

**PHYSICS 411L/611L, ECE 411L/611L
OPTICS FOR SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS LABORATORY
Syllabus, Fall Semester 2026**

Laboratory: T 3:30-5:50 or W 4:00-6:20

Room: South Engineering 112

Semester Credit Hours: 1

Instructors: Department

Dr. Andrew B. Croll Physics

Andrew.Croll@ndsu.edu

Office:

South Engineering 212B

Phone:

413-320-3810

Office Hours: (Dr. Croll) 9:00-11:00 M,W,
South Engineering 212b or on zoom (email for link)

Reference Text: *Optics* (Fifth Edition) by Eugene Hecht

Physics/ECE 411L Prerequisite: Physics 252, University Physics II

Physics/ECE 611L Prerequisite: Physics 252, University Physics II or equivalent

Corequisite: Physics 411/611 or ECE 411/611

Course Objective

The goal of this course is to provide students with the fundamentals necessary to enable them to successfully apply optics in their respective disciplines. This will be accomplished through hands-on use of state-of-the-art equipment in conjunction with classroom discussions in the corequisite lecture course to experience and understand the most important concepts and phenomena of optics.

Expectations:

In accordance with NDSU [Policy 601](#), failure to comply with instructions, including this syllabus, may be handled according to the Code of Student Conduct resolution process and may result in disciplinary sanctions.

Attendance Expectations:

According to [NDSU Policy 333 \(www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf), attendance in classes is expected, but this will be flexible. The course is taught to the classroom, but is broadcast on zoom (and recorded) for emergencies.

Please do not come to class:

- if you are feeling ill, particularly if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or
- if you are infected, during your five-day isolation period.

You will still need to complete the assignments, exams, reading, etc. necessary to meet class learning objectives. You can complete missed work by arranging a late submission with the instructor. If you are going to miss an exam for a valid excuse, e-mail or telephone your instructor before the test or on the same day. Phone number and e-mail address are listed above.

If you were exposed to COVID-19, please follow CDC guidance.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please follow CDC guidance.

Food and drink is not permitted in class unless a student has a documented accommodation through Disability Services. Students will have to remove their masks to eat or drink.

Veterans and student service members with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible and are encouraged to provide Activation Orders.

Lecture attendance will not be directly factored into the final grade, but active daily participation is essential. Students are expected to read the day's lesson prior to coming to class and to be prepared to discuss it in class. Material may be presented that is not in the text or it may be presented in a different way. Students are responsible for all material presented in class including that missed during excused absences. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to view recorded classes and discuss with peers.

BlackBoard:

Course assignments, information, and messages will be posted to BlackBoard <http://bb.ndsu.nodak.edu/>

Technical Issues:

We will use lots of software, if you have trouble with any of it contact NDSU Help Desk:

Email: ndsu.helpdesk@ndsu.edu

Call: 701-231-8685 (option 1)

Composition of Final Course Grade:

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Ten basic labs	70%
Project	30%

Graduate students will be graded separately and will be expected to have a more comprehensive understanding of the material. A total average of 89.5% of the possible points or more ensures an A, 75.5 to 89.4% ensures a B, 59.5 to 75.4% ensures a C, 49.5 to 59.4 ensures a D and below 49.5 will be an F. Depending on the class average, curving may be applied to grades; however the **lowest** passing final grade (C or higher) in the course will always be 50% or higher.

Americans with Disabilities Act for Students with Special Needs:

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the [Disability Services Office \(www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty Statement:

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. [NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#) applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found

guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the [Office of Registration and Records](#). Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty.

Laboratory results must represent the work of your two-person lab team.

Course AI Policy:

Any writing that is not produced by a student in this course without attribution, whether it was written by a human or AI, is a violation of the university's academic regulations and will be subject to disciplinary action. AI-generated composition (ChatGPT or other open-source composition software) that is used to produce any form of composition and is then submitted as the student's own writing without acknowledging the role that AI played in its production violates the writing program's academic integrity policy.

Work submitted in all courses must adhere to the [Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#) as cited in the Handbook of Student Policies: "The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play." NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records.

AI is not to be used in this course.

Course description:

This is a 1 semester-credit-hour senior undergraduate/first year graduate level laboratory course with minimum course prerequisites (University Physics II, electricity and magnetism). The corequisite lecture course based on the text *Optics, Fifth Edition*, by Hecht will provide the background required for performing the experiments. Students will be paired to maximize their hands-on experience.

The anticipated schedule is as follows:

First and third weeks—no lab

Ten weeks—one three-hour lab per week

Three weeks—laboratory five-hours per week to work on major-related experiment

Dead week—students present results—three classroom hours

All students will perform ten experiments to be completed in three-hour blocks. A major experiment related to the student's academic major (engineering, chemistry, physics, etc.) using optics will be selected by groups of three to four students for the last four-week project. Students will present their results to the class during Dead Week and write a research paper on this experiment. Students will be graded in this course on their experimental apparatus and approach and will receive a separate grade in the lecture course based on their paper, their presentation and their explanation of the results.

Lab Notebooks:

All students must have a lab notebook, with the pages numbered consecutively, in which all notes and experimental data, including graphs and tables, will be entered. The suggested notebook is Lab Book Large, 43-581, available in the NDSU Bookstore.

