

# Fall 2023 Illinois Physics Grad Student Orientation

Friday, August 11, 2023 (start time: 10 am Central Time)

- **Introductions and General Information** (~70 minutes) – 222/276 Loomis

Lance Cooper.....Welcome

Luke Prunkard.....Information on Facilities/Keys/Inventory

Rebecca Wiltfong.....Information on My Physics/Website

Elaine Schulte.....Information for Graduate Teaching Assistants

Mary Schlembach.....Information on the Physics Library

Randy Owen.....Physics Grad Student Association

Kevin Kleiner.....Illinois Physics Graduate Peer Mentoring

Shubhang Goswami and Rohit Chandramouli....Graduate Employees Organization
- **Break** (15 minutes) – Refreshments in 204 Loomis (Interaction Room)
- **Grad Program Information** (~25 minutes) – 222/276 Loomis

Lance Cooper....Overview of the Illinois Physics Grad Program
- **Lunch:** ~12:15 – Lunch in 204 Loomis (Interaction Room)

# New Grad Student Checklist

- Things you should have done or need to do before Aug. 21:
  - ☒ Completed your employment paperwork (I-9 form, New Hire form) if you're a TA or RA
    - Meet with Nicolette (227 Loomis) or Stephanie (290 K Loomis) to complete employment paperwork
  - ☒ Registered for classes on-line!
    - You must maintain at least 9 credit hours each semester to be a full-time student and keep an assistantship (12 credit hours for fellowship students) ⇒ No Later than Sept. 1!
  - ☒ Received and accepted your teaching/research assistantship offer
  - ☒ Received your teaching assignment if you're a TA
    - Attend mandatory campus TA training (Aug. 17) and course meetings next week

If you haven't completed some of these steps, contact me!

# Bookmark the Grad Student Blog!

<https://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/blog/>

## Graduate Student Blog

Grad Program Overview

[Degree Requirements](#)

[Graduate Student Blog](#)

[Qualifying Examination](#)

[Preliminary Examination](#)

[Final Defense](#)

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[Student Organizations \(Grad\)](#)

[Travel Fund Application](#)

Recent posts

### 2022-2023 Illinois Physics Graduate Student Handbook Posted

August 6, 2023 Lance Cooper

The new [2023-2024 Illinois Physics Graduate Student Handbook](#) has been posted on the [Physics Grad Student Blog](#).

### Reminder of Full-Time Registration and Stand Alone Waiver Policies for the 2023-2024 Academic Year

August 4, 2023 Lance Cooper

Important [College of Engineering \(COE\) policies](#) regarding full-time registration: (1) Physics grad students must register for a minimum of 9 credit hours each fall and spring, and (2) Stand-Alone Waivers available for some students enrolled 6+ years.

### July 31 APS Webinar: Oppenheimer: Scientists, The Bomb, & the Implications for Today

July 21, 2023 Lance Cooper

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July 17, 2023 Lance Cooper

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### Current Grad Info

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- [Prelim Exam Info](#)
- [Thesis Info](#)
- [MS Degree Requirements](#)
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Information consolidated in Physics Grad Student Handbook

# Curriculum/Course Requirements

<https://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/degree-requirements>

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate College requires 96 hours (formerly 24 units) of course work for the PhD, **including research units in Physics 597 and Physics 599**. Most physics students having half-time assistantships take 8 hours per semester plus 4 to 8 hours in the summer, so the total credit requirement may be fulfilled in approximately four years. Note that at least 6 hours of PHYS 599 Thesis Research is required; most students have many more.

### AS A BREADTH REQUIREMENT, TWO OF THE FOLLOWING SEVEN COURSES ARE REQUIRED

- Physics 540 *Theoretical Astrophysics*
- Physics 550 *Biomolecular Physics*
- Physics 560 *Condensed Matter Physics I*
- Physics 569 *Emergent States of Matter*
- Physics 570 *Subatomic Physics*
- Physics 513 *Topics in Quantum Optics and Information*
- or
- Physics 514 *Modern Atomic Physics*.
- Suitable substitute breadth course(s) approved by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs

**Note that only one of either the Physics 560 or Physics 569 courses counts toward the breadth requirement and only one of either Physics 513 or Physics 514 counts toward the breadth requirement.**

In addition, all students are urged to take *Quantum Mechanics I and II* (Physics 580 and 581), Mathematical Methods A and B (Physics 508 (MMA) and Physics 509 (MMB)), Classical Electromagnetism (Physics 505), and Statistical Physics (Physics 504). Students will find a number of advanced courses on more specialized topics indispensable in their preparation for research.

