

Texas Tech University Department of Physics
CRN 47540 Astronomy 1400H The Solar System
Course Syllabus Spring, 2013

Lectures: 3.00-3.50 am MWF, Sc 112. You will find it beneficial to attend regularly, since much of the material that I cover in class is not in your text, and because we will occasionally do small group exercises in class which count as your class participation grade.

Text: *The Cosmic Perspective:- The Solar System, (6th Ed.)* by Bennett, Donahue, Schneider, and Voit. Published by Addison Wesley. The “Starry Night” software is not required.

Also for the lab: **AS1400 Lab Manual, Spring 2013 Honours edition** by the Department of Physics, Texas Tech University. **(Make sure you get the correct edition)**

Instructor: Assistant Professor Maurice Clark. Office: Sc 014 Phone: 806-742-3781
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Office Hours: Thursday 10:00-11:00. Friday 4.00-5.00 PM. These are the times when I will be available in my office for discussions on any problems you might be having with the course. You are also welcome to come up to my office at any other time, although I cannot guarantee to be available.

Grading:	<u>Assignments</u>	7 x 2%	14%.	(A failing grade on the assignment component is a failing grade in the course.)
	<u>Labs</u>	10 x 2.5%	25%	(A failing grade on the lab component is a failing grade in the course.)
	<u>Observing labs:</u>	2 x 4%	8%	
	<u>Course Participation:</u>		8%	
	<u>Mid-term Tests:</u>	3 x 8%	24 %	
	<u>Comprehensive final</u>		21%	(Just what the name implies)

Grades: The following are the grades to be awarded for this course and the *approximate* scores for which they will be awarded.

- A Has met the course objectives with distinction. 85% +
- B Has met the course objective with credit 73% - 84%
- C Has met the course objectives. 60% - 72%
- D Has met some of the course objectives. 50% - 59%
- F Has failed to meet the course objectives. 49% or less.

For Better or For Worse: *By Lynn Johnston*



What should you get from this course? To a large extent that will depend on you and how much work you are prepared to put in. At the very least there are four major points that I would hope you will gain from the course.

1. To better understand the solar system and the amazing variety of objects that comprise it.
2. To learn to *think skeptically*, and to realize that science is more about searching for understanding than it is about knowing "The Truth".
3. To gain confidence in your abilities to learn something about which you knew little or nothing before attending this class.
4. To explore the ideas you are learning, both qualitatively (looking at the "Big Picture") and quantitatively (with math and numbers).

Course Purpose:

This course will satisfy a four hour laboratory science requirement. It has no pre-requisites. It serves well the student that is interested in astronomy and the student who is not science oriented but needs to satisfy the science requirement. This course is very important to both groups of students. For those interested (or who inadvertently become interested), it will give you the tools to continue astronomy as a lifelong interest. For those not really interested, astronomy will give you a basic understanding of science which is need for all educated members of society because the population at large determines the role of science in society — not just the scientists!

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Understand the motions of celestial objects (Sun, Moon, Stars, Comets, Planets, and Asteroids) in the sky
2. Understand astronomy basics (For example: What is the ecliptic? Celestial equator? Equinox? Solstice? When do eclipses occur? ...)
3. Know the history of astronomy.
4. Understand the physics of astronomy at an elementary level and know how astronomers use it to learn about the universe.
5. Understand how telescopes work.
6. Understand the physical principles involved in the formation and maintaining of planetary atmospheres.
7. Understand the physical principles involved in the geology of the terrestrial worlds.
8. Understand why the Jovians formed as they did
9. Understand how a solar system forms
10. Study the nature and detection of extrasolar planets
11. Have the tools needed to continuing enjoying astronomy on their own as a hobby if desired, including using a simple telescope to make observations of and identify celestial objects.

The objective of the study of the natural sciences component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to understand, construct, and evaluate relationships in the natural sciences, and to enable the student to understand the bases for building and testing theories. The natural sciences investigate the phenomena of the physical world.

Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to: explain some of the major concepts in the Natural Sciences and to demonstrate an understanding of scientific approaches to problem solving, including ethics.

