

**Don't  
Panic!**

## Port St. Lucie High School Science Department Physics I Syllabus (v2.0)

Fall 2007 – Spring 2008  
Instructor: Mr. Jim Riske  
Room 114

Textbook: *Conceptual Physics*  
by Paul Hewitt  
Class Website: [www.jimriske.com](http://www.jimriske.com)

### Key Notes:

1. CAVEAT DISCIPULUS (let the student beware): This syllabus is fair game for revision, re-thinking, and last-minute changes.
2. If, at any given time, I fail to enforce a rule (or choose not to for some reason) this does not negate my right to enforce the rule, when if I feel it is necessary at other times.
3. **Fair does not always mean equal.** You are all individuals. I often know more about what is going on in your classmates' lives than you do. I often know less. You are always welcome to share comments or concerns about me, this class, or a classmate privately. I will not, however, necessarily explain to you my reasoning for any given disciplinary decision, and I will most certainly not take class time to do it publicly. A decision that appears unfair may be based on specific information, private agreements, or individual histories (it is much harder to earn trust than to lose it).

### Contact:

I may be reached in a variety of ways:

Email: [jim@jimriske.com](mailto:jim@jimriske.com)

School phone: 772-337-6770

Parent/Teacher conferences can be scheduled through the Guidance office.

The best way to reach me and to receive a quick response is to use email. Emails can often (though not always) be answered in between classes. Messages through the office will get to me, but often involve a delay of a day or two as it the message moves from desk to mailbox to desk.

Parents who have not already done so are encouraged to contact the Guidance office to sign up for the "Parent Portal". Most of the information that I could give you in a meeting is already available through that system.

### Instructional Objectives:

The course objectives are set by the State of Florida in the Sunshine State Standards and the Florida Course Descriptions. These may be found at [www.firn.edu/doe/menu/sss.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/menu/sss.htm). A timeline is laid out by the St. Lucie County Scope & Sequence. This may be found at [www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/includes/High\\_scope\\_seq/Science-1-Scope-and-Sequence.pdf](http://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/includes/High_scope_seq/Science-1-Scope-and-Sequence.pdf). Additional objectives are laid out in the National Science Education Standards. These may be found at [www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/html/index.html](http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/html/index.html).

### **General Protocols:**

1. Be on time for class, in seat, ready to work when the tardy bell rings.
2. Have proper supplies: Pen, Pencil, Paper, Binder, Calculator, etc.
3. Bell-work will be posted either on the board or projector each day. Upon arriving to class, begin this work promptly. Many times this will include an FCAT or study question. All bell-work is to be kept in your notebook all week and will be the subject of a quiz on Friday. If you need to sharpen your pencil, this is the time to do it.
4. There will usually an agenda posted on the board. Be sure to copy this down so you can refer to it if work is not completed. Listed homework is still due, even if I do not mention it aloud.
5. Once these activities are completed, you will either write notes, listen to lecture, or an activity/lab will be planned. Regardless, please continue to have your notebooks out with writing utensils handy. I wouldn't be taking time to talk about it, if it weren't noteworthy.
6. I will not give make-up work or extra credit for those students that were present and chose not to do work in class. Make-up work is for students that were absent. Extra credit is available from the benchmark tests and the standard curve on chapter tests.
7. All assigned work must be completed and turned in on the due date. Failure to turn work in on time will result in a loss of 25% per day. Exceptions to this rule are noted later in the syllabus.
8. Always head papers properly in the upper right hand corner with Name, Assignment, Class Period, and Date. Example:

Jane Doe  
8/1/05  
Section Review, Pg. 514, 1-4  
Period 4

### **Grading and Assessment:**

Do not ask me if an assignment in class is for a grade. You are graded on everything you do in my class, from the moment you walk in the door until the moment you leave, from the first day of school until the last day of school. Your level of success in this class is in your hands.

Grades for each nine week marking period will be computed using a "total points" system. Different assignments or tests will often have different weight upon your grade.