Lab Report Preparation:

General comments

1. Read the experiment description posted on BlackBoard before coming to lab.
2. Lab reports will be prepared using Microsoft Word (pdf format will not be accepted).
3. Images, plots, etc. will be prepared in MatLab, Excel, or your favorite software and inserted into the Word document. MatLab and Excel are available on the SE112 computers.
4. Lab reports will be submitted using BlackBoard Assignment. Reports are due 1 week after the lab is scheduled to be completed. **Late reports will not be accepted and will result in no credit** (except for exceptional excused delays such as medical or blizzards).
- 5.

Tentative Laboratory Schedule:

Week	Lab Number	Topic
1	No Lab	
2	1	Detection of light
3	No Lab	
4	2	Absorption
5	3	Index of refraction, total internal reflection, and critical angle
6	4	Lenses and simple lens systems
7	5	Preparing optical fibers and fiber optic numerical aperture
8	6	Fiber optic light attenuation
9	7	Single-mode fibers
10	8	Optical polarization
11	9	Interference and diffraction
12	10	Spectrometry
13	Major Project	Optics project related to student's academic major
14	Major Project	Optics project related to student's academic major
15	Major Project	Optics project related to student's academic major
16	Present Results	Attendance is mandatory for all presentations
17	Paper due	Monday, December 12 at 1:00 PM

Optics Lab Report Rubric				
Name				
Description				
Rubric Detail				
Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	A	B	C	D
Lab notebook	9 to 10 points Information entered neatly in ink. Corrections crossed out with a single line. Notes clearly describe what was done as it was accomplished. Graphics or tables generated by computer neatly taped into notebook.	8 to 8 points Most information is provided. Neatness could use improvement.	7 to 7 points At least one major component is missing or notes are not legible.	6 to 6 points Notes have been copied into notebook. They should be entered directly as you work.
Lab instructions followed	18 to 20 points A clear and correct understanding of the purpose and physics of the experiment is demonstrated.	16 to 17 points Some significant aspect of the experiment or theory is incorrect or missing.	14 to 15 points Only partial understanding of the purpose and physics of the experiment is demonstrated.	12 to 13 points Little understanding of the purpose and physics of the experiment is demonstrated.
Data and images	18 to 20 points Data/images for every measurement are provided. Data/images are clearly presented.	16 to 17 points Data sets are not clearly presented. Images are distorted.	14 to 15 points Data sets are incomplete. Images are missing.	12 to 13 points Data sets/images are inadequate for determining results.
Plotting and fitting data	18 to 20 points Best-fit functions are properly chosen and presented as solid lines in your plots. Experimental points are plotted as individual points on the same graph. Axes and legends are properly labeled. Images include a clear caption.	16 to 17 points Fits are provided but not fully described. Labeling is not complete.	14 to 15 points Labeling and legends are missing.	12 to 13 points Fits are not appropriate for data. Images are mislabeled.
Lab report questions	18 to 20 points Answers are clearly presented.	16 to 17 points Some answers are inconsistent or incorrect for the collected data/images.	14 to 15 points Significant aspects of the experiment and theory are discussed incorrectly.	12 to 13 points Answers are missing.
Composition and grammar	9 to 10 points Prose is clear and in a logical styles. Words are correctly spelled. Punctuation is correct.	8 to 8 points Prose is mostly clear but parts seem out of place or are unsupported. A few misspelled words and/or incorrect punctuation.	7 to 7 points Numerous misspellings and words used inappropriately. Sentences are incomplete.	6 to 6 points Sentences don't make sense.

Name Major Project Lab Component Rubric

Description This rubric is used to grade the portions of the presentation and paper relevant to the 411U/611L lab course.

Rubric Detail

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	A	B	C	D
Selection of topic	18 to 20 points Project selected is within the level of scientific difficulty covered in 411/611. Project is ambitious enough to constitute a 3 week project. Equipment is available to complete the project.	16 to 17 points Level of difficulty is more appropriate for a 2 week project or parts of the project are not possible due to lack of appropriate equipment.	14 to 15 points Level of difficulty is more appropriate for a 1 week project or project is impossible due to poor planning of equipment requirements.	12 to 13 points Relation of optics to project is unclear.
Description of Experiment	18 to 20 points All experimental details are covered, and all trends and data comparisons are interpreted correctly. A good understanding of results is conveyed. Group displays a good grasp of data and uncertainty analysis techniques.	16 to 17 points Important experimental details are covered, but some minor details missing. Most results have been correctly interpreted and discussed. Group has some familiarity—but not facility—with data and uncertainty analysis techniques.	14 to 15 points Missing important experimental details, but some results have been correctly interpreted and discussed. Group displays rudimentary understanding of data and uncertainty analysis techniques.	12 to 13 points Missing several important experimental details. Very incomplete or incorrect interpretation of trends and comparison of data. Group displays no understanding of data and uncertainty analysis techniques.
Data	18 to 20 points Data for every measurement are provided. Data are clearly presented.	16 to 17 points Data sets are not clearly presented.	14 to 15 points Data sets are incomplete.	12 to 13 points Data sets are inadequate for determining results.
Plotting and fitting data	18 to 20 points Best-fit functions are properly chosen and presented as solid lines in your plots. Experimental points are plotted on the same graph. Axes and legends are properly labeled.	16 to 17 points Fits are provided but not fully described. Labeling is not complete.	14 to 15 points Labeling and legends are missing.	12 to 13 points Fits are not appropriate for data.
Results	18 to 20 points Results found and conclusions reached are clearly presented.	16 to 17 points Some conclusions are inconsistent or incorrect for the collected data.	14 to 15 points Significant aspects of the experiment and theory are discussed incorrectly.	12 to 13 points Discussion of results is missing.