

# Syllabus for ASTR116: Spring 2017

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*philsegre.com* and *oxfordastropics.com*  
 Lecture: MWF 12:00-1:05pm  
 Lab: Tues. 1:40-4:40pm  
 Class: Lecture #4706 and Lab #4707

## Goals of the Course

This course is an introductory survey of the science of astronomy. Students completing Astronomy 116 are expected to have an ordered understanding of the development of the human quest for knowledge of the heavens, of the ways in which modern astronomers know the Universe and of the important current questions and issues in astronomy. They are expected to learn basic information about the Sun, the solar system, stars, galaxies and modern cosmology, as well as to develop a basic understanding of physical principles underlying astronomical research. They should be able to identify objects in the night sky and develop the foundation for a lifetime of appreciation and enjoyment of the heavens.

**Textbook and Readings.** The textbook for the course is *Discovering the Essential Universe*, 6th edition, by Neil F. Comins, published by W. H. Freeman and Co., 2012. Additional readings from other sources may be assigned from time to time, and some videos that supplement the readings and lectures will be shown.

**Blackboard:** I will post all lectures, lab reports and homework assignments on our **ASTR116 Blackboard page**.

**Office Hours:** My office is in room 220 of the Oxford Science building. My office hours each week are **Wed. 1-4**. I have an open door policy: if I am in the office and the door is open, feel free to come in. We can talk about astronomy and homework assignments, your student life, or anything else you would like to chat about. You can also email me or talk with me in class to make individual appointments.

**Homework:** Questions, exercises, etc., will be assigned in class. Such assignments will be turned in for a grade and students are expected to follow the Honor Code.

**Additional Materials.** Students will need scientific calculators for laboratory and class work.

**Daily reading:** After each class, I will assign the reading that you should do before coming to class the next time. By doing the reading before coming to class, you will be better prepared to follow the material covered in class.

## Tests and Exams:

The tests in Astronomy 116 will include objective questions, some of which will be quantitative in nature. A few questions will require Algebra to solve equations used in class. Some questions may stress reasoning with principles. Three tests will be given, during class time, on the following dates:

Test # 1 - Wednesday, February 8  
 Test # 2 - Friday, March 3  
 Test # 3 - Wednesday, April 5.

### Grade Breakdown:

Two tests count 15% each, and the lowest test counts 10%, Total 40%

Labs Reports: 15%

Lab Quizzes: 5%

Homework: 10%

Class Participation: 10%

Final Exam: 20%

*\*\*Extra Credit Observation Lab: up to +2%*

The course grades will be determined, as follows: 90-100 A, A- : 80-90 B+, B, B- : 70-80 C+, C, C- : 60-70 D : Fewer than 60, F.

Grades of A-, B+, B-, C+, C-, D+ will be assigned for sums of points near the ends of the grade ranges; example, (79.5-82.5) B-, (82.5-86.5) B, and (86.5-89.5) B+.

**Attendance:** I find attendance and class participation to be vital for this course. I will take attendance every lecture class. You will find the homework much easier to do if you come to class and you actively participate by asking questions. You are allowed 4 absences regardless of whether you have a valid reason for them or not. Therefore, I recommend that you save those for when you really need them (e.g. you get sick) instead of skipping class. If you exceed the 4 absences, I will deduct 2% off of your final grade for every additional absence. Being late for a class, or having your cell phone ring in the middle of one, is distracting not only for you but also for me and for your classmates. Students who are late for class for more than 10 min will generally not be allowed to attend that days lecture and will be considered absent. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY FOR LAB SESSIONS.

**Use of Computers/Cell Phones/Tablets in class:** My policy is simple, during lectures, unless I specifically say otherwise,

- No Computers
- No Tablets
- No Cell Phones

are allowed to be used.