The department has no formal language requirement. Graduate students may find it advantageous, however, to be proficient in reading articles in a foreign language. For this reason, graduate students are allowed to enroll in language courses offered in the various language departments at Illinois.

### Current Grad Info

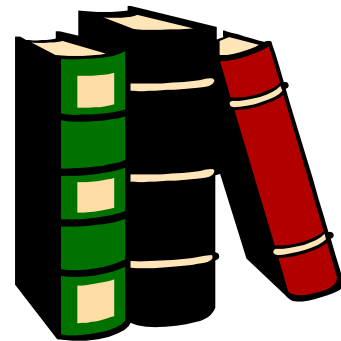
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# First Year Courses at UIUC

## □ There are few course requirements

- Pick 2 !** {
- Biophysics
  - Nuclear and Particle
  - Astrophysics
  - Quantum Optics & Information or Atomic Physics
  - Condensed Matter or Emergent States of Matter
  - Appropriate substitute course



## □ But it's likely you will start with

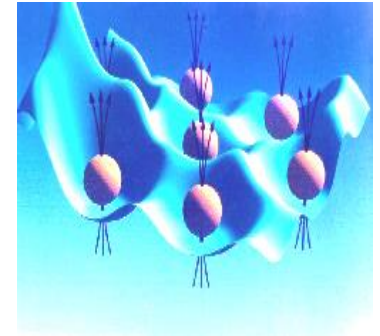
- Quantum Mechanics I and II (580,581)
- Mathematical Methods 1 and 2 (508, 509)
- Electricity and Magnetism (505), Statistical Mechanics (504)
- Undergraduate Quantum 2 (487), E&M 2 (436), Classical Mech 2 (326), Stat Mech (427)

## □ And everyone takes 596 (Physics Orientation)

# First Few Semesters at UIUC

## □ Advanced courses specialize

- Condensed Matter Physics II
- Quantum Field Theory I and II
- Particle Physics
- General Relativity
- Nonequilibrium Statistical Physics
- *Special topics* (Phys 598) courses – one benefit of a big department!!



**After your first year or two, you will primarily take research credits:**

Physics 597, Independent Study – **Graded class**, taken prior to prelim

Physics 599, Thesis Research – Taken once you pass your prelim

**TAs and RAs should always register for at least 9 credit hours in the Fall and Spring terms to be full-time students! Fellowship students should register for 12 credit hours while on fellowship.**



# First Few Semesters at UIUC

## □ Teaching

- This is important training, giving you an opportunity to make an impression on professors you might do research with, so take it seriously!
- A chance to learn how to be a good teacher: we have many award-winning TAs! This looks good on your resume, especially if you're applying for faculty positions!



# First Few Semesters at UIUC

## □ The Qual:

- Qual exam is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 19 and Sunday, Aug. 20, 12:30 (check in) – 5 pm. The exam starts at 1:00 pm both days. You can register via this link:

<https://my.physics.illinois.edu/grad/qual-signup>

- Qual will be held in 222/276 Loomis
- Qual FAQ and problems can be found here:  
<http://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/qual-faq>
- The August 2023 Qual Information Session can be viewed on-line here:

[https://mediaspace.illinois.edu/media/t/1\\_1vq4hxuz/179926551](https://mediaspace.illinois.edu/media/t/1_1vq4hxuz/179926551)





# Qual Exam Info on the Blog

<https://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/qualifying-examination>

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Qual exam information and problems can be accessed here



# Research !!

- **Picking an advisor** (there are many available)
  - Physics 596 Research Talks in Fall
  - Research opening advertisements on Grad Student Blog
  - Make your own one-on-one arrangements!
  - Start looking early, attend seminars, talk to faculty!

**Condensed Matter Physics**  
14 experimentalists  
10 theorists

**High Energy Physics**  
3 experimentalists  
5 theorists

**AMO/Quantum Information**  
6 experimentalists

**Medium Energy (Nuclear) Physics**  
4 experimentalists  
2 theorists

**Biological Physics**  
4 experimentalists  
3 theorists

**Astrophysics/Gravitation/Cosmology**  
2 experimentalists  
7 theorists

**Cross-Cutting Research**  
2 experimentalists

**Physics Education Research**  
3 researchers

## Physics 596 - Course Syllabus - Fall 2023

(Syllabus is subject to change!)

