Physics 1314 The Physical Perspective **Spring 1997**
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Course WWW Page: `http://www.physics.smu.edu/~coan`
Office hours: Monday: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Also by appointment.

Course Overview

Welcome. Physics 1314 will introduce you to important physical ideas about electricity, magnetism, light, the workings of atoms and nuclei, and provide a very brief description of what the physical universe is made of. This course will demand that you exercise your reasoning capabilities. Pure memorization is useless here. Indeed, the tests and final exam (but not the quizzes!) are "open book, open note" and yet most students find them challenging. The laboratory sessions will permit you to test *for yourself* whether the ideas we discuss in lecture actually correspond to what you yourself observe. These sessions provide some safeguard against me defrauding you, perhaps a unique situation in your undergraduate career.

Although you will be exposed to many interesting and beautiful ideas and facts in this course, it is unlikely you will remember much detail after, say, 3 years. (This is an unfortunate aspect of undergraduate education that universities are generally reluctant to mention.) However, the intellectual gains you can acquire here are far more lasting. I am mostly interested in developing your intellectual health and self-confidence. I want you to learn "how to think". The implicit bargain in Physics 1314 is this. I will provide an explanation of some important physics ideas and show you some demonstrations supporting the importance of these ideas. You will make an honest and substantial effort to understand these ideas. Good luck.

Grading Policy

My grading policy is to "curve" your overall course score to determine your final letter grade. This means that where you stand with respect to your classmates' scores will determine your final grade. This implies that a low test score does not necessarily imply a low letter grade and similarly, *a high test score does not necessarily imply a high letter grade*! Effort is rewarded and will be considered when the final grades are determined. A poor performance on the first exam does not mean you will automatically do poorly in this course. Keep trying.

Homework:	20%
Lab Reports:	20%
Quizzes	10%
Tests:	25%
Final Examination:	25%