**FAIR WARNING: PROJECTS ARE OFTEN ASSIGNED SO THAT A LARGE PART OF THE GRADE IS ASSESSED AFTER THE FINAL PROGRESS REPORT. IF YOU CHOOSE TO PRESUME THAT A PASSING PROGRESS REPORT MEANS THAT YOU CAN STOP WORKING, IT IS QUITE EASY TO MOVE FROM PASSING TO FAILING IN SHORT ORDER.**

Letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

100% - 90% = A; 89% - 80% = B; 79% - 70% = C; 69% - 60% = D; 59% - 0% = F.

NOTE: There is a multiplier function in the current grade book that does not reflect well on progress reports. That is, I may grade an assignment out of 10 points, but make it worth 100 points. Reading the progress report it may appear to be worth 10 points, but it will have the effect of 100 points. Students will be generally be informed of the relative effect of assignments, as they work. Additionally, a column will be printed on the progress report indicating the percentage of the total grade that a given line is worth.

### **Late Work and Make-up Work:**

Turn your work in on time! The schedule does exist for a reason. And the school board does have specific rules for the handling of late and make-up work.

- School policy states that you have two days to make up any work missed from an excused absence. There is a maximum of ten school days, no matter how long you have been absent.
- If you know in advance that you will be out for an extended period of time, I can usually give you some, though rarely all, assignments in advance. We have actual classes for a reason. If you could get everything you need for the class without showing up, I'd give you the website or DVD, then go home and take a nap.
- **It is your responsibility to make sure you get any work you have missed due to absences.**
- Please do not disturb class to get these assignments. See me before or after class. I will write you a pass, if necessary. But I am not going to stop class for everyone else, because you remember in the middle of a lecture, "Gee, I was absent yesterday, maybe I ought to see if there was homework."
- When turning in make-up work, you must note the date that you were absent, or the assignment may be considered late. While I, of course, have access to your attendance records, I do not have them in front of me while I am grading, nor should that be necessary.
- The nature of certain assignments requires that I give out the answers soon after grading, so that we can proceed with our work. If you hand in the assignment after I've given out the answers, it's not exactly fair to give you credit for it, despite any conflicting suggestion in the "General Protocols" section. If this is an assignment that you have the right to make up over a longer time frame, I will simply give you a different assignment. If not, at this point, it is too late for me to give you credit.

### **Passes**

- It is generally expected that you will take care of personal business before school, after school, during lunch, or during passing times between classes.
- When this is not possible, school policy states that you are allowed two emergency passes per nine weeks, in this class.
- No passes will be given during school "freeze times" for any reason.
- If you abuse the two emergency pass privilege, you will most likely receive a referral, and will most certainly lose all pass privileges for the school year.
- If you require more frequent restroom breaks due to a medical condition, please obtain a doctor's note regarding the condition and submit it to the school nurse. The nurse will give you a permanent pass for the year.
- Passes for guidance, Dean, SRO, or administration office will be delivered to my mailbox for you. If you need to make an appointment for any of the above offices, please do so on your own time. As a matter of policy (and their general request) I do not write passes for any of the above areas.
- If you leave something in another classroom, you must wait until class is over to retrieve it.

- **I will not engage in an argument with you over the validity of your need for a pass at a given time versus my policies or school policies whether it is appropriate and allowable for me to write one for you. ...You have free will. If it is that much of an emergency, you have the option to take care of the matter between classes and then go to tardy tank. You also have the physical ability to get up and leave class. But, once I have marked you present, I am legally responsible for your whereabouts and safety for the duration of class. Therefore, should you choose to leave, I may be forced to contact the office and then write a referral.**