[Physics 596 Fall 2023 Channel on Media Space](#)

### Agenda for Phys 596 (Friday, 10:00-11:50 am, Rm. 276/222 Loomis):

- Research opportunities in the department, finding advisors, etc.
- Instruction/practice in scientific writing and presentation
- Scientific publishing process, using on-line resources, etc., etc.

<https://courses.physics.illinois.edu/phys596/fa2023/>

**Make sure you register for this course! It is required!**

Week	Date	Topics	Lectures	Assignments	Reading	Zoom/Video
1	Aug 25	Introduction and course expectations Finding an advisor and tips for succeeding in grad school Panel discussion with Physics grad students	<a href="#">slides</a> <a href="#">slides</a>	Major Group Assignment Create and present a group Journal Club PowerPoint talk + individual referee reports		<a href="#">Zoom Link</a> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>
2	Sep 1	Research - Creating/giving a journal club presentation How to read scientific papers	<a href="#">slides</a> <a href="#">slides</a>			<a href="#">Zoom Link</a> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>
3	Sep 8	Publication process; How to write a referee report How to use on-line scientific resources Using Scopus	<a href="#">slides</a> <a href="#">slides</a> <a href="#">slides</a>	mini-Assignment #1 On-line resource activities	<a href="#">Resource Activities</a> <a href="#">Celia's scientific database guide</a> <a href="#">Casey Miller's scientific resource advice</a>	<a href="#">Zoom Link</a> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>
4	Sep 15	Research in Theoretical and Computational Biological and Nanoscale Physics - Prof. Alek Aksimentiev Research in Theoretical and Computational Biological Physics - Prof. Jun Song Research in Experimental Condensed Matter Physics - Prof. Pengjie Wang				<a href="#">Zoom Link</a> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>

# Research !!

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- ❑ Interested in applying for a grad fellowship?
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year and (most) 2<sup>nd</sup> year grad students are eligible
  - Celia and I will hold an NSF Fellowship Workshop, 6-8 pm on Wednesday, Sept. 20
  - We will hold an NSF Fellowship pre-competition in October
  - Stay tuned to the grad blog for more details!

## Years 2-N: Focus on Research

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- You'll join a group
  - By no later than the summer after your first year
  - Often supported by an RA but otherwise you can still be a TA
  - Trial research period, and you can still make changes
  
- Want to attend a conference/workshop not supported by your advisor or do you need supplemental funds for emergencies?
  - Physics Grad Travel Award program

# Grad Travel Award Program

## Travel Fund Application

### Purpose

The purpose of the Department of Physics Graduate Student Travel Award Fund is to provide opportunities for graduate students to participate (remotely or in person) special conferences or workshops, to participate in professional development activities that are not funded by their advisers' research grants, or to supplement student funding for unanticipated medical, financial, or educational expenses. Awards will typically be limited to a maximum of \$500, although higher award amounts are possible in exceptional circumstances.

### Application Schedule

The 2022-2023 Physics Grad Travel Award program will be divided into three time periods. Applications should be submitted by the following dates if possible:

- **September 1, 2022**, for September 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023 conference participation or supplementary funds
- **February 1, 2023**, for February 1 – May 31, 2023 conference participation or supplementary funds
- **May 1, 2023**, for June 1 – August 31, 2023 conference participation or supplementary funds

Applications *may* be accepted for reimbursements, and it is *preferred* that applications be received at least 30 days before funds are needed. Questions about deadlines and submissions should be directed to Professor Lance Cooper ([slcooper@illinois.edu](mailto:slcooper@illinois.edu)), associate head for graduate programs.

### Application Evaluation Process

Applications will be reviewed by the associate head for graduate programs, and final decisions will be made by the associate head for graduate programs. Applicants will be informed of the final decisions. All decisions of the associate head are final.

### Application Review Criteria

Review criteria include:

1. An assessment of how the proposed conference participation will contribute to the student's professional development **or** a brief explanation describing why supplementary funds are needed.
2. The student's past history of travel support by the department (for conference participation awards).
3. Time remaining to PhD degree (for conference participation awards).

