

Physics 210 Assignment # 1: INTRODUCTION

Thu. 09 Sep. 2010 — finish by Tue. 14 Sep.

1. **GET CONNECTED:** Go to the Computer Lab in Hennings 205 and familiarize yourself with the workstations there. If you don't already have an account on the `phas.ubc.ca` computers (*e.g.* `hyper.physics.ubc.ca`), which you can test by sitting down at one of the workstations and trying to log in, then get one from Gerry Grieve in Henn 205 or one of the other sysadmins (system administrators) in Henn 203. Crank up the `firefox` Web browser when you get logged in.
2. **BROWSE** the PHYS 210 Homepage at `http://musr.physics.ubc.ca/p210/` and make sure you know what's there, how to get to it and what it's for. If you have any questions, ask us during class or Email me (`jess@phas.ubc.ca`) or your TAs any time. By next week we'll assume that this e-territory is familiar to you and that you have assimilated all the obvious information (like the Syllabus and the Course Outline).
3. **LOG IN** at `http://musr.physics.ubc.ca/p210/peo/` and make sure there is one *and only one* entry for you in the PHYS 210 People Database. Please change your initial password (which everyone will know as soon as I announce it in class) and *update your profile* there so that we have your preferred Email address and any other information you are willing to share.
4. **JOIN THE *wiki*:** There is a link to the PHYS 210 *wiki* on the PHYS 210 Homepage. Go there and *register yourself*. Please use your real name, in an easily remembered form — it will be your ID. Your registration has to be confirmed (first by your answering an Email sent to the address you provide, and then by sysadmin approval). You are free to peruse this *wiki* any time; next week's Assignment will involve *editing* certain pages of the *wiki* and adding your own thoughts; this requires login to your approved account — so don't put this off!
5. **SUGGESTED READING:** The famous author Neal Stephenson wrote a long essay in 1999 entitled, "*In the Beginning ... Was the Command Line*". It is still surprisingly timely today, despite the rapid evolution of Information Technology; this may be partly because Stephenson is a brilliant writer of speculative fiction. Give yourself a present over the weekend: download the typeset version from `http://musr.physics.ubc.ca/p210/pdf/TheCommandLine.pdf` (a 480 kB PDF file) or visit `http://www.cryptonomicon.com/beginning.html` (Stephenson's website) and read it there. This is not required and you will not be tested on it, but it may help to explain the philosophy behind this course.
6. **WRITE ME A LETTER:** Using any *plain text editor*¹ (or just the composition window of your favourite Email client), write a short essay outlining your experiences with computers and your expectations of this course. What are your goals in Physics 210? Then send it to me, either as a **plain text** Email message or as a (**plain text**) attachment to one. I will use your input in revising my own agenda for this course.

Note that all but the first task can be accomplished remotely at any time before next Tuesday. You are welcome to log in from home (or from any Public Library) to complete this Assignment; however, you may want to take advantage of the help available from me and your TAs in the Thursday Lab to make sure you are not lacking any of the knowledge required to complete all parts of this rather easy Assignment on time.

¹**Not** a word processor like *Microsoft Word* or *WordPad*, which produce huge encrypted files that can only be read with bloated applications like *Word* itself. I am not interested in pretty fonts or formatting (this time), only in content; but do try to be grammatically correct and reasonably lucid, please!