

**PHY2054 - Summer, 2006**  
**Estimating your grade or pass-fail chances**

We get inquiries every term from students who want us to tell them the grade they are likely to make in our classes (!!!!!). **This is impossible.**

Why? Because we are not clairvoyant: we cannot predict exactly where the letter grade cut-offs will be. These are determined only after all of the data have been averaged, including the final exam which is a few weeks in the future.

Some of you are asking questions like: "What do I need to score on the final exam in order to pass the course?" Or "...to make a grade of \_\_\_?" We can't answer those either, for the same obvious reasons.

If you wish to make your own estimate of your final percentage score and 'guesstimate' your approximate grade or pass-fail chances, here is a way to proceed. It's what I would do if you came in and insisted that I make an estimate ..... **BUT**

**Please note that the following is for your estimating purposes only.**

**We can make absolutely no guarantees..... these are *guesses* that may be wrong.**

1. First, review the 'Exams and Grading' section of the course syllabus to remind yourself of the weighting percentages of each component.
2. Make a guess as to your final exam score (15 points, max). Avoid over-optimism: appreciably less than 50% of a typical class improves their average on the final exam.
3. Multiply your guess by 1.5 (this normalizes the guess to 23%).
4. Add your Exams 1 & 2 scores (20 points, max, each) and multiply the result by 1.15. This normalizes the total to 46%.
5. Add together the numbers you got in Steps 3 and 4, above.
6. To this number add your estimated discussion score (maximum 23 points)
7. Add to this your estimated WebAssign score (maximum 8 points).
8. The result should be a number less than 100. This is your estimated final percentage score.

***The above involved three guesses, so judge its reliability accordingly!***

9. Now comes the really tough part since nobody knows what the final score distribution will be. Please refer to the rough letter-grade 'curve' given in the syllabus. In previous classes,

these have seldom varied by more than 5 percentage points, usually less. The C-D cutoff has rarely been below 50%. What the numbers will be *this* time is another guess; however, on the optimistic side, the fraction of our previous classes earning grades less than C is usually less than 20%. Again, no promises, but that's the track record.

**Our Advice: Study hard and plan to do your very best on the final exam. Most of you are going to pass and many of you will make good grades.**