

Hi everybody.

Thanks for the feedback today; and I think it was a good time to reflect after the first midterm. Most students expressed approval of how things are going, an increased comfort with physics, and an increased awareness of how they are participating differently in this learning process.

New video grading policy: Many students indicated they are happy with it, and more comfortable watching the videos; they are focusing on learning rather than getting the answer correct. This is great, and I am grateful for your honest input two weeks ago that led me to change the video grading policy.

On the midterm – most liked how it was graded, but some folks asked for more complete feedback on what they did wrong. While I think it's important to get the feedback that you need, I request that you innovate a way to do this by using office hours, the book, and (most importantly) your peers. I think it's important for you to receive your exam back as soon as possible, so you can revise your mental models while they are still fresh and you are thinking about them. By writing very little, I'm able to get the midterms graded by the next day.... I slept very little last night as it was. Additionally, for the reasons explored in the Veritassium Video the first week of class, I think you benefit more from struggling with a question together than being told by an "expert" what to do.

To anyone who is interested in more study guides, I refer you to last year's website where you can find all the old tests and problem sets. Additionally, please see some resources under "more practice" on our class website.

Some students expressed concern about uncertainty of your final grades; how many points is each exam, video, problem set, LON-CAPA worth? What portion is the "lens" worth in an exam? How can I improve my grade after a poor midterm? I refer you to the syllabus to be sure of how you are being graded. In particular, I let you know that the final exam can replace the lowest midterm grade, so you are always allowed to have one disastrous midterm.

I think that this course is being compared to others that have a Poly Learn real time calculation of what your grade in the class is right now. It seems that grades have become the currency of the education system, and it is thus fitting that students would want to have constant affirmation of what their "value" as a student is; much the same way that an investor might constantly monitor the value of his/her stock portfolio as it changes in time. However, thinking that you know your grade before the final exam is an illusion because much of our grade depends on the final exam. More importantly, studies show that students who are more focused on their grades ironically do worse. This makes sense to me because we can really only think about one thing at a time. So you will learn best when you are relaxed and thinking about what is in front of you, not where it's going to get you. In any case, it is my advice to please understand how you're being graded and then put your attention on learning.

Ok, Thanks for your help in shaping the class. See you Monday.

Pete.... Some quotes below

“...I think about my thought process when I see a question instead of just jumping into formula work.”

“To be honest, I was very frustrated over the weekend leading up to the midterm. Then I started spending a lot of time with the problems and other students in the class.... Ah HA! Moments started to occur. Took Pete’s advice and helped teach [one person] some stuff and this really helped. Stoked.”

“I am learning more and more in this class everyday but sometimes I find it frustrating studying for tests because what we learn is so broad I don’t know where to focus in. I also wish that class time was more productive with practice problems.”

“I’m really likeing this class so far. It feels like I’m getting a great understanding of physics.”

“I very much enjoy this class. I love the communication and collective work ethic. I feel like I learn a lot by helping others. Also the grading system on the tests are great.”

“I feel like this period of peer review afterwards is really helpful as we’ve all gotten to the right answer by the end of class and we now have a clearer understanding of the concepts.”