

Astronomy/Physics 1403 – Introductory Astronomy I Course Syllabus

Contact Information

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Office Hours: MWF: 9AM – 10AM; MW: 11AM – 12PM; TTH: 8:30AM – 9:30AM, 12:30PM – 1:00PM,
5:00PM – 6:00PM

Course Information

Course: Astronomy/Physics 1403

Lecture/Lab:

Text and Lab Manual: Explorations: An Introduction to Astronomy (6th Ed.), Arny & Schneider;
Astronomy – Activity and Lab Manual, Hirshfeld.

Physics Webpage: <http://www.odessa.edu/dept/physics/lestep/>

Course Prerequisites

None.

Course Description

Introductory Astronomy I is a study of the current knowledge and techniques of modern day astronomy. Course content focuses on the universe beyond the solar system including a look at galaxies (including the Milky Way), nebulae, stars, black holes, and dark matter. The course ends with a brief survey of stellar and galactic topics. Emphasis is placed on current knowledge of the universe and how astronomical measurements are made. Some night observing sessions are required. (SCANS 1, 3, 6, 9)

Course Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes

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

General objectives for this course include:

1. To understand and apply methods and appropriate technology to the study of natural sciences.
2. To recognize scientific and quantitative methods and the differences between these approaches and other methods of inquiry and to communicate findings, analyses, and interpretation both orally and in writing.
3. To identify and recognize the differences among competing scientific theories.
4. To demonstrate knowledge of the major issues and problems facing modern science, including issues related to ethics, values, and public policies.
5. To demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and their influence on, and contribution to, modern culture.

Specific objectives for this course include:

1. To obtain the intellectual ability to translate, interpret, and extrapolate the most important scientific models governing modern astrophysics, the practices and methodologies used by modern astronomers in constructing astrophysical models, and to be familiar with the astronomical objects studied by astronomers.
2. To further develop critical thinking and problem solving skills in the area of physics and the natural science.

Laboratory learning objectives include:

1. To complete the introductory physics learning experience through quantitative laboratory experimentation, with focus on the specific learning objective concepts within the course.
2. To continue to learn and practice sound scientific methods as evidenced by satisfactory assessments of laboratory notebook record keeping, laboratory reports and assignments, and required laboratory procedures.

Course Attendance

Course attendance is the responsibility of the student. Excessive absences will not result in a student being dropped from a course. Attendance will be taken in class.

Academic Honesty

Odessa College expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the code of Student Conduct found in the student handbook. Cheating will not be tolerated in any form.

Students with Disabilities

Odessa College complies with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation act of 1973 and the ADA of 1990. Students with special needs or issues pertaining to access and participation in this class must contact me immediately. Further, you may call the Office of Disability services at 432.335.6861 to request assistance and accommodations.

Late Work Policy

Homework is due on the assigned date. Late homework will only be accepted the first class day after the due date and will only be worth 50% of the original grade. Pre-lab assignments are due at the beginning of the laboratory, no exceptions. Laboratories are to be turned in at the end of the lab period.

Course Evaluation

Course grades are a culmination of weekly homework assignments, daily quizzes, weekly labs, and exam grades. The percent breakdown for each of these is as follows:

30%	Homework & Quizzes
25%	Labs
45%	Exams

While the laboratory constitutes only 25% of the course grade, it is important to understand that astronomy is fundamentally a laboratory-based science. Therefore, a failing grade in the lab will result in a failing grade in the course. While you will never receive a score lower than that numerically earned, I do reserve the right to rescale grades as I see fit at any time during the semester. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	00 – 59

Cell Phone Use

Cell phones, while an important communication tool in modern society, are a severe interruption to classroom instruction. Thus, cell phones are, as a rule, strictly prohibited from being seen or heard. If you must have a cell phone available to you in case of an emergency, your phone must be put up on your person (not in a desk, but in your pocket or on a belt) and set on vibrate or silent. You may at any time excuse yourself from the classroom to attend to your personal business. There will be no cell phone use allowed in class. Strictly, no texting or Internet surfing. During exams, in order to maintain integrity of the testing environment, all cell phones will be required to be off.

Video /Audio Recording

Video/audio recording of lectures or class activities is strictly prohibited unless special accommodations are warranted for students with disabilities. Violation of this policy will result in the student being removed from the class and receiving a grade of F.

Course Outline

Week	Dates	Topics	Chapters	Labs
1	Aug. 24-28	Intro & History The Night Sky	Ch 0-1	Intro
2	Aug. 31-Sept.4			1
3	Sept. 8-11	Gravity & Light	Ch 1-3	2
4	Sept. 14-18			3
5	Sept. 21-25	Stars	Ch 11-14	4
6	Sept. 28-Oct.2			Exam 1
7	Oct. 5-9			5
8	Oct.12-16			6
9	Oct. 29-23			7
10	Oct. 26-30			8
11	Nov. 2-6			Exam 2
12	Nov. 9-13	Galaxies	Ch 15-17	9
13	Nov. 16-19			10
14	Nov. 23-24			X
15	Nov. 30-Dec. 4			Exam 3
16	Dec. 7-10	Final Exams		X