Course Format: We will be covering the course material in lecture format on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. However I want to encourage you to ask questions during the lecture. Whether about the lecture, the textbook, or about any problems you encounter. Remember... **NO** question is too stupid to ask!!! If you are unsure about something, it is almost certain the several others will be as well. Be sure to let me know if I mention something you are unfamiliar with and help me adjust the pace of the course to better suit your needs. During the course we will be studying worlds far different to our own. From the huge to the tiny, from the densest to the most tenuous, from the hottest to the coldest, even things that cannot be seen. In studying these, we will use tools from many other branches of science, particularly physics and chemistry. Some mathematical skills are necessary as is a vivid imagination! By the end of the course I hope you leave with a deeper appreciation of the awesome universe that we are a part of and can understand why some people devote their lives to spending every possible moment, often in extremely isolated locations, regardless of temperature, to study its wonders.

My expectation is only that you keep up with the material and that you do **not** fall behind. In particular, **I will assume that you have tried to look over the relevant text material *before* the corresponding lecture**, so that the lecture can serve as a concentrated review and clarification. If you are coming to class “cold,” without having skimmed the material in the text, you will find yourself at a large disadvantage.

Lecture Powerpoints: My powerpoint presentations from the lectures are available to anyone who comes to my office with a thumbdrive. You should come to my office about once a week to get the latest lectures. **However these are not a substitute for you skipping the lecture or not taking your own notes!** They are to assist you in studying the course.

Attendance: The exams are weighted mostly toward the lecture material, so attendance is important and beneficial. Also, frequent absences will affect your earned points on course participation (8% of grade).

Suggestions for success: *Read ahead, in the textbook, before each lecture, even if it is merely to skim the relevant pages and look at the pictures.* This will prepare you for the lecture and make the lecture much more understandable. It will also ensure that you keep up with the material. *Most importantly, look at or think or talk about the course material as often as possible, even if it means 15 minutes every day--familiarity is remarkably important for understanding a subject conceptually.* Finally, attempt to talk about the material, to yourself or someone else, or an inanimate object if necessary. *My experience is that students who can explain the material in everyday language do well on my exams.* The subset of students who think they have studied hard and understood the material and nevertheless do much more poorly than expected on exams are almost always those who cannot articulate the material themselves. ***The biggest single danger in this course, as in most courses, is to fall far enough behind, either through lack of reading or spotty attendance, that you cannot really understand the material being covered. A related danger is to study the material infrequently and irregularly (e.g. once per week).*** Subsequent chapters will almost certainly seem obscure, and the effect becomes seriously cumulative if you allow this state of affairs early in the semester, when we cover the most “physics-oriented” material that you will need throughout the rest of the book. I realize that all instructors probably say this about not falling behind, but it is one of the most important factors in controlling your success in most classes, and probably the most important factor in this one

Homework Assignments:

(a) There will be 7 homework assignments. These will be handed out in class on a Monday and will be due on the following Monday. These will be graded and each will contribute a possible total of 3 points towards your final grade. The questions will include problem solving and basic maths. **Note that a failing grade on the homework component is a failing grade in the course.**

(b) Make sure to show your work and to explain what you are doing. You will receive very little credit if you do not. **Staple** your assignment together to make sure no parts of it get lost, and leave space in the margins for graders' comments.

(c) You may work together on assignments and discuss them with others, but this does not mean that you may copy someone else's work. The paper that you hand in should be the result of your own work, with ideas expressed in your own words and with your own calculations shown. Violations of this policy are taken very seriously. Here is an example of the difference: - asking “Does Kepler’s third law apply in this situation?” is an acceptable question. However asking “Did you get 5.6 metres as the answer for question 6 when you plugged in 5 for x and 0.6 for y in the equation $(x + y)$?” is **NOT** acceptable. Throughout the semester, I hope you take the opportunity to talk to your fellow ASTRO 1401 students about the material you are learning, and how to apply it during exams and homework assignments—sometimes the best way to learn something is to hear it more than one way, or to try and explain it to someone else! However, please remember that in the end, your answers and all of your work must be your own. Indeed, you’ll want to make sure that you understand the material yourself, for when you walk into the lecture hall to take your exam, you will have no one to help you but yourself!

