

From Tradition to Enlightenment: The Evolution of Intro Physics at the University of Illinois

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Room 118 Nieuwland Science Hall

Refreshments @ 3:30 in 202 NSH

About 17 years ago we significantly changed the way we teach intro physics at UIUC. The innovation, which in hindsight seems almost trivial, was to define these courses in terms of their content and infrastructure rather than in terms of the faculty assigned to teach them. Having our courses rest on a solid departmental foundation rather than on the shoulders of faculty means that faculty have the time and freedom to innovate, making incremental yet significant improvements to these courses over time. In this talk I will discuss this evolution as well as several of the resulting innovations, including prelectures, just in time teaching, peer instruction, and a new approach to labs.