsibility to disclose. Undisclosed AI submission will not be substantially graded by your instructor (having failed the "AI check" above). Disclosure of AI use should include a link to the AI chat so that your instructor can assess what portion of your submission is "AI" and what portion is "you". The disclosure should occur at the very top of the submission so that it won't be missed.

If any of your submissions are flagged as AI and you believe this was in error, you are invited to hold a 1-on-1 meeting with the instructor to discuss your submission.

Tutoring and Academic Support

For tutoring support, please check [Learning Resources Center](https://alameda.edu/students/learning-resources-center-lrc/) (https://alameda.edu/students/learning-resources-center-lrc/) website for access information.

Preferred Names and Pronouns

Please help me refer to you in the way you prefer by completing the following at the beginning of the semester:

- [\[GRADED DISCUSSION\] Introduce Yourself](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/discussion_topics/1461478) (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/discussion_topics/1461478) (also accessible from Modules, may need to complete Module requirements to access)

I will always do my best to pronounce your name correctly and refer to you with respect. Please help me do that by correcting me if I mispronounce your name—or any other mistakes I may make unwittingly in how I refer to you.

Additional Advice

In the remainder of this syllabus, you will see course policies and other additional detail that may be good to know. But in terms of how you can best prepare yourself for *success* in this class, additional advice is given throughout the Canvas module, [Getting Started](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules/764074) (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules/764074). So, please, work through the [Getting Started](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules/764074) (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules/764074) module in the first couple days of the semester (or as soon as you can).

Schedule of Assignments

The [Modules](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules) (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules) view in Canvas shows all course materials, assignments, and due dates on a single page, and this is the recommended view for the class. Please use the [Modules](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules) (https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/modules) view to see upcoming assignments and their due dates. Please look at the end of the syllabus for a summary of topics covered, with textbook references.

Fine-print details are below—I encourage you to read through them (it lays out course policies in detail), but I will remind you of anything that is important.

The Fine Print - Course Policies

Please read on for the full listing of course policies. If you would rather skip it, that is fine; I will remind you of anything that is important.

