



Syllabus

Descriptive Astronomy
1171-FIU01-AST-1002-SECRVC-11126

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Professor Information



Instructor: Prof. Caroline Simpson

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Course Description And Purpose

This course is designed to familiarize you with the universe in which we live and with the principles of scientific inquiry that have enabled us to explore and understand that universe.

The textbook is built around 5 themes:

1. We are part of the universe and thus can learn about our origins by studying the universe.
2. The universe is comprehensible through scientific principles that anyone can understand.
3. Science is not a body of facts but rather a process through which we seek to understand the world around us.
4. A course in Astronomy is the beginning of a life-long learning experience.
5. Astronomy affects each of us personally with the new perspectives it offers.

The first part of the course will concentrate on the history and fundamentals of astronomy, including the night sky as seen from the Earth, the apparent motions of celestial objects, lunar and solar eclipses, phases of the moon, the historical development of astronomy, and the nature of light and matter and how they interact. The rest of the course will be about the formation and evolution of the planets of our solar system, stars, and galaxies. This includes a close look at the nearest star - our Sun - the different types and properties of stars, how they are born and how they die. We will also examine the huge collections of stars known as galaxies, including our own galaxy, the Milky Way.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will understand:

- C1: the scientific method and how we apply it to investigate the universe
- C2: the size and scale of the solar system, galaxies, and the universe
- C3: how the motions of the Earth affect our view of the sky over days, months, and years; including lunar and solar eclipses
- C4: the cause of the seasons
- C5: the basic physical laws that govern the motion of objects, including the planets
- C6: what light is, how it works, and how we use it to study distant objects
- C7: how the solar system was formed and evolved over time
- C8: the physical characteristics of the individual planets, including their compositions, atmospheres, and the physical processes that dictate these properties
- C9: how we detect extrasolar planets, what they are like, and how they formed
- how we measure the properties of stars, such as luminosity, temperature, and mass
- C10: how stars, including the Sun, produce energy
- C11: how we measure the properties of stars, such as luminosity, temperature, and mass
- C12: what the different classes of stars are and how we classify them
- C13: what the life stages are for low-mass and high-mass stars, and how they die

- C14: what our galaxy is like; what other galaxies are like, what the evidence for supermassive black holes is
- C15: how we discovered the expansion of the universe, what the observable universe is, how the universe began and what the early universe was like
- C16: what the evidence is for dark matter and dark energy, how the universe will end
- C17: how we search for life elsewhere in the universe, what the evidence for evolution is

Teaching Methodology

This is a fully online course in which all of the instructional materials and activities are delivered through Blackboard, and/or other internet-based media. Should you have any questions, please contact the professor.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

Technical Requirements & Skills

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "[What's Required](#)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

This course utilizes the following tools:

1. MasteringAstronomy: You must purchase access to the [MasteringAstronomy](#) online homework system. See the Textbook Information below for details. **Work done in the MasteringAstronomy website constitutes 40% of your course grade so you can not pass the course without it.**
2. ProctorU (see below)

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

Accessibility And Accommodation

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit [Blackboard's Commitment Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student

Handbook.

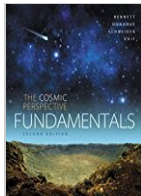
Academic Misconduct includes: **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Textbook



Cosmic Perspective Fundamentals

Jeffrey O. Bennett, Megan O. Donahue, Nicholas Schneider, Mark Voit

Addison-Wesley, 2nd Edition, 2015

Textbook and access to Mastering Astronomy Online

ISBN-10: 0134201477

ISBN-13: 9780134201474

Textbook Separately

ISBN-10: 0133889564

ISBN-13: 978-0133889567

You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#), or purchase the ebook at the bookstore, bookstore website, or online at the [MasteringAstronomy](#) website.

ONLINE HOMEWORK SYSTEM ACCESS

You also need access to the [Mastering Astronomy web-based homework system](#). This requires an access code for the **second edition**. Access codes for the 1st edition will not work.

