

Physics 595 – Spring 2026

Assignment #1: Write a Paper Topic Statement and Paper Outlines

First, write a two or three sentence description of the topic (i.e., a topic statement) on which you propose to focus your writing assignments and final research talk/paper this semester. This research topic might concern your own research, e.g., for a prelim, thesis, or journal article you're working on, or it could be a research topic you're interested in learning about but not directly involved with. Please consult Lance Cooper if you want to discuss ideas for this topic. The topic statement should be understandable by a scientifically literate audience that are not experts in your field (e.g., members of the Phys 595 class) and it should include the following elements: (i) a statement of the research problem, (ii) the methods that will be used to study this research problem, and (iii) the goals and/or potential impact of the research.

Second, write a draft level 1 or 2 outline of your research paper in **both** topic and sentence outline formats. It's fine if you haven't fully sketched out the organization of your paper—because we will develop this outline throughout the semester—but please make these first-draft outlines as detailed as possible.

This assignment is worth 70 points, divided as follows: Topic Statement (20 points); Topic Outline (25 points); Sentence Outline (25 points).

The final draft of this assignment will be due on **Friday, Feb. 6.**