

Galileo's public lectures covered the agreed syllabus, but he also supplemented his income by private lectures on military engineering, mechanics and, possibly, on astronomy. In this way he was able to offset his debts caused by having to pay a dowry when his sister married, and support his household.

His most significant contribution to science was the evidence he provided proved that, like the other planets, the Earth orbited around the Sun and was not the center of the Universe. His position represented such a departure from accepted thought that he was tried by the Inquisition in Rome, ordered to recant, and forced to spend the last eight years of his life under house arrest. After he had become blind, Galileo was permitted to have his two friends (a geometrician and a physicist) to live with him. He managed to keep up his correspondence, and his mind remained active.

Besides sentencing Galileo, the ecclesiastical authorities banned all Galileo's books, including the 'Dialogue'.

In spite of his readiness to forgive, Galileo's quick temper and caustic tongue made him enemies, though it is clear that he was loved by his students and by a host of friends and acquaintances. Galileo was a martyr of science, or more correctly he was a martyr to entrenched opinion. Enemies could not understand the independence of thought necessary to formulate a scientific picture of the world.

'Who can doubt that it will lead to the worst disorders when minds created free by God are compelled to submit slavishly to an outside will? When we are told to deny our senses and subject them to the whim of others?

--- from Galileo's 'Dialogue'.

In 1637 he made his last astronomical discovery about moon, a few months later he was blind. He was dictating his latest theories on the impact of matter to his two friends, when the end came. He contracted a slow fever and died on January 8, 1642 in the city of Florence.