

Homework Assignment #1, Getting Familiar with arXiv and Evaluating Titles

This assignment consists of the **four** components enumerated below; make sure you submit something for each component.

To begin, go to <http://arxiv.org> and read the “General Information” page (find the link near the bottom of the screen in the “About arXiv” section). Poke around a bit on the website and get familiar with it if you’ve not used it before. Because of the delay in getting papers published in the peer-reviewed literature, physicists often post a “preprint” on arXiv to get results out to the community sooner.

Caveat lector! The papers posted to arXiv have not been peer reviewed or vetted in any way; *anybody* can post *anything* to arXiv. For example, look up 0909.3189 and note the arXiv administrator’s comments:

The screenshot shows the arXiv page for the article "Schrödinger equation of general potential" by Xiang-Yao Wu, Xiao-Jing Liu, Yi-Heng Wu, Qing-Cai Wang, and Yan Wang. The article is in the Quantum Physics section. The abstract discusses a general Quantum Mechanics proposal. The comments section contains a yellow highlight: "arXiv admin note: substantial text overlap with arXiv:0909.2995, and text overlap with arXiv:0711.3544 by other authors without attribution". The submission history shows two versions: v1 (Sep 2009) and v2 (Dec 2012).

As an experiment, type <substantial text overlap without attribution> (without the brackets) in the “Search or Article ID” box in the upper right corner of the screen and see what happens.

The screenshot shows the arXiv search bar with the text "<substantial text overlap without attribution>" entered. A blue arrow points from the text in the paragraph above to the search bar. The page header includes the Cornell University Library logo and the arXiv.org logo.

(Hint: Look for the **comments** line immediately below the authors’ names in the results.) In particular, note the commentary for arXiv:1608.00277, “Fuzzy thresholding in wavelet domain for speckle reduction in Synthetic Aperture Radar images.” Make a mental note of this feature of arXiv for our discussions later in the semester on plagiarism and the proper referencing of others’ work.

Next, go to the **Physics** section on the main page, select a subfield that you’re interested in, and click on the **recent** link (in parentheses to the right of the section name). Scan down the list of titles that appear on the next screen.

1. Select one paper that you think has a particularly good title, and one that you think has a

particularly bad title, based on our class discussions. In making your selections, glance over each paper and read at a minimum the abstract and the conclusions section to see how well (or poorly) the title reflects the contents of the paper. Write down the full bibliographic citation for each paper (author names, title, arXiv ID number, date submitted). Be sure you clearly identify which is the “good” title and which is the “bad” title.

2. Write a \approx^\dagger 200-word evaluation of *each* title (\approx 400 words total for the assignment). Justify why you assigned the “good title” and “bad title” designations to your two choices. (200 words = \approx 0.5 page of single-spaced typewritten text.)
3. Suggest a revised title for the paper whose title you found inadequate and *explain why you think your title is better*.
4. Upload your completed assignment to the my.physics upload portal by **Friday, Sept 1, by 9 p.m.** Assignments submitted after the deadline will be downgraded and will be ineligible for rewrite points. You may submit a late assignment through the portal until 8:59 p.m. Sunday, Sept 3. If you must submit an assignment after the late deadline, [email it to Celia](#).

Total—50 points

†Technical writing lesson of the day: The \sim symbol does *not* mean “approximately equal to”; it means “asymptotically equal to” or “of the order of magnitude of.” If you really mean “approximately equal to,” use \approx .