

Astronomy C10 Syllabus

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Fall 2025

Astronomy C10 Section Syllabus

Logistical Information

GSI: Peter Ma

Email: peter_ma@berkeley.edu

Sections: - Monday 12:10-1pm (Section 104) in Campbell 131

- Monday 1:10-2pm (Section 105) in Campbell 131
- Monday 3:10-4pm (Section 101) in Campbell 131

Office Hours: TBD

Section Goals

Discussion section is designed to reinforce the material introduced during lecture and to give you an opportunity to engage with the course content in a smaller class setting. Most sections will begin with a mini-lecture on challenging topics from that week's lecture and a chance for you to ask questions. The remainder of the section will be devoted to an activity such as carrying out a demonstration, completing a worksheet, or doing practice problems in small groups.

My goals as your GSI are to help you solidify your understanding of the course material and have a positive experience in the class. If at any point you feel there is something I can do to better fulfill these goals, please let me know!

Attendance and Participation

Discussion section attendance is highly encouraged, and the section attendance/participation score will make up a small portion of your final grade (3/180 points). I understand that different people are comfortable participating

in different ways, so I won't require you to participate in a specific format for this class; instead, I just want to see that you are showing up and engaging with the course material. That could mean asking a question during section or volunteering to solve a practice problem for the class, but it could also mean discussing a challenging concept with another student or contributing during small group work (and that list is not exhaustive!).

If you need to miss a section, I encourage you to make arrangements to attend a different section for the week. You are welcome to join my other section, and it may also be possible to attend another GSI's section (in this case, please email me and the GSI teaching the section you would like to attend in advance).

At the end of each section, I will ask you to submit one question about the week's material on a short Google Form. This form is password-protected and the password will change each week, so you need to attend section in order to complete it! The purpose of the form is to ensure you receive credit for attending section and to encourage you to think inquisitively about the course material. To this end, please do not respond "I don't have any questions" because asking questions is an important part of doing science. You will not be penalized if your question has already been answered during section, though I encourage you to think of something we have not discussed yet. If there are any common questions that fall within scope for the class I will send out a bCourses announcement to address them.

Quizzes

We will have two quizzes to be taken during discussion section this semester. The first quiz will take place the week of September 22 and the second quiz will take place the week of October 20. Each quiz will be 20 minutes long and will consist of approximately 4 short answer questions. More details will be provided as we approach the first quiz.

Grading

Your final course grade will be calculated based on the assignments and points shown in the table. The homework, lab exercises, midterm exams, and final exam are course-wide assignments, so please see the Course Reader for more information. The details of the attendance/participation score and the quizzes are specific to our section and are described above. If you are worried about your grade at any point during the semester, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Category	Points
Attendance/Participation	3
Homework	23
Lab Exercises	15
Quiz 1	7

Category	Points
Quiz 2	7
Midterm 1	25
Midterm 2	25
Final Exam	75
Total	180

Course Resources

Astronomy C10 is a challenging course, but there are many resources to help you succeed! I encourage you to take advantage of office hours and TALC (described below). In addition, you are always welcome to email me with any questions or concerns. I will aim to respond to all course-related emails within 24 hours during the week; feel free to follow up if you do not receive a response within that time frame.

Office Hours

Office hours are an opportunity for you to talk with us in a one-on-one or small group setting about anything related to the course. You are encouraged to bring questions about course material or logistics to office hours. However, you do not need to be struggling or even have a specific question in mind to attend office hours; you are welcome to come just to talk about astronomy or to listen to other students' questions! Also, you can attend office hours with me, Alex, or any of the other GSIs.

TALC

The Astronomy Learning Center (TALC) is a space for you to collaborate on homework and discuss course material with classmates. In addition, GSIs will be there to answer any questions that come up and to provide guidance on the homework as needed. TALC is a great opportunity to get math help, compare approaches to the homework with your peers, and discuss challenging course topics! This semester, TALC will be held 5-7pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays in Campbell 131.

Academic Honesty

It goes without saying, but please don't cheat! Submitting work that is not your own eliminates the opportunity for you to truly learn something, and the procedures surrounding cases of academic misconduct are not fun. If you are feeling stressed or are struggling in the course, please get in touch—I am here to help!

Accommodations

UC Berkeley is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with me. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you can work with the Disabled Students' Program (DSP) to request official accommodations that may be needed for you to have equal access to participate in our class.

The Disabled Students' Program (DSP) is the campus office responsible for authorizing disability-related academic accommodations, in cooperation with the students themselves and their instructors. There are approximately 5,000 students at Cal who receive services from the DSP. The majority are students with nonapparent or invisible disabilities. You can find more information about DSP, including contact information and the application process here: dsp.berkeley.edu.

August 2025