

# Quantum Field Theory, continued (Physics 215C)

## Spring 2026

Lecturer: John McGreevy

Mayer Hall 5222; email: mcgreevy at physics.ucsd.edu

Office Hours: After lecture or by appointment.

**Use of the Web:** The course web page is

<http://physics.ucsd.edu/~mcgreevy/s26/> .

Problem sets, solutions, lecture notes, handouts, *etc* will be distributed via this page. You should check it regularly (*e.g.* before each lecture) for new material. It will help to look at the relevant lecture notes *before* the lecture happens. Problem set hand-in and return and announcements will happen through Canvas.

**Content:** Here's my opening bid: coarse-graining in QFT, effective field theory, anomalies, lattice models of QFT, effects of topology in QFT, generalized symmetries, and path integral representations for a wide variety of systems (including spin systems and fermions), large deviation theory, various notions of duality, conformal field theory in  $D = 1 + 1$  and in  $D > 1 + 1$ . The choice of subject matter will evolve in response to the needs and interests of the class membership.

**Texts:** I do not plan to follow any textbook very closely. My posted lecture notes will be the main text. The textbook by Zee is wonderful and you should all keep it by your bedside. I will sometimes refer you to some relevant sections of the following books:

*Quantum Field Theory in a Nutshell*, by Anthony Zee (electronic version through UCSD library [here](#)).

*Quantum field theory and the standard model*, by Matthew D. Schwartz.

*An Introduction to Quantum Field Theory*, by Michael Peskin and Daniel Schroeder.

*Quantum field theory: an integrated approach*, by Eduardo Fradkin.

*The quantum theory of fields, vol. 1: foundations* by Steven Weinberg (electronic version through UCSD library [here](#)).

*The quantum theory of fields, vol. 2: modern applications* by Steven Weinberg (electronic version through UCSD library [here](#)).

**Grading:**

Grades will be determined by problem sets (70%), a brief final paper (20%), and participation (10%). The final paper assignment is [here](#).

**Problem sets:**

Problem sets are a very important part of this course. Sitting down yourself and trying to reason your way through a problem not only helps you learn the material deeply, but also develops analytical tools fundamental to a successful career in science. I recognize that students also learn a great deal from talking to and working with each other. I encourage each student to make his/her own attempt on every problem and then, having done so, to discuss the problems with one another and collaborate on understanding them more fully. Such collaboration adds most to the understanding of those participants who have done the most by themselves first. The solutions you write up after any discussion and then submit must reflect your own work. They must not be transcriptions or reproductions of other people's work.

All the above remarks apply equally to the use of AI.

In doing the problems, you should feel free to use whatever computational software (*e.g.* *Mathematica*) you find useful; please make a note in your write-up when you do so.

Problem sets will be posted on the course web page

<http://physics.ucsd.edu/~mcgreevy/s26/hw.html> .

They will generally be due at the beginning of lecture.

- This quarter, homework will be handed in electronically. The preferred option is to typeset your homework. It is easy to do and you need to do it anyway as a practicing scientist. A LaTeX template file with some examples is provided [here](#). If you need help getting set up or have any other questions please email me.
- To hand in your homework, please submit a pdf file through the course's canvas website (at [canvas.ucsd.edu](http://canvas.ucsd.edu)) under the appropriate assignment, hwnm (where *nm* are the decimal digits of the assignment number).

Thanks in advance for following these guidelines. Please ask me if you have any trouble.

**Miscellaneous unsolicited advice about how to do well in this class:**

Come to lecture! I will post my lecture notes, but they are intended as a supplement to what is presented in lecture, not a substitute.

Keep up with the material. Review the lecture notes from previous lectures before the next one. The structure of this course is a bit of an experiment, and I am relying on all of you to follow its twists and turns. I will post the relevant reading assignments in advance; read ahead.

Start the homework problems as early as possible. Give yourself some time to think about them, and keep them in mind when you are reading and in lecture.

Ask lots of questions: in lecture, in office hours, in the hallway. The fact that you can ask questions is the point of having classes and not just having everyone go learn on their own.