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# Years 2-N: Preliminary Exam

<https://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/preliminary-examination>

## □ The Prelim

- 15 page paper, oral presentation
- “Proposal” for your thesis research
- Typically in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year

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# Years 2-N: Thesis and Defense

<https://physics.illinois.edu/academics/graduates/thesis>

## □ Thesis defense

- Your own personal “book”: you’re the world’s expert!
- Time to Ph.D. ~ 6.5 years on average (depends on field)

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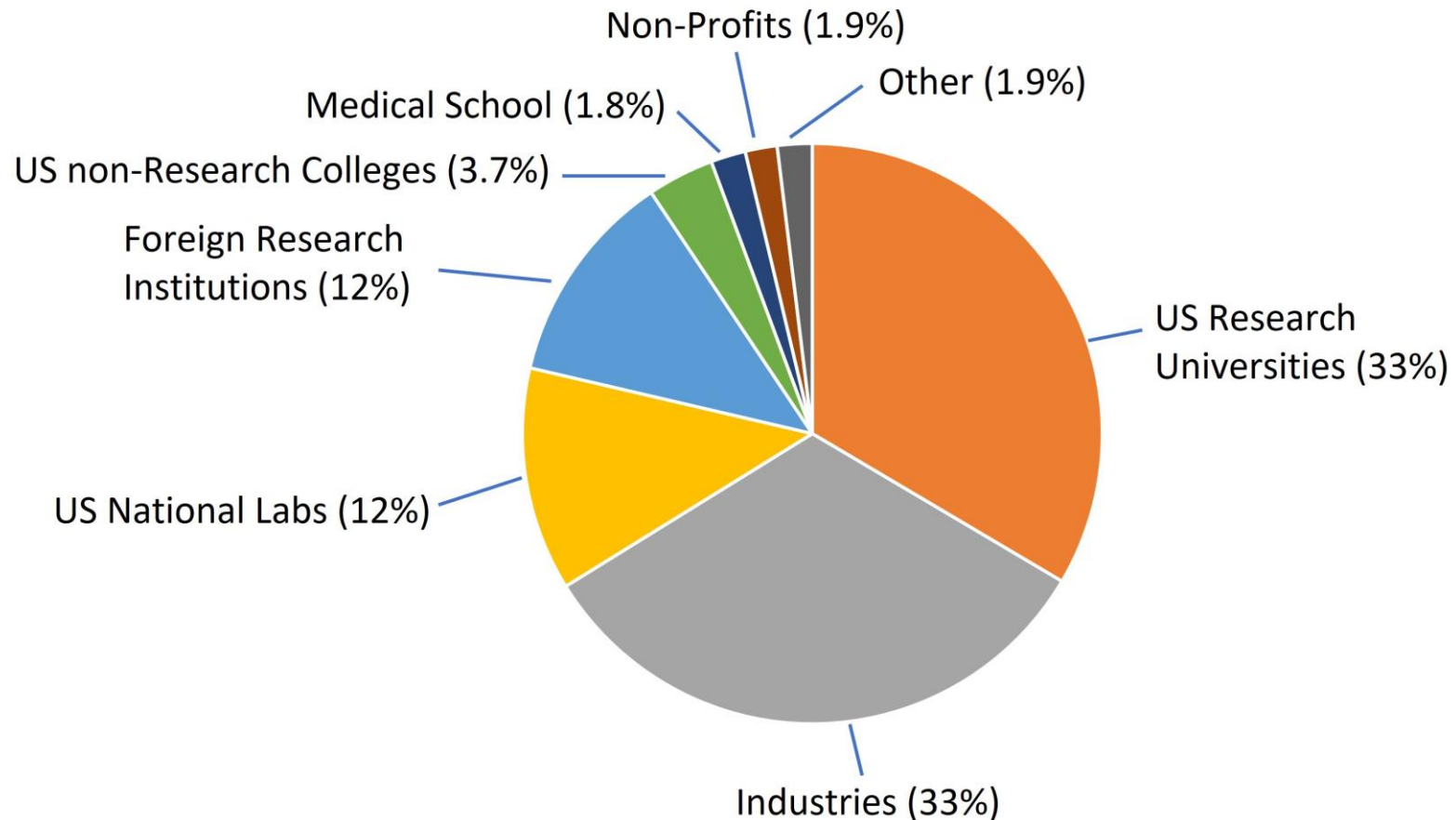
# Life After UIUC Grad School

