

PHY 6920 Graduate Student Seminar

Meeting times:

Seminar: Mo 9-10th Period, Mo 2nd Period is needed

Room: 1002

Preparation:

Tu 2nd to 5th, Wd 9th and 10th, special arrangements possible

Room: NPB 2370 (My office)

Instructor: Guido Mueller (Graduate Student Coordinator)

Phone: 392-8521

email: mueller@phys.ufl.edu

Office Hours: Send email or just knock on door (NPB 2370)

Course: 1 credit

Grading: S/U

Goals of the course:

The course will give all graduate students the opportunity to present their research in a colloquium style setting to their peers. The students will face similar situations in academia, industry or government all the time; they have to be able to present their work to colleagues or customers who are well educated but not necessarily highly specialized in the topic. The students have to be able to express their work or plans clearly, frame them in a way that an audience of non-specialists can follow, motivate their work and put it into a larger context if they want to succeed in life later.

Graduate student talks at group meetings or scientific conferences are often limited to 10 to 15 minutes and the content is virtually always very narrow and focused. This tendency often continues into the final defense where the student has much more time but often does not develop the bigger picture for the audience. This seminar will give them the opportunity to develop the necessary communication skills to make an effective presentation targeted to this particular audience.

The course also will present the entire breath of the ongoing research in our department to all students. This will expose all students to a broad range of research topics, increase their general knowledge in physics and foster collaborations between different groups. It will also help our first and

second year students to identify suitable research projects and groups for themselves which will reduce their time to graduation.

Last but not least, each presentation will allow the student, his advisor, and the graduate student coordinator (myself) to evaluate the progress of the student towards the degree and adapt or reformulate goals as needed.

Syllabus:

The course is mandatory for all students after their 3rd year. Attendance in the seminar will be monitored and all enrolled students have to attend at least 50% of all seminars. All 1st and 2nd year students are also highly encouraged to attend. Following their qualifier, all students will give a presentation about once a year depending on availability of slots. Each presentation will be 25min long with a 5min question and answer session. Each presentation should include at least three parts. The first one should answer why this research topic is interesting or important. How does it fit into the bigger picture? It is aimed at the upper undergraduate to early graduate student level. The second part should focus on the methods used while the third part presents the results and plans forward.

The student will work with the graduate student advisor on the development of the presentation. The advisor will meet with each student at least three weeks prior to the scheduled talk for an initial discussion about the talk. A first practice talk will be scheduled for the following week at which the presentation should only need minor refinements. A second practice talk will be scheduled if needed.

Contact hours:

Two each week with entire class.

Eight per week with individual students to prepare each presentation. The students research advisor is welcome to participate in these meetings.