- If purchased **new**, the 2nd edition of the text comes with a Student Access kit for the Mastering Astronomy website.
- **OR** you can also buy just the Student Access kit in the FIU bookstore
- **OR** once you log into the Mastering Astronomy website you can then purchase an access code (and access to the ebook if you want) using a credit card online.

Expectations Of This Course

This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- Review the How to Get Started information located in the course content.
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum.
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard.
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers and keep up with all assignments.
- Review and follow the course calendar.
- Log in to the course **at least twice per week**.
- Respond to discussion boards **twice per week: once between Sunday and Wednesday, once between Thursday and Sunday**.

- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.
- **Take the online exams on the assigned days.**

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course a **minimum of three times per week.**
- Respond to emails **within 36 hours** of receipt.

Proctored Exam Policy

This course requires two online proctored exams via ProctorU.

ProctorU is a virtual proctoring center recommended by FIU that allows students to take exams from any comfortable and private location. ProctorU connects students to a real person who can be seen and heard. This person will walk students through the exam process and provide assistance in the event that the student should run into any technical problems.

Student responsibilities:

- It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the exam dates and times to make appropriate arrangements.
- **Students need to schedule an exam appointment with ProctorU at least THREE DAYS in advance of the scheduled exam date given in the Blackboard course shell.**
- Students must comply with the ProctorU requirements, including but not limited to a **functioning web cam.**
- If a student anticipates issues completing any exams through ProctorU, they must notify their professor for further assistance.
- Students must schedule their proctored exam(s) during the specified time noted in the course.
- **Pay any fees associated with registering with ProctorU.** This is usually \$15 per exam.
- Students that schedule exams late will be responsible for additional fees.

Getting Started:

To begin, please review the following links:

- [Getting Started!](#): This link provides an overview of the ProctorU process.
- [Test your computer](#): This link will test your computer to ensure you have an optimal experience.
- [Exam Tips](#): This link provides student tips when taking their exams with ProctorU.
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#): This link highlights frequently asked questions and answers.
- [ProctorU Privacy Page](#): This link provides an overview of the ProctorU privacy policy.

Support:

- If students encounter issues with ProctorU, students may contact ProctorU at (855) 772-8678 or (205)-870-8122 and/or via email at help@proctoru.com
- If students encounter issues with Blackboard, they may contact FIU Online's Support Services team at:
 - Phone: 305-348-3630 or Toll-Free: 1-8773-ELEARN (7 days a week from 8am – midnight)
 - [Support Website](#)

Please visit our [Proctored Exam Resources](#) webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Title	Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time	Duration	Exam Type
Exam 2	03/05/2017	8:00 AM	03/11/2017	11:59 PM	60 minutes	ProctorU
Exam 4	04/23/2017	8:00 AM	04/29/2017	11:59 PM	60 minutes	ProctorU

COURSE DETAIL

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **E-mail**.

The E-mail feature is external communication that allows users to send emails to users enrolled in the course including the instructor and other students. E-mails are sent to the student's FIU email on record. The E-mail tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage.

Visit our [Writing Resources](#) webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

Discussion Forums

These will be used for class discussions and other postings of general interest that are directly related to the course. Everyone can read Discussion Forum postings, do not post private information.

The weekly discussions are an important part of the course. The purpose is to promote a dialog between you and your classmates. There will be a topic provided each week related to the week's course material. You (the student) are expected to participate fully in the discussions by posting as many times as you like, but you must make **a minimum of two posts each week: one in the first half of the week, and another in the second half.** Your Discussion grade each week is based primarily on your participation. Extremely short posts ("I agree!") or extremely long posts, or posts off-topic, will be marked down at the instructor's discretion.

In order to receive full credit, you must:

1. Read the comments left by your peers.
2. Make a post of your own between Monday and Wednesday (midnight).
3. Make a second post, preferably in response to someone else's post, between Thursday and Sunday (midnight).
4. You get 50% for a post made between Monday and Wednesday night (midnight), and 50% for a post made between Thursday and Sunday night (midnight).
5. Your two posts must be separated in time by more than 24 hours for full credit.