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- Universities (post docs and faculty)
- Government Research Laboratories
  - Argonne, Fermilab, Jefferson Lab, NISTs, LANL, Livermore, LBL, Sandia, NRL, ...
- Industry
  - Intel, IBM, AT&T, HP, Microsoft, AMD, Shell, Kodak, and hosts of high-tech start-ups
- Computing (hardware and software)
- Wall Street
- Management consulting
- Science policy
- Science writing and publishing

# Illinois Physics PhD Job placement

- We maintain a database of our past ~665 PhD alumni for the past 18 years



# Physics Careers Seminars

<https://physics.illinois.edu/calendar/careers>

We invite 10-12 Illinois Physics PhD alumni to visit each year and describe their careers, recruit, give career advice, etc.



## Spring 2023

Physics Careers Seminar: "Quantum (& Space) Research at Los Alamos National Laboratory"

Dr. Kristina Meier, Scientist, Los Alamos National Laboratory

Thursday, Jan 19, 2023 11:00 AM

Physics Careers Seminar: "Physics Career Opportunities at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory"

Dr. Philip Powell, Staff Physicist, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Tuesday, Jan 31, 2023 4:00 PM

Physics Careers Seminar: "Career Paths of Physics Degree Holders"

Dr. Brendan Kiburg, Scientist, Fermilab

Friday, Mar 24, 2023 4:00 PM

Physics Careers Seminar

Dr. Rezvan Shahoei, Senior Scientist, Applications Science at Schrodinger, Inc.

Friday, Apr 7, 2023 12:00 PM

Physics Careers Seminar

Dr. Jackson Ang'ong'a, Postdoctoral Researcher, ETH Zurich

Thursday, Apr 13, 2023 12:00 PM

# Other Departmental Seminars

<https://physics.illinois.edu/calendar/seminar>

A full slate of departmental seminars are available for you to attend during the week:

## Research Seminars

Seminar	Day of Week	Time
<a href="#">Institute for Condensed Matter Theory Seminar</a>	Mondays	12:00 p.m.
<a href="#">Medium &amp; High Energy Physics Seminar</a>	Mondays	1:00 p.m.
<a href="#">Theoretical Biophysics Seminar</a>	Mondays	3:00 p.m.
<a href="#">IQUIST Seminar</a>	Tuesdays	11:00 a.m.
<a href="#">Astronomy Colloquium and Seminars</a>	Tuesdays	3:45 p.m.
<a href="#">Astrophysics, Gravitation, and Cosmology Seminar</a>	Wednesdays	12:00 p.m.
<a href="#">Physics Colloquium</a>	Wednesdays	4:00 p.m.
<a href="#">Mathematical and Theoretical Physics Seminar</a>	Thursdays	1:00 p.m.
<a href="#">High Energy Phenomenology Seminar</a>	Fridays	12:00 p.m.



# Advice: Get to know your interesting classmates!

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## Portrait of the Fall 2023 Illinois Physics Graduate Class:

- 60 students in the Fall 2023 grad class
- 44 Men, 14 Women, 2 gender non-conforming students
- 22 International students, 38 Domestic students
- **Citizenship:** US (38), India (9), China (7), Columbia, Iran, New Zealand, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand
- **Universities:** UIUC (4), Boston U (2), Indian Inst Science (2), Rice (2), Washington (2), Wisconsin-Whitewater (2), Adelphi, Arizona, Arizona State, Beijing U of Tech, Berea, British Columbia, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Cambridge, Colorado, Cornell, Florida, Florida State, Franklin and Marshall, Grinnell, Indiana, Indian Assoc Cult Science, Indian Institute Bombay, Johns Hopkins, Lehigh, Missouri State, MIT, Otago, Pennsylvania, Penn State, Rensselaer Polytech, Santa Clara, ShanghaiTech, Sharif U of Tech, SUNY-Albany, Tennessee, Toledo, Univ del Valle, UCLA, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, UC Santa Cruz, UI-Chicago, Vanderbilt, Xian Jiaotong

## Advice: Keep socially active!

Getting involved with grad social groups helps relieve the stress of grad school. Many of these groups will continue meeting virtually.

