

Course Syllabus
PHY 133.01
Introduction to Solar System Astronomy
3 Credit Hours
Summer I 2008

Class Time: MTWThF 10:00 – 11:50 a.m.
Class Location: Farrington 101
Instructor: Dr. C. Renee James
Contact Info: Farrington 306 294-4888 phy_crj@shsu.edu
Suggested Textbook: *The Cosmic Perspective, 5th Edition*
Physical Office Hours: AFTERNOONS BY APPOINTMENT.
Electronic Office Hours: Pretty much perpetual (meaning I check my e-mail often throughout each day, and will try to respond to questions quickly)
Suggested Textbook: *The Cosmic Perspective, 5th Edition*
Required Materials: *Lecture Tutorials for Introductory Astronomy*, by Adams, Prather & Slater (ISBN-13: 978-0-13-239226-6; ISBN-10: 0-13-239226-7)
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.

Course Description: This course is designed to give you a qualitative overview of solar system astronomy. There are no prerequisites, but it is expected that you have a working knowledge of algebra.

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

- > The reasons behind the apparent motions in the sky
- > The development of the scientific method
- > Historical development of the laws governing the solar system
- > The structure and membership of solar system objects
- > Extrasolar planets
- > The formation of the solar system
- > Decoding light to determine physical properties of objects

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 DATE: July 1 (Tuesday) during class time.

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

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 6/10
Exam 2 will be held on or around 6/16
Exam 3 will be held on or around 6/20
Exam 4 will be held on or around 6/26

These dates might need to be modified depending on the circumstances of the semester.

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.

Homework is... well... homework. It will be assigned periodically in class. I do not accept late assignments for the simple reason that I try to post the solutions on my website 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 10 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: EACH CLASS DAY HAS TWO CLASS SESSIONS: 10-10:50, and then 11 - 11:50. At the end of each 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: YOU CAN MISS UP TO EIGHT (8) 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. Do not cheat on exams. I will give you an automatic F for the class 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 or risk embarrassment.

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