

PHYS 489 SENIOR PROJECT

BASIC INFORMATION

Course prefix, catalog number, and title: PHYS 489, Senior Project

Number of credits: 2 credit hours

Term and year: Fall 2026

Classes: Wednesday, 4:00 - 4:50 pm, South Engineering 221

Instructor's name: Dr. Andrei Kryjevski

Office location: SE 318D

Office hours: Wed 03:00 - 04:00 pm or by appointment

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BULLETIN DESCRIPTION

In this course, students research and present on a selected topic for students and faculty. In addition to feedback from peers and instructors, various resources for professional development (e.g., CVs and resumes, careers and job searching skills, public speaking, scientific writing, etc.) will be provided and discussed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this course is to help students gain both a better understanding of current physics topics and practical skill sets for their future careers. Students are to apply conceptual understanding and practical knowledge gained from coursework to complete a semester-long research project. Students are to select and study a topic related to current physics research, which will be the subject of their final presentation and report. The scope and depth of the proposed project must be feasible for an undergraduate student. Also, students will attend a series of seminars designed to provide professional development skills. After completing this course, students will be able to explain fundamental concepts underlying some of the current physics topics, deliver professional presentations to both scientific audiences and the general public, and be well-prepared to pursue diverse career paths.

PRESENTATION TOPIC SELECTION

Within the first three (3) weeks of the semester the Senior Project Committee will review the proposed topic and decide on its approval. Below are some *examples* of possible presentation topics:

- Medical physics (MRI, X-rays, CT, ultrasound, etc.)
- Color Confinement in the Strong Coupling Regime of Non-Abelian Gauge Theory
- Quantum computing/information science/engineering
- Nanotechnology and Nanomaterials
- Biophysics
- Climate change (causes, impacts, responses)
- Topological Materials: physical principles
- Superconductors: physical principles and applications
- AI: impacts on science, education, and society

The topic may be related to a research project in which you have been involved. However, the project cannot merely present this research. The emphasis must be on its broader underlying scientific context.

No later than 9/25/2026 students must submit to the Capstone Committee a proposal (2-3 pages), including (1) a title, and (2) a project description, including motivation, objectives, methods, a plan/timeline, and references. All proposals will undergo review, resulting in approval or revision requests. During week 4

students will also give a 10-minute oral presentation of their proposal to the Committee and attend presentations of all other students.

REQUIRED STUDENT RESOURCES

This course has no textbook.

COURSE CONTENT ON THE WEB

Syllabus, Announcements, and Notes will be posted on our Blackboard course homepage:

<https://bb.ndsu.nodak.edu>

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

This course has no homework assignments beyond researching and presenting a selected topic.

COURSE SCHEDULE/OUTLINE/CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Week	Topic	
1	Searching, reading, and citing scientific literature	
2	Scientific and technical writing skills	
3	Presentations and public speaking skills	
4	Student proposal presentations	
5	Responsible conduct of research, professional ethics	
6	Applying to graduate programs	
7	Careers and job searching skills	
8	CVs and resumes	
9	Special seminar on request	
10-16	Student presentation*	
17	Written report submission	

*After all student presentations have been completed, the scheduled student presentation slot will be substituted with presentations by invited speakers.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND GRADING CRITERIA

Final letter grades for the course will be computed using the following weights:

- Proposal presentation: 10 %
- Seminar participation: 10 %
- Oral presentation: 40 %
- Written report: 40 %

NO MAKE-UP EXAMS ARE ALLOWED

Grades A: ≥ 90 %, B: ≥ 80 and < 90 %, C: ≥ 70 and < 80 %, D: ≥ 60 and < 70 %, F: < 60 %

SEMINAR PRESENTATION & FINAL REPORT

PRESENTATION INFORMATION

Each student will deliver a 20-minute presentation on their chosen topic, followed by a 10-minute question and answer session. **All students must attend all seminars and ask at least two** meaningful questions per seminar.

WRITTEN REPORT FORMAT AND DUE DATE

The written final report should include the following components (single-spaced, 11-point font):

- Title and abstract (summary of your topic): 1/2 page
- Introduction (motivation of the topic): 1 page
- Background information (literature review on the topic): 2 pages
- Details of the topic (multiple sections depending on the topic): 2-4 pages
- Discussion, broader significance, conclusions: 1-2 pages
- References (articles, books, etc. cited)

The final written report must be submitted by the final exam date.

ATTENDANCE

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. 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.

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 [Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources \(www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices\)](http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

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.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus if it is deemed beneficial to student learning.

Academic Integrity Policy

All writing submitted for any course must be produced by the student. When appropriate, ideas, phrases, and words from other sources can be integrated into student work with attribution. In all writing, ideas and words taken from any source should be attributed to the original source.

Part of our course will focus on helping understand how and when to give credit to other sources or authors, and why it is a standard academic convention to do so. We will also discuss the role of AI in writing processes. Please pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers (Note: if you are referring to work previously submitted for this course, then you should cite yourself).

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. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found [here](#).