- Physics Grad Student Association
- Illinois-GPS: Grad/undergrad mentoring group
- Women in Physics & Astro
- Grad Peer Mentoring: Grad mentoring of 1<sup>st</sup>-year grad students
- Diversity Committee



# Advice: Stay safe!

Our campus and community is reasonably safe, but it's important to be aware of your surroundings, particularly at night.



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# Advice: Know who to contact if you need help!

Contact me if you don't know who to ask!

## 24-Hour Emergency Numbers

Life-threatening fire, police, or medical emergency	9-911 (on-campus) or 911 (off-campus)
<a href="#">Emergency Dean</a> (available 24/7 to assist students or their families in crisis)	333-0050
Domestic Violence Hotline (A Woman's Place)	384-4390
Crisis Line (24-hour suicide prevention and crisis hotline)	244-7911 or 359-4141
<a href="#">Faculty/Staff Assistance Program</a>	244-5312
National Capital Poison Center	1-(800)-222-1222

## Non-Emergency Numbers

Fire Departments		Police Departments	
Champaign	403-7200	University of Illinois	333-1216
Urbana	384-2420	Champaign	351-8911
Savoy	359-5814	Urbana	384-2320
Champaign County Sheriff	333-8911	Savoy	333-8911

## Hospitals and Medical Services

<a href="#">Carle Hospital Emergency Room</a>	383-3313
<a href="#">Provena Covenant Medical Center Emergency Room</a>	337-2131
<a href="#">McKinley Health Service</a>	333-2701

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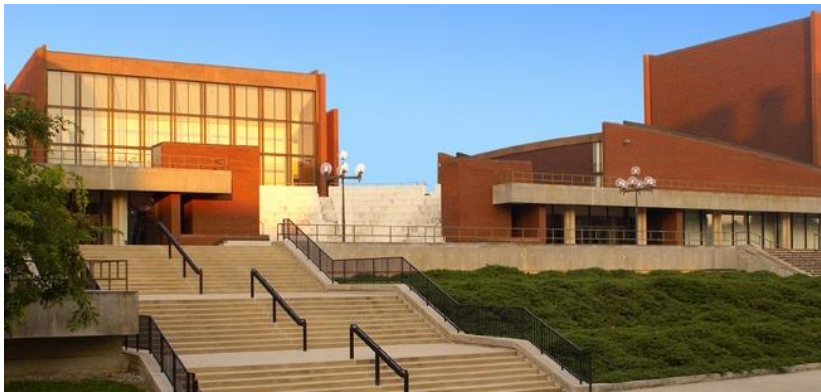
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- [Ethics Resources](#)
- [Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [Research Safety Training/Info](#)
- [Grad Expertise Database](#)
- [Grad Travel Award](#)
- [Grad Student Evaluations](#)
- [Grad College Calendar](#)
- [COE Grad Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Student Mentoring Guidelines](#)
- [International Student Resources](#)
- [Physics Information Resources](#)
- [Useful Forms](#)
- [Health/Safety Resources](#)
- [Counseling/Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Diversity Resources](#)
- [Important Phone Numbers](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources](#)





# Advice: Get to know and enjoy the community!

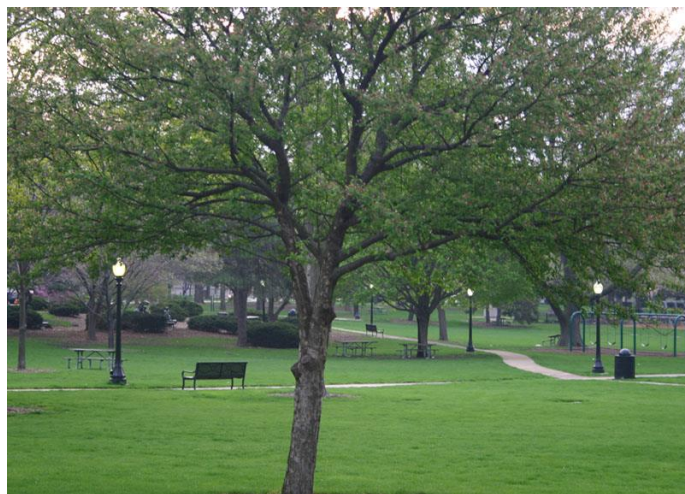
Many parks, restaurants, and facilities are open, but stay safe and socially distanced!