Grading of discussion posts: This is a participation grade. You get 50% for the first post if it's made between Monday and Wednesday, and 50% for the second post if it's made between Thursday and Sunday. You get 25% for the first post if it is made after Wednesday (midnight), and 0% for the second if it is made after Sunday (midnight).

Posts made after the week is over do not count for credit. The discussions are "conversations" and after the week, the conversation is over. They cannot be made up.

Please use, as best you can, complete sentences, and proper grammar. If you use material from another source (anything that didn't come from your own brain!), please include a reference to the source. You are encouraged to use your own words and thoughts, however.

These discussions should be conducted in a respectful, considerate manner.

Homework

The homework will be done using the online tutorial/homework on the [MasteringAstronomy](#) website. You must register for this course on the website (instructions are below).

To register on the website:

- Purchase an access code for the 2nd edition of Cosmic Perspective Fundamentals (see Textbook information above).
- Go to [MasteringAstronomy.com](#)
- Create a Pearson Education account if you have not used one of their products before.
 - You may use any login name you like and can remember
 - Enter your first name and last name as they appear in Panthersoft. This allows us to correlate your work in masteringastronomy with your work in Blackboard.
 - You may choose anything you like as your login id.
 - Use your Panther ID as your Student ID.
- When you register, make sure you enter your email address correctly. If you forget your password, this is the email address

that your password information will be sent to.

To access this semester's homework:

- You must add this course to have full access to the assignments. To do this:
 - “Join” our course. The Course ID for this course is **simpson62126**. It is case sensitive. I suggest you cut and paste it. You cannot edit this field after you record it, so please pay very careful attention to the code as shown here.
 - If you register but don't enter the course ID, you will not have access to the entire MasteringAstronomy website, including our specific assignments.

Due dates: All work for each week's unit must be completed no later than *11:55pm on the following Sunday*.

Late work: You will lose 5% each day an assignment is late. On MasteringAstronomy, this means that after 20 days, you will get zero credit.

Quizzes

The Quizzes at MasteringAstronomy will be worth 10% of your grade. After you have completed the homework for the week, you need to complete the practice quiz assignment. They are multiple choice, and conducted in a tutorial fashion: you are prompted to try another answer if you get one wrong. There is a small deduction for each wrong answer. Hints are available; there is a bonus for each unopened hint however.

Late Quizzes: As with homework assignments, you will lose 5% each day after the due date; so after 20 days, you will get zero credit for the quiz.

Exams

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

There will be four multiple choice online exams available here in Blackboard. Once you begin an exam, you have a set amount of time to complete it. It is your responsibility to notice when the timer runs out. **See the Course Content Exams folder for dates and durations.**

Exams 1 and 3 will not be proctored, you may treat them as open book exams. Exams 1 and 3 will be available from 7:00am to 11:55pm ONLY on the day assigned. Exams 2 and 4 will be proctored, closed-book, no notes, and will include a few questions on the material covered in Exams 1 and 3. Exams 2 and 4 may be taken any time during the week they are assigned. More information in is the Course Content Exams folder.

To prepare for and schedule a time to take Exams 2 and 4, see the section above on Proctored Exams, or the Exams page of the course.

The proctored exams are closed book; no notes.

If you have a conflict and cannot take an exam on the scheduled day, let me know **ahead of time** and we can arrange an alternative test date.

MISSED EXAM: At the instructor's discretion, you are allowed to make up **one** missed exam within one week of the scheduled exam date.

Extra Credit

Because there are so many graded components to this course, I'm sorry, but there is **NO** extra credit available. I do **not** make exceptions to this policy.

Grading

Grades for all activities, discussions, homework, exams, will be posted on the [MasteringAstronomy](#) Website, not in Blackboard.

Tentative:

Course Requirements	Weight
<i>Syllabus Quiz (Required)</i>	-
MasteringAstronomy Homework	30%
MasteringAstronomy Quizzes	10%
Blackboard Weekly Discussion Posts	10%
Exams: Exams 1 and 3 (not proctored) are worth 5% each; Exams 2 and 4 (proctored) are 20% each	50%
Total	100%

Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)
A	93 - 100	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 92	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

COURSE CALENDAR

Schedule

For due dates, check the weekly assignment folders in the course.