- **Registration:** After the last day to register for classes (see [academic calendar](https://www.peralta.edu/admissions/academic-calendar-finals-schedule-enrollment-calendar) , <https://www.peralta.edu/admissions/academic-calendar-finals-schedule-enrollment-calendar>), you must be registered in the class in order for you to receive credit. No students can be added after this date.
 - **Attendance:** Please come ready to work at the beginning of every lab class. Instructor may drop a student if the number of unexcused lab absences exceeds 2 (number of times the lab section meets in two weeks; refer to [College of Alameda 2026-2027 catalog](https://coa.curriqunet.com/catalog/iq/2079/2109) , <https://coa.curriqunet.com/catalog/iq/2079/2109> for the college policy on attendance). If any difficulties in regular lab attendance arise, please email me so that we can figure out what can be done. Lecture attendance is encouraged but not strictly enforced.
 - **Academic Integrity:** Everything you turn in must be your own work. If you use sources other than the textbook, please clearly cite it and give credit where it is due. Allowing another student to copy your own work also constitutes academic dishonesty (there is a fine line between group collaboration and dishonest copying of others' work; I will help you see it, as needed). Please refer to [College of Alameda 2026-2027 catalog](https://coa.curriqunet.com/catalog/iq/7433/7453) , <https://coa.curriqunet.com/catalog/iq/7433/7453> for the college policy on academic dishonesty and possible disciplinary measures.
 - **Honor Code Pledge:** You must complete the honor code pledge (accessible within the first few course Modules) to continue in this class. Students who do not maintain their honor code pledge may become ineligible to participate in certain course activities or be required to complete activities in a format that does not assume honorable conduct of participants.
 - **Schedule Subject to Change:** Assignment and assessment schedules are subject to change. Any changes will be announced through Canvas.
 - **Late Assignments:** All assignments are due on the date noted. Canvas will accept late submissions on essay or discussion assignments (the instructor reserves the right to grade late submissions in appropriate cases). MyOpenMath assignments must be extended using a "late pass". Thirty-six late passes are given at the beginning of the semester, and each late pass extends a MyOpenMath assignment deadline by one week (168 hours). If you have run out of late passes, you are advised to (1) schedule a 1-on-1 meeting with the instructor to plan the best path forward and (2) continue working on the course material using MyOpenMath practice mode (scores in gradebook won't reflect any practice mode attempts).
 - **Allowed/Prohibited Items During Timed Assessments (open book):** Certain assessments are timed and are used like "exams" in face-to-face classes. The following describes what you may use and what you may not use during these assessments.
 - Allowed: calculators, foreign language dictionaries, any material that is provided in the context of the course (usually through Canvas), and the means used to access the assessment.
 - Prohibited: any outside help, including but not limited to: (a) any individual other than the instructor providing help during the assessment, (b) external websites, unless they are used purely for calculation function, and (c) external references, either in digital or paper-bound format, other than those allowed above.
 - **Holistic Grading Rubric:** A holistic grading scale is used for grading essay or freeform-answer questions.
 - 5 (out of 5 points possible): "Excellent understanding." The student clearly understands how to solve the problems; one or two minor mistakes can appear on a "5" solution, if they don't lead to larger conceptual errors.
 - 4: "Good understanding." The student understands the main concepts and problem-solving techniques but is missing one major concept, or made one major mistake that may involve conceptual misunderstanding.
 - 3: "Fair understanding." The student started to set up the solution and is on the right track of applying the problem-solving techniques but is several major steps (or mistakes) away from being able to solve it.
 - 2: "Poor understanding." The student jots down some formulas from memory that may be relevant to the problem but shows little conceptual understanding of how they should be used.
 - 1: "No understanding." The student writes down something that has something to do with the problem.
 - 0: "Blank." Blank answers.
- Any requests for consideration of a grade change must be submitted in writing.
- **Course Grading Standards:** This course uses a version of [contract grading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract_grading) , https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract_grading. Please review [Physics 4A Grading Standards](https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/pages/physics-4a-grading-standards) <https://peralta.instructure.com/courses/88395/pages/physics-4a-grading-standards> and raise any questions in a timely manner.

Topics Covered

Following is the 16-week schedule of topics being covered. Chapter references are for OpenStax [University Physics Volume 1](https://openstax.org/details/books/university-physics-volume-1) , <https://openstax.org/details/books/university-physics-volume-1>, unless otherwise stated.

- **Week 1: Intro to Physics Problem-Solving** (Chapters 1 and 2)
- **Week 2: Kinematics** (Chapters 3 and 4)
- **Week 3: Newton's Laws Intro** (Chapter 5)
- **Week 4: Newton's Laws Applications** (Chapter 6, Sections 1 and 2)
- **Week 5: Newton's Laws Applications with Circular Motion** (Chapter 6, Section 3)

- **Week 6: Motion and Forces Problem-Solving** (Chapters 3 through 6, with review problems)
- **Week 7: Work and Energy** (Chapters 7 and 8)
- **Week 8: Momentum and Conservation Laws** (Chapter 9)
- **Week 9: Energy and Momentum Problem-Solving** (Chapters 7 through 9, with review problems)
- **Week 10: Rotation** (Chapters 10 and 11)
- **Week 11: Static Equilibrium and Gravity** (Chapters 12 and 13)
- **Week 12: Rigid-Body Motion Problem-Solving** (Chapters 10 through 13 and all earlier chapters, in review)
- **Week 13: Oscillations** (Chapter 15)
- **Week 14: Waves** (Chapters 16 and 17)
- **Week 15: Oscillations and Waves Problem-Solving** (Chapters 15 through 17, with review problems)
- **Week 16: Fluids** (Chapter 14)