Course Syllabus
PHY 134.01, PHY 134.02
Stars & Galaxies
3 Credit Hours
Fall 2007

Class Time:	MWF 11-11:50 (134.01) or TTh 9:30 – 10:50 (134.02)
Class Location:	Farrington 101 (134.01) or Farrington 209 (134.02)
Instructor:	Dr. C. Renee James
Contact Info:	Farrington 306a 294-4888 phy_crj@shsu.edu
Office Hours:	MWF 9:30 – 11 a.m.; TTh 11 a.m. – noon OR BY APPOINTMENT
Required Textboook:	*Stars & Galaxies, 5th Edition,* by Michael Seeds
Required Materials:	*Lecture Tutorials for Introductory Astronomy,* by Adams, Prather & Slater
	One package 'baby Scantrons' (quiz strips)
	At least four 'normal' Scantrons (50 questions each side; no essay)

You can check for HW sets, handouts, and miscellaneous information on Blackboard.
**YOU NEED TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT YOUR SHSU E-MAIL ACCOUNT IS ACTIVE AT ALL
TIMES AND THAT YOU CHECK IT OFTEN (at least once daily). I communicate heavily via mass e-mail.**

Important Dates: **Sept 3 – Labor Day Holiday (no class)**
                         Sept 5 – Last day to drop with 100% refund
                         October 10 – Last day to drop class
                         Nov 21, 22, 23 – Thanksgiving Holidays (no class)
                         Dec 6 (Thursday) – Last Class Day
                         Dec 7 (Friday) – Study Day (no MWF class that day)

Course Description: This course is designed to give you a qualitative overview of everything outside the solar system, namely stars and stellar systems. There are no prerequisites, but it is expected that you have retained a good working knowledge of algebra from high school. If not, you might want to seek help in the math tutoring center.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, you should have a firm grasp of the following items…

> The development of the scientific method
> Decoding light to determine physical properties of objects
> Apparent and absolute magnitudes
> The cosmic distance ladder
> Historical development of the laws governing the universe
> Formation and evolution of stars
> Evolution of stellar systems
> Galaxies
> The expansion of the universe
> The origin and fate of everything

Grade Breakdown: This is what you're REALLY interested in. How much work will you have to do, and what will you get for it? Your grade in this course will be based on the following

Homework	**15%**
Homework quizzes	**15%**
One minute papers	**5%**
In-Class Exams (best 3 of 4)	**45%**
Final Exam (**yes, it IS comprehensive**)	**20%**

FINAL EXAM DATES:
        MWF Class Wednesday 12/12 at 11 a.m.
        TTh Class Tuesday 12/11 at 8 a.m.

THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO YOUR FINAL EXAM DATE. Be certain that you do not make any travel plans that will interfere with your taking the final exam.

NOTE – I will not compute your grades for you until the end of the semester. You need to keep track of your own percentages so that you know what you need to do to succeed in this class. Do not ask me how you are doing. Do not look at the cumulative points reported on Blackboard. These do not accurately reflect the dropped exam score or the variable weights for quizzes and HW's or the one minute paper percentages.

Exams: The in-class exams are fairly self-explanatory. These are tests that will assess your understanding of the subject for a three-week-long block. Note that your lowest exam grade will be automatically dropped (this does NOT include the final exam). This gives you the chance to have an off day, be at home with a sick kid, simply ditch a test, etc. without penalty. As a consequence of this policy, **I DO NOT ALLOW MAKE-UP EXAMS!** If you miss an exam, consider it your dropped grade. Also note that the exams will be curved, meaning that there is no set number corresponding to an A, B, etc. This means that a 50 on a test might turn out to be a C, depending on how your classmates fared. Anything over a 90 will always be an A, however, regardless of class average. Likewise, anything over an 80 will always be at least a B; anything over 70 will always be at least a C, anything over 60 will always be at least a D.

TENTATIVE EXAM DATES: Exam 1 will be held on or around 9/10 ; 9/11
                        Exam 2 will be held on or around 10/2; 10/3
                        Exam 3 will be held on or around 10/25; 10/26
                        Exam 4 will be held on or around 11/19; 11/20
These dates might need to be modified depending on the circumstances of the semester.

Homework is… well… homework. There is a large list of HW questions posted in the "Assignments" section on Blackboard. I will assign smaller sets of questions for HW. These questions – especially ones that were not specifically assigned – will also serve as exam review questions. I do **not** accept late homework for the simple reason that I try to post the solutions on Blackboard immediately after the due date. If you must, fax it to the department or e-mail it to me on the due date to avoid getting a zero.

Quizzes: To make sure that you actually DO your homework, a portion of your HW grade will be based on short quizzes which will be given on the HW due dates. You will be able to use YOUR OWN HW to answer several multiple choice questions. These quizzes will assess your understanding of your HW AND will help prepare you for the exams. Please invest in a package of the baby Scantrons for these quizzes.

One-minute papers: At the end of each class session, I will (if I remember) ask everyone to write a one-minute paper. This will consist of a sentence or two expressing the clearest point, the fuzziest point, or the general impression of the day's class. I will read the 1-minute papers before preparing the material for the next class, and if there is an overwhelming vote to go back over some point or to move on to new information, I can gear the next class to better accommodate you. While this is a darned good way to assure quasi-regular class attendance, it is really an attempt to get a handle on your current thoughts about class. It really doesn't make sense to pretend everyone is understanding everything I say, and most people choose not to ask many questions for fear that they will look stupid. Sadly, in most cases, two-thirds of the class usually wants to ask *the exact same question*, but are afraid of looking stupid. And so the cycle goes. **NOTE: IF YOU ARE IN THE T-TH CLASS, YOU CAN MISS UP TO SIX (6) 1-MINUTE PAPERS WITHOUT PENALTY. IF YOU ARE IN THE MWF CLASS, YOU CAN MISS UP TO NINE (9) 1-MINUTE PAPERS WITHOUT PENALTY.** After that, you will lose 1 point off your average for each one-minute-paper missed, with a maximum deduction of 10 points. Thus, worst case scenario: OMP's can be worth -5 (negative 5) points. ALTHOUGH GENEROUS, THIS ATTENDANCE POLICY COSTS SOME PEOPLE THEIR GRADES AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER. PLEASE TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AND KEEP UP WITH YOUR OWN ATTENDANCE!

MY POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Work you turn in is expected to be original. Do not turn in homework that is copied directly from another. I don't mind if you work on homework together, but it should be in your own words. <u>Do not cheat on exams</u>. I will give you an <u>automatic F for the class</u> if I catch you cheating, and then you'll have to do a horrendous runaround with the department head and the Dean of our college that involves lots of time-consuming paperwork. So don't go there. Try not to allow anyone to cheat off your paper. Keep it covered at all times, and avoid looking around too much during exams. Check all backpacks and hats at the front of the room before the exams. You will be allowed pencil, scratch paper, and the exam paper at your desk.

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT: Please see the student handbook for guidelines on acceptable student behavior. Be sure to turn off all cell phones, pagers, Blackberries, etc. before class begins.

VISITORS: Visitors are welcome at all times, provided they do not interfere with student learning in any way.