Physics 201 & WebCT

Physics 201 uses the WebCT system to both administer taking Math Quizzes and submitting homework. On WebCT you will take a Warm-up for submitting course material, a Preliminary Physics Background Evaluation (FCI), Math Quizzes, and homework. We begin with a description of each. Instructions on how to use WebCT are at the end.

Warm-up for submitting course material: This is a short quiz that is administered at the very beginning of the course. The purpose of this quiz is to make sure that you have read over your WebCT instructions and understand them. You must obtain a perfect score in order to access the Preliminary Physics Background Evaluation (FCI).

Preliminary Physics Background Evaluation(FCI): The Force Concept Inventory (FCI) is a pre-class evaluation which is designed to help us gauge your physics background preparation for the class. This does not count as part of your grade, but you must complete it before you can access the Math Quizzes and Homework sets. Note that you only get one attempt at taking the Force Concept Inventory but you may take as long as you like to complete it.

Math Quizzes: Experience has shown that students with insufficient mathematical background do very poorly in Physics 201. For this reason there are a set of Math Quizzes which are designed to help you overcome any potential weaknesses in the areas of mathematics which might impede your doing well in the course. The questions in the quizzes are meant to *remind* you of mathematical concepts that should be familiar to you and which are going to be used repeatedly throughout the semester. Your professor and TA will assume that you are proficient with these types of problems by the end of the first few weeks of class.

There are ten separate quizzes which cover the mathematical skills that are necessary to successfully complete the course. Each quiz consists of ten short math questions (you are allowed 10 minutes to take each) and is graded on a pass/fail basis with a 10/10 being the only passing grade. You are provided with immediate feedback after you hit the submit button for each quiz. If you are well prepared mathematically for this course they should be quick and easy. If not, you are allowed an unlimited number of attempts so that by the time you have received ten perfect scores you have the necessary skills to complete the course.

Homework: Homework assignments are an integral part of Physics 201. Experience has shown that students that do all of their homework in a timely manner, in addition to earning the homework points, do well in other aspects of Physics 201 such as exams and recitation quizzes. The WebCT based homework grading system is designed to reward you for doing your homework diligently and to give you immediate feedback on your problem solving skills. Each homework assignment is divided into three separate pieces and individually graded.

The homework portion of the system works on the assumption that you have completed all of your homework problems on paper ***in formula form before*** you attempt to submit your answers on WebCT. Before trying to turn in your HW, you should plug in the numbers from the problems in the textbook and check the answers in the back of the book or on the web. After you are confident you have gotten all problems correct you should bring your textbook, a calculator and your solutions with the final answer *highlighted and in formula form* (if possible) to the computer that you will use to access WebCT. Once you log in, you will need to select your particular homework assignment. The problems are virtually the same as those in the book but the numbers or parameters will be different (this is done to prevent you from succumbing to the temptation of copying the solution from the back of the book and also to show the value of obtaining final solutions in formula form so substitutions are easy to do).

Example*:* If the book Ch.1, Prob.1 asks "What is the time taken if the distance traveled is 35miles and the speed is 70mph?" your solution should read:

$t = x / v \Rightarrow t = 35\text{miles}/70\text{mph} = 0.50\text{ hours}$

You then should CHECK your answer with the back of the book. Once you are done with the entire assignment, you can log into WebCT and the question will likely read:

Ch.1 Prob.1: "Suppose the speed is now 60mph, what is the new time in hours?"
Since you already have the correct formula above, all you need to do is substitute 60mph for v. You would enter the answer (0.58, no units!) in the answer box.

All three parts of the HW are always available to you, and you can do them in any order and have as many attempts for each as you like. Each time you submit your HW the automatic grading system will immediately show you the questions

you answered correctly and incorrectly. There is a 20-minute time limit for each submission. Be aware that there is a significant advantage to being careful when turning in your HW as each time you try to submit your HW a new set of numbers for each problem is generated.

Note: If it takes you more than four attempts to get all of the homework problems in a particular part of the homework correct, either you are not doing enough preparation before attempting to turn them in, or you should get help from your TA, the Help Desk, or your instructor. This is a common problem among 201 students. Guessing and using the answer to help guess better in the future is frowned upon and a waste of everyone's time!

Getting started with WebCT

- To use WebCT you will need a NEO account. Instructions for activating your NEO account can be found by going to the URL https://webct.tamu.edu/logininstructions.html. These instructions are available both as a webpage and as a PDF for download.

Step 1

- Go to https://webct.tamu.edu and log into WebCT Vista Login (which will appear on the right hand portion of your browser window. You will be prompted for you username and password. These are the same as your NEO account.

Provisional Step (This is only if you browser requires updates)
A check of your browser will occur automatically when you attempt to login.
If you receive an error message, use the following instructions to fix.

- Before going any further, be aware that WebCT is now using Vista version 3.0, this means that you may have to update your version of "Java" and go through the "Tune up your browser with Vista". To access these different links, go to https://webct.tamu.edu and click on the **student resources** link on the top of the page. You will then see on the right hand side of your screen the links Upgrade Java Virtual Machine and Tune up your Browser with Vista**.** Follow these instructions to make sure your browser is compatible with WebCT Vista 3.0

Step 2

- Once you are registered with WebCT and upgraded your browser, you can begin submitting homework from any campus computer with Internet access.

If you are attempting to access WebCT off campus and experience troubles
For off-campus computers you must either have a TAMUnet modem connection or have a VPN (Virtual Private Network) client running (e.g. if you have a cable modem or DSL connection). For more information about VPN and TAMUnet, please refer to the CIS support staff: (979) 845-8300

Step 3

- Once you have successfully entered both your username and password and entered WebCT, you will be taken to a "Courses" page. Click on the link **Physics 201** to access your Homepage. From there you click on **Quizzes and Homework** to access your Math Quizzes, etc.

NEED HELP? :
If you are having trouble with WebCT there are WebCT training sessions listed on webct.tamu.edu at the beginning of the semester. If you are having trouble getting into WebCT, need technical assistance (registration/lost passwords etc.), or believe there is a WebCT problem please contact WebCT directly by filling the request assistance form on the WebCT web site at the **Fill Out the Online Help Form** link on the lower right hand portion of your screen under **Need Help?**
There is also a physics department WebCT Frequently Asked Questions page at faculty.physics.tamu.edu/toback/WebCT/FAQ.html

If you have any questions regarding the physics or math content, or don't understand the homework grading system, you can email Dr. Ford (ford@physics.tamu.edu).