**Working with the Honor Code:** The Oxford College Honor Code applies to this course as follows:

- Quizzes and exams: The work presented in these assignments should be your own. No collaboration permitted. You are expected to follow the instructions given by me and abide by the Honor Code. Sharing calculators, pencils, etc., is not allowed.
- Lab report, lab project: On these assignments you can only collaborate with your lab partner.
- Homework assignments: It is fine to work together on homework assignments but students are expected to solve and understand the problems themselves.
- Study groups: You are encouraged to form study groups and study concepts together and explain to each other things that you were not clear about from class or from your reading assignments.

**Religious Holidays:** You need to tell me immediately if any religious holidays will interfere with the course, especially the final exam and tests.

## ASTR116 Course Lecture Topics

All dates (except for the final) are approximate, although they should be accurate to within 1-2 class dates.

WEEK	DATE	LECTURE	READINGS
#1	Jan. 11	Introduction	Chapter 1
2	Jan. 16	Celestial Sphere, Constellations, Earth's Motion	Chapter 1
		Magnitudes, Moon Phases, Eclipses, Distance Formulas	Chapter 1
3	Jan. 23	History of Astronomy, Newton's and Kepler's Laws	Chapter 2
		The Nature of Light & Telescopes	Chapter 3
4	Jan. 30	Blackbody Radiation	Chapter 3
		Atoms and Spectra	Chapter 3
5	<b>Feb. 8</b>	<b>TEST # 1</b>	<b>Chapters 1-3</b>
		Formation of Solar System, The Earth & Moon	Chapter 4
6	Feb. 13	Venus and Mars	Chapter 5
		Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune	Chapter 6
7	Feb. 20	Planetary Moons	Chapter 7
		Asteroids, Comets and Meteors	Chapter 7
		The Sun	Chapter 8
8	<b>Mar. 3</b>	<b>TEST # 2</b>	<b>Chapters 4-8</b>
		Characterizing Stars	Chapter 9
	March 6-10	<i>SPRING BREAK</i>	
9	March 13	Formation of Stars, HR Diagram	Chapter 10
10	March 20	The Lives of Stars, Variable Stars and Nebulae	Chapter 11
11	March 27	The Deaths of Stars, Relativity and Black Holes	Chapter 12
12	<b>April 5</b>	<b>TEST # 3</b>	<b>Chapters 9-12</b>
		Milky Way Galaxy and Dark Matter	Chapter 13
13	April 10	Types of Galaxies / Cosmology	Chapter 13/14
14	April 17	The Big Bang, History of Everything	Chapter 14
		Structure and Fate of the Universe	Chapter 14
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>May 3</b>	<b>Final Exam 9am-12pm</b>	<b>Chapters 1-14</b>

## Laboratory

The weekly Labs will consist of both in class activities as well as some nighttime observations with telescopes and cameras. Laboratory activities are designed to give the student opportunities for investigating nature with scientific methodology. All laboratory sessions will begin promptly at 1:40 p.m. in room 223 in the new science building. Students are expected to arrive on time for lab.

Laboratory work will consist of investigatory projects using the Voyager 4.5, CLEA or NAAP software programs. Attendance at laboratory sessions is mandatory. An absence from lab will result in a 10% reduction in the student's final lab grade. The lab manual needed for a particular laboratory session will be given out in class the week before the laboratory session.

Each student's work must be their own. Collaboration is permitted only in using laboratory apparatus, and observing the sky. During the in-class labs, you may discuss your calculations or procedure, but each student must do his/her own measurements and obtain his/her own results.

**Laboratory Reports.** Students will submit laboratory reports in connection with the computer projects mentioned above. All reports will require written work and will be judged on the quality of writing as well as on the presentation of the results of laboratory investigations. Standards for reports will be issued and discussed in laboratory. **Lab reports are due 1 week after performing the labs in class.** Failure to turn in assignments on the designated day will result in a reduction of 10% for each day the assignment is late.