So remember to learn the material yourself, and don’t take credit for something someone else told you. **This also includes copying answers from the book!** Your assignment answers **must** show evidence of being **your own work**. Please remember the following, which is part of the Standard Texas Tech Policies that apply to all of your classes:

Students will foster a spirit of academic integrity, and they will not present work as their own that was not honestly preformed by them. For a complete description of this policy see Texas Tech Operating Policy 34.12.

My general policy is that if a student is found to have copied from someone else’s assignment, **BOTH** persons get zero for that assignment, on the first occurrence. A second offence will result in a **fail grade** for the course. If two or more students hand in assignments that are basically the same and then claim that they worked together on the assignment, then the marks for the assignment will be split between the students.

(d) You have **ONE** late assignment slip at the end of this information, which entitles you to a 48-hour extension. If you are handing in a late assignment, you should attach this slip to you assignment and hand it to me **at the start of class** on the following Wednesday! As this is the **only** extension you will be granted for the course, **use it wisely!** Assignments are always due in class **before** it begins; **if you come to class a little late, hand in the assignment immediately after class. Do not disrupt the class by walking to the front.**

Daytime Labs: There is **a required** laboratory that is part of this course. You will receive one grade for the lecture and laboratory combined—they are not separate courses. For most weeks during the semester you will have a lab during your regularly scheduled lab session. These will be held in Sc 121. If no lab is listed on your schedule, you should see me immediately. You **must attend** the labs in order to get credit (points) for them and all lab work must be turned in to your TA **by you** at the conclusion of each lab. **Work done on your own outside of lab will not be accepted.** You are expected to have read the lab thoroughly before you come to the lab. There will be a quiz at the start of the lab that will be counted are part of your lab grade. Anyone who arrives more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the lab will not be permitted to do the lab. **There are no lab make-ups.**

YOU MUST PASS THE LAB SECTION IN ORDER TO PASS THIS COURSE; REGARDLESS OF YOUR GRADE IN THE LECTURE. LESS THAN 50% for the combined lab/observing lab component IS AN AUTOMATIC FAIL IN Astronomy 1400.

Night-time Observing sessions: Observing is an important part of astronomy and as such, is an important part of this course. These are **in addition** to your weekly lab meetings in Sc121 and will be held at the Texas Tech Observatory. Directions to the observatory are posted on the web site <http://www.phys.ttu.edu/~ozprof/observatory.htm> More details of the dates of these observing sessions will be conducted will be given in class a couple of weeks before each observing session is held. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the observing session will not be permitted to do the lab. Also, the last stretch of road to the observatory is unsealed. Driving fast down this road can cause a considerable amount of dust, which can drift over the telescope equipment, damaging it. **So drive slowly down this road, no more than 25 mph!** Anyone driving fast down this road will not be permitted to do the lab.

Tests: They will emphasize concepts and, to a lesser degree, calculations. You should carefully review your class notes, the PowerPoint's, and the assignments, as well as the relevant sections of the textbook, before the exam. You may **not** share calculators. Each test will contribute a possible total of 7 points towards your final grade. **No tests may be dropped. There will be no make-up for missed tests after one day from the time the test is given.** If possible please let me know early if you are going to miss a test since there is a possibility that you may take the test in advance.

Final Exam: The final exam will cover the entire course and will be held during the normal exam time. However the final will be **optional** for students who have an “A” or “B” grade at the end of the course. Students with a “C” grade or below **must** take the final.

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

One last very important point! The showing of pictures and slides is a considerable component of the course. This requires the room lights to be set down low! This can cause some students to feel drowsy. If this happens you can lose much of what is being presented. While I will by trying to watch out for this, you should also take responsibility for staying awake. Remember, this is **YOUR** course, and what you learn from it will depend largely on you.

LATE ASSIGNMENT SLIP

Name: _____

This slip entitles the bearer to one 48 hour extension to an assignment for Astro 1400.

Attach this slip to the assignment and hand the assignment in at the start of the next class.

Course Outline

Here is a **tentative** outline of the lecture topics for the term and the associated readings from the textbook. Some modifications may be made depending on how fast we proceed.