Krannert Center for the Performing Arts



Virginia Theater



Westside  
and other  
parks



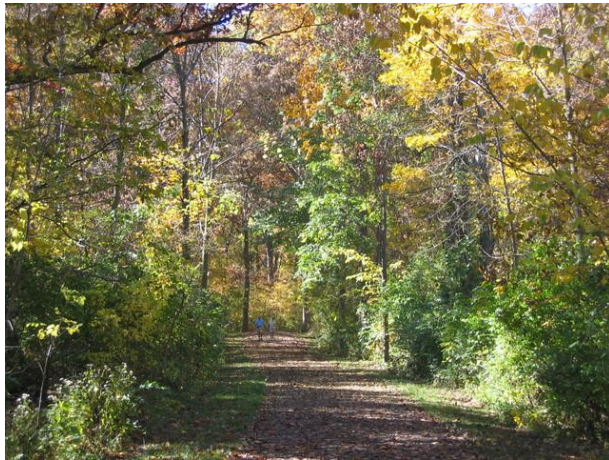
Downtown  
Champaign





# Cool places in the surrounding area

Lake of the Woods (~15 min)



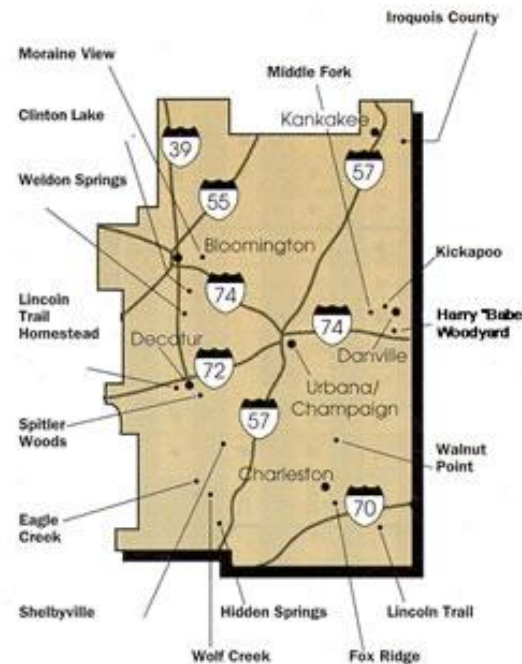
Turkey Run (Indiana, ~1 hr)



Allerton Park (~20 min)



Kickapoo State Park (~30 min)







# Cool places in the surrounding area



Chicago (~2.5 hrs)

Indianapolis (~1.5 hrs)

St. Louis (~3 hrs)



# Upcoming Departmental Events

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- Annual Micro-aggression Workshop
  - Wednesday, Aug. 16, 1:00 – 2:30 pm
  - Rm. 222/276 Loomis

**Title: Creating an Equitable and Inclusive Cohort**

**Abstract:** Join ***Ross Wantland***, Director of Curriculum Development and Education in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, for a conversation about strategies for confronting bias and promoting inclusion as Physics graduate students. This program is designed to be as interactive as Zoom allows, so please plan accordingly (i.e., cameras on, able to type into chat, etc.).

**Required workshop for 1<sup>st</sup>-year physics grad students!**



# Other Upcoming Events

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## **Wednesday, Aug 16: Mandatory Microaggressions Workshop**

In-person, 1-2:30 pm in Rm. 222/276 Loomis, required for all 1<sup>st</sup>-year physics grad students

## **Thursday and Friday, Aug 17 and 18: Grad Academy TA and Grader Training**

Let me know if you're a TA/grader but haven't received information about these training sessions!

## **Thursday and Friday, Aug 18, 19: Intro Course Orientation Meetings**

Elaine Schulte will send you information about the time and place of your respective course meetings

## **Saturday and Sunday, Aug 19 and 20: Qualifying Exam**

Will be held in person, 12:30 – 5:00 pm in 222/276 Loomis. Make sure to register

## **Monday, Aug 21: Fall 2023 Classes Start**

## **Saturday, Sept. 9: Departmental Picnic in Illini Grove – 4:00 – 7:00 pm**

## Final Piece of Advice

- And always feel free to e-mail or meet with me if you have problems or questions!