**Lab Quizzes.** At the start of each lab period, you will taken a short quiz comprised of questions relating to

- post-lab quiz question: on the lab you did last week
- pre-lab quiz question: on the lab you are about to do, and
- general quiz questions: on recent lecture material

**Oral Presentation.** Students will prepare and give short, illustrated, oral presentations concerning a current topic in Astronomy. Details will be issued after midterm. The oral presentations will take place during the last laboratory sessions on April 11 and 18.

## In Class Labs

1. The Night Sky. (Skygazer4.5 software)
2. Equatorial System and Planetary Motion. (Skygazer4.5)
3. Moon Lab and the Inverse Square Law of Light. (Handouts)
4. Jupiter's Mass. (CLEA)
5. Extrasolar Planets. (NAAP)
6. Hertzsprung-Russel (HR) Diagram. (Skygazer4.5)
7. Atmospheric Retention (NAAP)
8. Classification of Stellar Spectra. (CLEA)
9. Variable Stars. (Handouts)
10. The Color Index of Stars. (CLEA)
11. Hubble's Law. (CLEA)

- **CLEA Computer Labs** All of the programs used to run the labs can be downloaded for FREE from the website at <http://www3.gettysburg.edu/~marschal/clea/CLEAhome.html> Note: these labs contain .exe files and will NOT work on Mac computers.
- **NAAP Computer Labs** All of the programs used to run the labs can be downloaded for FREE from the website at <http://astro.unl.edu/naap/>

## Outdoor Telescope Observation and Photography Labs:

We will be going outside three times during the semester to observe the Sun, the Moon, and stellar constellations. The exact dates will depend of course upon the weather, but we will not go out on either Friday or Saturday nights. In some cases the outdoor observational labs will be in addition to the regular weekly in class labs, in some cases they will replace them. The observational labs will include taking photos and/or videos using telescopes and digital cameras. Following the observational labs, you will do some exercises and image processing work on the computer back in the lab.

1. *The Orion Constellation, Star Trails and Star Colors* – We will observe and photograph the Orion Constellation from the Oxford college soccer field early in the semester on a night with very clear skies.
2. *The Moon* – We will observe and photograph the Moon at very high resolution. The telescopes and cameras will be set up right in front of the science building. The best times are a few days *before* the full Moon so that it is very high in the sky at 7-9pm.
  - Full Moon Dates: Jan. 12, Feb. 10, March 12 and April 11, 2017.
3. *The Sun* – Will be done sometime mid semester during the regular Tuesday afternoon lab time.

### \*\* Possible Extra Credit Observation Lab \*\*

*A completed lab will earn a maximum of 2 points towards your final course grade.*

- *Jupiter and the Galilean Moons* – Visible in the late evening (~10pm) after April 1.

\*\*Note that to observe and photograph the night sky, we need the sky to be very dark, which occurs approximately 90 minutes after sunset. The approximate times when the sky becomes dark are: Jan. 15–7:15pm, Feb. 1–7:30pm, Feb. 15–7:45pm, March 1–8:00pm, March 15–8:15pm and April 1–9:30pm.

### Astronomy Software Programs That You Need to Download to Your Computer:

On my webpage at <http://www.philsegre.com/astronomy-software>, I give links to many useful astronomy program that are free to download and use. Use this webpage to find and download the following required programs...

1. **LAPTOP - Skygazer4.5 DEMO:** The free sky planetarium software Skygazer4.5 DEMO, available for both Windows and Mac computers.
2. **LAPTOP - StarStax:** The free star trails program StarStax, available for both Windows and Mac computers.

### Astronomy Software Apps That You Need to Download to Your Phone:

1. **iPhone - SkySafari 5:** \$2.99 – Planetarium software to visualize the night sky.
2. **Android - SkySafari 4:** \$2.99 – Planetarium software to visualize the night sky.
3. **iPhone/Android - Planets:** Free – Details on the visibility of planets each day.
4. **iPhone - Moon Globe:** Free – Shows a detailed map of the lunar surface with names of significant features.
  - (a) **Android - Moon Atlas 3D:** Free – Details on the phase of the Moon each day.

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