#### **Turning in Assignments:**

- Make sure that your name is on every paper you hand in or work on. If your name is not on it, it will go into the trash can. Your heading should contain your first and last name, the date and the assignment detail. Also include your class period.
- The occasions that I will remind you to hand something in will be few and far between. The supply list included a planner for a reason.
- In-class assignments are due at the end of class. That's why they're called "in-class assignments".
- Assignments that are due the following school day, or within two days, should not be that hard to remember. I will not necessarily mention it again, unless you ask about it when it's handed back, or when you see the NHI on the progress report.
- Long-term assignments usually have reminders written on the board, as well as multiple reminders for me. This is not, however, a guarantee. One of the key things that you need to learn at this level is to plan for long-term assignment – so that you don't forget them and so that you allow enough work time to do it well.
- I have established a drawer for each class period, clearly marked on the counter. All work to be turned in must be placed in the appropriate drawer. It is considered late, if I do not find it in that drawer at the time I leave on the day the work is due.
- Work that is amenable to being submitted electronically may be (this is actually encouraged). Essays, PowerPoint presentations, and lab reports would be examples where this is appropriate (though lab reports may require separate submission of some handwritten data). Such work should be submitted to jim@jimriske.com by 8pm local time on the due date.
- I have also established folders for each class, for you to pick up graded papers (as well as make-up work). These will be placed at the bottom of each drawer. If there is free time, or someone has finished work early, you are encouraged to hand work back to your classmates.

#### **Tardy Policy:**

If you are tardy, I am generally required to send you to the tardy tank.

If you are delayed in your arrival to class by someone authorized to write you a pass, please do not disturb the lesson. I do not need to hear an immediate explanation. Quickly and quietly hand me the pass (or set it on my desk, if I indicate that as my current preference). If I feel that further discussion is necessary, it will be reserved for a later point, when it won't disturb class time.

#### **Textbooks:**

You will be issued a textbook to be taken home. You may occasionally need to bring it to school as well. It may be in your best interest to purchase a lock for a locker so you are not carrying it around all day.

You will be required to read the material at home PRIOR to the lesson at school. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared. If you choose not to, you will only fall behind. If you are on the obligation list, you will not be issued a textbook.

#### **Bell to Bell:**

The bell does not dismiss the students in my room, I do. The bell serves as a reminder to me that my lesson time has expired, it is time to wrap up, and let students go to their next class. I may need to remind you of an assignment or collect work. Please be respectful of this procedure. At no time is it permitted to line up at the door. That is elementary school behavior. I expect you all to act like teenagers.

#### **Labs, Field Trips, and Guest Speakers:**

We will be doing many hands on activities in class and incorporating as many outside resources into our classroom as possible. In many cases, hands on activities can provide students a far better understanding of the topic than basic lectures or videos.

However, safety, logistics, and a basic respect for the people assisting in these activities demands that students be on their best behavior during these activities. Students who prove themselves unable to handle themselves during these additional activities will be provided with alternative assignments and risk referral to the dean's office.

#### **Technology in the classroom:**

- While we will use technology throughout this class, you may not use cell phones, pagers, cameras, personal music players, or video players in my class, without specific permission from me. Violation of this rule is grounds for an immediate referral. All such items should be turned off and invisible to me, or they will be confiscated, as is school policy.
- There is nothing more important than my lesson during my class time. If a caller has a message for you, they will leave one and you can check it later. If a family member must contact you in an emergency, they are more than welcome to call the front office and an administrator will call for you or come to collect you.
- There is a video camera built into the classroom and others are used at various times. While these are generally used for educational purposes, I reserve the right to use them to obtain information on disciplinary infractions.
- Persons using public school campuses and other School Board property, including but not limited to buildings, parking areas, and athletic and recreational areas, have no expectation of privacy in or around such property.

#### **Announcements**

- Do not talk during announcements. Even if you do not believe the information is of use to you, it may be of the utmost importance to me or to your classmates to that we hear a particular announcement in a timely manner. (See Rule #5)
- It is my expectation that you will stand during the Pledge of Allegiance. I do not have the right, nor would I presume to attempt, to force you recite the Pledge. However, regardless of your feelings toward the current administration or your feelings of loyalty toward another nation that may be your country of origin, this is a basic sign of respect toward all the people of this country.

"Men died for us. We [have] a responsibility to live our lives with integrity and honesty to honor their sacrifice."

- Leo McGarry, *The West Wing: An Khe*