

PHYS 596: Graduate Physics Orientation

General Information

♦ Class Times

The class will meet on Fridays, 10:00 a.m.–11:50 a.m. *Attendance is required.*
Classes will be held in person in **Room 144 Loomis**.

♦ Course Website

The lectures slides can be accessed on the course syllabus webpage shortly after class:
<https://courses.physics.illinois.edu/phys596/fa2026/index.html>

♦ Physics 596 Fall 2026 Channel on Media Space

Videos of all lectures will be posted on the Physics 596 Fall 2026 Channel on Media Space as soon as possible after the main lecture. The link to this channel is here:
<https://mediaspace.illinois.edu/channel/Physics+596+Fall+2026/412554092>

♦ Instructor

	Office	e-mail
Lance Cooper	227B Loomis	slcooper@illinois.edu

♦ Course Goals

Goals of this course: (i) to expose you to the range of research activities available in the department and (ii) to give you instruction on the important communications, teamwork, leadership, and organizational skills you will need as graduate research assistants and scientists.

♦ Textbook

No textbook is required for this course. Lecture notes are posted on the course website. Some scientific papers published in the peer-reviewed literature will be assigned; all are available free of charge online through the University's library subscription.

Recommended reading:

Vernon Booth, *Communicating in Science: Writing a scientific paper and speaking at scientific meetings*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993).

♦ Assignments

Assignments include both written work and oral presentations. Detailed instructions for each assignment, along with its due date and point value, are posted at
<https://courses.physics.illinois.edu/phys596/fa2026/Assignments.html>

♦ Grading

Your final grade will be based on both class attendance and completion of the group assignments. Late submission of assignments, unexcused absences, and failure to participate in class may result in your grade being lowered. There are no formal exams for this course, and no final will be given.

◆ Class Administration

Any concerns, questions, or comments about the administration of the course should be directed to Professor Cooper. Please e-mail us if you'd like to schedule an appointment to meet regarding the class. If you send e-mail to the instructors regarding the class, please put "Phys 596" in the subject line.

◆ Office Hours

Lance Cooper will be available for as many office hours as requested. Please contact Lance (slcooper@illinois.edu) to schedule a remote meeting.

◆ Course Syllabus

A tentative course syllabus for Fall 2026 is included below and an up-to-date syllabus can be found on the course website here:

<https://courses.physics.illinois.edu/phys596/fa2026/syllabus.htm>

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments
1	Aug 28	Introduction and course expectations; How to find an advisor	<u>Major Group Assignment</u> Create and present a group Journal Club PowerPoint talk + write a referee report
2	Sep 4	Research Talk	
3	Sep 11	Research Talks Creating/giving a journal club presentation	
4	Sep 18	Research Talks Scientific publication process; How to write a referee report	
5	Sep 25	Research Talks Using on-line scientific resources	<u>mini-Assignment #1</u> On-line resource activities
6	Oct 2	Research Talks	
7	Oct 9	Ethics in research	
8	Oct 16	Research Talks	
9	Oct 23	Research Talks How to write a scientific abstract	<u>mini-Assignment #2</u> Write an abstract for selected paper
10	Oct 30	Research Talks	

11	Nov 6	Research Talks Tips for Effective Scientific Communication	
12	Nov 13	Research Talks	
13	Nov 20	Team Journal Club Presentations	
	Nov 27	Thanksgiving Break	
14	Dec 4	Team Journal Club Presentations	

◆ Academic Integrity

All activities in this course are subject to the Academic Integrity rules as described in [Article 1, Part 4, Academic Integrity, of the Student Code](#).

Infractions include, but are not limited to:

- cheating, plagiarism, fabrication
- facilitating infractions of academic integrity.
- academic interference
- computer-related infractions
- unauthorized use of university resources
- sale of class materials or notes

Violations of any of these rules will be prosecuted and reported to the student's home college in compliance with the Student Code: [Article 1, Part 4, Academic Integrity, of the Student Code](#).

All aspects of the course are covered by these rules.

◆ Disability Access

(<https://www.disability.illinois.edu/academic-support/instructor-information/examples-disability-statements-syllabus>)

The Department of Physics is committed to being an open and welcoming environment for all of our students. We are committed to helping all of our students succeed in our courses.

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services

(DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the [DRES website](#). If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting “Sign-Up for an Academic Screening” at the bottom of the page.

If you are interested in obtaining information to improve writing, study skills, time management or organization, the following campus resources are available to all students:

Writer’s Workshop

Undergrad Library

217-333-8796

<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop>

<https://www.disability.illinois.edu/strategies>

<http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/self-help-brochures/>

Also, most college offices and academic deans provide academic skills support and assistance for academically related and personal problems. Links to the appropriate college contact can be found by going to this website and selecting your college or school: <http://illinois.edu/colleges/colleges.html>

If you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression or are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or in crisis, you can seek help through the following campus resources:

Counseling Center

206 Fred H. Turner Student Services Building

7:50 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Phone: 333-3704

McKinley Mental Health

313 McKinley Health Center

8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Phone: 333-2705

McKinley Health Education offers individual consultations for students interested in learning relaxation and other stress/time management skills, call 333-2714.