



Polaris 2018-19 Class Syllabus

Class Description

The Polaris Mentorship Class is a year-long course for students in their first two years in OSU physics, math, and astronomy. The goals of the program are threefold: first, students will come to understand the status of diversity and inclusion in STEM, and the benefits and challenges that people from various backgrounds bring to STEM as students. Second, students will understand the how to successfully maintain a mentor-mentee relationship, including developing goals, communicating effectively, and harnessing mentorship as a step to research or academic success. Finally, students will be given time with mentors each class period to work concretely on achieving the goals they have established, with some class days devoted to career development, skill building, and planning.

As part of the course, students will be paired with mentors who are upper-level undergraduates and graduate students. The details of the program are as follows:

- Mentors and mentees would meet weekly at this time. The class will begin with a presentation by a member of the Polaris leadership board on a topic related to mentorship or diversity and inclusion in STEM. The presentation will last no more than ten minutes. The remainder of the time will be divided between small group discussion of the weekly topic and individual mentor-mentee meetings (with the time division decided by the discussion leader for the day).
- Topics range from diversity and inclusion in STEM to skills workshops. We will also invite speakers from the Physics Education Research group to lead a discussion on relevant topics.
- Mentors will attend one training session before class begins; much of their training will occur through the class itself. We intend to ask mentors to attend class every week, but we recognize it may not be possible for some to register for the course officially. Polaris leadership will monitor the mentor-mentee relationships throughout the year and offer support and mediation.

- The goal of OSU Polaris is to increase retention of undergraduates in STEM at OSU. As such, and because space in the class is limited, we will consider applications for the class on the basis of interest in our mission, mutually-compatible mentor-mentee pairing, and diversity.

Details

- Time and place: **McPherson 2015; Mondays 1:45-2:40 PM**
- Class Coordinator: Lauren Ennesser (contact her at ennesser.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu for questions or concerns)
- Assignments: Readings related to the topic of the next class may be assigned.
- : Grading: The grading scheme for the class will be **pass/fail**. To pass, the student must attend **all but one class period** (excused absences not counted toward this total) and participate in **at least one out-of-class career-building activity**.
- The mentorship program is intended to be a **two-semester** commitment. If at all possible, students should commit to registering for the course in the Spring semester when registering in the Fall.

Out-of-Class Activities

Career-Building Activities

- Polaris will host weekly short talks of about twenty minutes by researchers and students in participating departments. Many of these will focus on research skills and opportunities. Topics will be announced each week in class. The talks will be Thursdays just before Physics TEA (2:40-3 PM).
- Polaris will organize groups of mentors and mentees to attend a number of talks at OSU during the school year. When relevant, Polaris may also host a primer on the topic just before the talk.
- Polaris will organize a group of mentors and mentees to attend the undergraduate research forums.

Social Activities

- Polaris will host four social gatherings throughout the year for mentors and mentees, two each semester. Details will be provided during the class at least two weeks in advance.
- Mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet outside of the class at their convenience, if time and interest permit.