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Weekly Readings</u>	<u>Weekly Assignment</u>	<u>Labs</u>
Week 1	W Jan 16 F Jan 18	Introduction. The scale of the Universe. Ancient Astronomy Constellations	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 1 Appendix A. Appendix B. Appendix C.	Assignment 1 Due Friday Jan 25	No indoor lab this week
Week 2	M Jan 21 W Jan 23 F Jan 25	No Classes. Sky motions. Sky Coordinates. Eclipses	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 2.1. Appendix I. <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt S1		No indoor lab this week
Week 3	M Jan 28 W Jan 30 F Feb 1	Early Theories. Greek advances. Birth of Modern Astronomy I, Copernicus, Tycho. Birth of Modern Astronomy II, Kepler, Galileo.	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 3.1 – 3.2 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 3.3		Lab 1 Solar System Distances and Sidereal Time
Week 4	M Feb 4 W Feb 6 F Feb 8	Newton: Gravity: Orbits. Light, Radiation, Atoms Spectroscopy Doppler effect	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 4.2 – 4.5 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 5.1 – 5.3 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 5.4 - 5.5	Assignment 2 Due Friday Feb 8	Lab 2 Motions in the Sky
Week 5	M Feb 11 W Feb 13 F Feb 15	Solar System Overview The Surfaces of the Terrestrial Planets I. First mid-term test:	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 7.1 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 9.1 - 9.2, 9.6		Lab 3 Retrograde Motion of Mars
Week 6	M Feb 18 W Feb 20 F Feb 22	The Surfaces of the Terrestrial Planets II. The Surfaces of the Terrestrial Planets III. The Terrestrial Planets:- Interiors	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 9.3, 9.5 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 9.4	Assignment 3 Due Monday Feb 25	Lab 4 Parallax
Week 7	M Feb 25 W Feb 27 F Mar 1	The Terrestrial Planets:- Atmospheres I The Terrestrial Planets:- Atmospheres II Terrestrial planet Exploration. The Moon	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 10.1 – 10.3 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 10.4 – 10.6 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 7.3		Lab 5 Studying the Surface of the Moon
Week 8	M Mar 4 W Mar 6 F Mar 8	Terrestrial planet Exploration. Mercury Terrestrial planet Exploration. Mars I Terrestrial planet Exploration. Mars II		Assignment 4 Due Friday Mar 8	Lab 6 Ices and water on Mars
	Mar 9 - 17	No Classes Mid-term break			

Week 9	M Mar 18 W Mar 20 F Mar 22	The Jovian Planets: Atmospheres The Interiors of the Jovian Planets. Second mid-term test.	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 11.1	Assignment 5 Due Friday Mar 22	Lab 7 Rotation of Mercury
Week 10	M Mar 25 W Mar 27 F Mar 29	Rings of the Jovian Planets. Moons of Jupiter I. Io and Europa Moons of Jupiter II. Ganymede and Callisto.	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 11.3 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 11.4		Lab 8 Revolutions of Jupiter's Moons
Week 11	M Apr 1 W Apr 3 F Apr 5	No Classes. Moons of Saturn I. Mid-sized moons Moons of Saturn II. Titan	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 11.4		No indoor lab this Week
Week 12	M Apr 8 W Apr 10 F Apr 12	Moons of Uranus Moons of Neptune Jovian Planet Exploration I: Jupiter		Assignment 6 Due Friday Apr 12	Lab 9 Hunting for Asteroids
Week 13	M Apr 15 W Apr 17 F Apr 19	Jovian Planet Exploration I: Saturn Solar System Debris I Pluto. Solar System Debris II The Kuiper Belt.	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 12.3		No indoor lab this week
Week 14	M Apr 22 W Apr 24 F Apr 26	Solar System Debris III Asteroids Solar System Debris IV Comets Solar System Debris V Meteors	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 12.1 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 12.2	Assignment 7 Due Friday Apr 26	Lab 10 Searching for exo-planets
Week 15	M Apr 39 W May 1 F May 3	Origin of the Solar System Third mid-term test. Detecting Extra-solar planets.	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 8 <i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 13		No indoor lab this week
Week 16	M May 6 W May 8 F May 10	Are we alone? No classes No classes	<i>The Cosmic Perspective:</i> Chpt 24		
Week 17	M May 13	Final Exam 4.30 – 7.00 pm			