

Dear Students of Dr. Sean P. McBride -



You are encouraged and welcome to participate in what I call 'HERD Hours,' this is a place where students can come individually, or especially in groups or herds, and work on their homework together in a non-classroom and non-typical-professor-office-hour setting. Simply come by 'HERD Hours' and ask some questions, I will be happy to help. The time and location will vary from semester to semester, but an attempt will be made such that at least four to six hours of time per week will be set aside for 'HERD Hours'. You will be informed of the location and times at the start of the semester. **For Spring 2026, 'HERD Hours' will be from 11-2 pm and 3-5 pm in Room 179 in the Science Building every Friday.** Herd Hours is in addition to an 'Open-Door' policy and an "Email me anytime" policy for students with questions. I founded Herd Hours in Spring 2017, and it has been a vastly successful resource for many students ever since. Even if it is not during Herd Hours, come ask questions whenever you have them. The times for Herd Hours are the same as my office hours times.

At 'HERD Hours', I will always be around to help you at any time if you get stuck, my office is right across the hall (Room 152), but what I really want to see at 'HERD Hours' is students helping fellow students, leading each other through peer instruction. Struggling, discussing, conquering the problems, and celebrating with your friends and peers is better than being frustrated by yourself and not making progress on the homework. I encourage you all to work together. When working in groups there are more people around the table with different skill sets and different approaches and ideas to attack the problems. Working together in groups often results in getting the homework done faster with a better understanding of the material and is overall a more memorable experience than spending long, frustrated isolated hours struggling on your own. Attendance will be taken during 'HERD Hours' for recording keeping purposes only, not for extra credit. I will be periodically checking in on you in Herd Hours every 15-20 minutes or so, but please, also come across the hall at any time and get me if you need help.

For your homework, always try it yourself first; however, you are encouraged (but not required) to discuss it with your peers for help ('HERD Hours' provides a great distraction free place to do this, or at least puts you in the same place as others trying to accomplish the same task). I encourage students to discuss homework with each other if you arrive at different answers. Use the chalkboard. Work it out on the board. If you think the answer you got is correct and you are confident in your solution, try and explain it to your fellow students, see what they think. Maybe they solved the problem a different way, arriving at a different answer, encouraging you to review and rethink how you solved the problem. Maybe they also solved it in a different way, arriving at the same answer as you! Ask how that is possible? Discuss it. Hopefully this encourages discussion of physics among you and your fellow students and builds your confidence in problem solving and improves your ability to explain your work to others. If you cannot get the required help from your peers, or simply have a question you cannot get answered, come see me, drop by anytime, or make an appointment with me, email me, and/or apply for a tutor. Remember, the number of your peers (N) can vary each semester for your class (N = 12 – 50+) and significantly outnumber the number of the professors for your course (N = 1) so, your peers may be more available than your professor to help you outside of normal business hours and 'HERD Hours'. You are strongly encouraged to make friends in the class.

If office hours, or 'HERD Hours', is not something you think you will benefit from (try it out first), there are free university tutors available. See current tutoring options at: <http://www.marshall.edu/uc/tutoring-services/>. I also provide a list of "Dr. SPM Approved Tutors" on my Teaching Homepage that I will vouch for, these students aced the courses. I personally have not vetted or approved any of the Knack tutors, so be cautious. I suggest first giving 'HERD Hours' a try or drop by my office for help before trying other resources. Additionally, the Physics Majors have been known to offer free tutoring in the Science Building each semester as much as possible; more information on times will be provided when information becomes available (email Hayden Farley, [farley242@marshall.edu](mailto:farley242@marshall.edu), for more details, when available this information will be posted on my teaching website listed below). As you can see, there are many resources and options for help. I am your number one resource for help in your class with me. More information about the math and physics programs is presented on the department website: <https://www.marshall.edu/cos/math-physics/>. Hope to see you at 'HERD Hours'!!!

**Dr. Sean P. McBride, Associate Professor, Marshall University**

College of Science Faculty Senator & Faculty Advisor for MU Astronomy, Society of Physics Students, ΣΠΣ, and ΣΦΕ  
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