COURSE NUMBER  PHYS1304
COURSE TITLE  Astronomy of the Solar System

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Office Hours: Contact me by e mail anytime 9am to 9 pm

COVID-19 EXCEPTIONS

This fall we have modifications to protect students, faculty, and staff. Our top priority is student and employee health and safety, and we are monitoring developments related to COVID-19. The university’s top leadership and a health response team are in regular communication about these evolving circumstances. We are coordinating with our healthcare partner, Shannon Clinic, and local health authorities to ensure we have the best possible plans in place for prevention and response. We are following recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the Texas Department of State Health Services. We encourage everyone to go to the CDC website or the Texas Department of State Health Services website to stay updated.

Although you will be at your computer (someplace) when occupied with this course, ASU has required that I include the following statement regarding wearing a mask.

“Course Syllabus Statement on Required Use of Masks/Facial Coverings by Students in Class
At Angelo State University
As a member of the Texas Tech University System, Angelo State University has adopted the mandatory Facial Covering Policy to ensure a safe and healthy classroom experience. Current research on the COVID-19 virus suggests there is a significant reduction in the potential for transmission of the virus from person to person by wearing a mask/facial covering that covers the nose and mouth areas. Therefore, in compliance with the university policy students in this class are required to wear a mask/facial covering before, during, and after class. Faculty members may also ask you to display your daily screening badge as a prerequisite to enter the
classroom. You are also asked to maintain safe distancing practices to the best of your ability. For the safety of everyone, any student not appropriately wearing a mask/facial covering will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. The student will be responsible to make up any missed class content or work. Continued non-compliance with the Texas Tech University System Policy may result in disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct.”

Office hours will be severely restricted, and it will be easiest to contact me via email. Please feel free to contact me if you have any problems whatsoever in this course—or if you're doing well, and just want to talk about the wonders and mysteries of the universe. It’s in all our interests, and I care, that you do well! The best way to contact me is by personal in-office visit, or by e mail. Telephone is often less useful because the visual aspect is missing and it is often important if I am to respond properly to you.

Some modifications to the course have to be made as well. The start date is August 17 and the formal last day of the class is October 2 (although some material may be submitted to me until October 4. I will announce what must be done.)

**Course Information**

**Course Description**

This course is a three hour introduction to Solar System astronomy. A separate laboratory course can be taken. The sequence of astronomy courses (PHYS 1303 and PHYS 1304) plus labs (PHYS 1103 and PHYS 1104) satisfy the eight-hour physical science with lab requirement for most degree programs. This course can be used for elective credits in most degree programs. Physics 1304, Astronomy of the Solar System, is an introduction to astronomy of the Solar System, covering night sky observations, the techniques and methods of modern astronomy, and basic concepts related to solar system objects such as planets, asteroids, and comets. This is an eight-week, online course.

**Note:** This course is a full 16-weeks’ material done in 8 weeks. It demands a lot of work in a compressed time. It cannot be done by working a couple hours on an evening trying to look up answers in the text. It requires some effort every day, a minimum of 3-4 hours and no less per week. Owing to COVID-19 arrangements we have time for just 7 weeks of work. The 8-th week will be available for extra credit. Grades for the course will be based on the total available points for 7 weeks.
Prerequisite and Co-requisite Courses

None

Prerequisite Skills

Students can expect to spend a minimum of 6 hours per week to complete all the readings and assignments. The lessons themselves take as long as the student will require to read the materials and watch or listen to media presentations. Assignments are due throughout the week, so it is not possible to do the course successfully by doing it only on weekends.

Note: This course cannot be done successfully by attempting to do a week’s work on the weekend. Binge studying is counterproductive and seldom gives decent results. Each week’s material opens on Monday just after 12 AM and closes the following Sunday at 11:59 PM. If you forget to do your work during the week and the lesson closes you won’t be able to access it late.

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

Course Goals

Apart from the utility of Astronomy in the ordinary sense of the word, the study of the science is of the highest value as an intellectual training. No other science so operates to give us on the one hand just views of our real insignificance in the universe of space, matter, and time, or to teach us on the other hand the dignity of the human intellect as the offspring, and measurably the counterpart, of the Divine; able in a sense to “comprehend” the universe, and know its plan and meaning. The study of the science cultivates nearly every faculty of the mind; the memory, the reasoning power, and the imagination all receive from it special exercise and development. By the precise and mathematical character of many of its discussions it enforces exactness of thought and expression, and corrects that vague indefiniteness which is apt to be the result of pure literary training. On the other hand, by the beauty and grandeur of the subjects it presents, it stimulates the imagination and gratifies the poetic sense. In every way it well deserves the place which has long been assigned to it in education.

Course Objectives:

The following two objectives are the major performance goals for the course.

Objective One: After completing this course you should comprehend the most important scientific models governing modern astrophysics and be familiar with the astronomical objects studied by astronomers.
Objective Two: After completing this course you should comprehend the practices and methodologies used by modern astronomers in constructing astrophysical models.

In addition, there are multiple learning objectives for each of the 8 weeks of the course. I won’t burden you with listing them all, but if you are so inclined to know the nitty-gritty details, feel free to ask.

Learning Outcomes

When you finish this course you should be able to:

1. Apply scientific reasoning to future astronomical discoveries to understand their validity as well as to everyday situations.
2. Demonstrate an understanding that science is based upon observations of the universe and how that is used to understand some basic phenomenon of our world.
3. Discuss how gravity is related to the formation, interaction, and evolution of the solar system.

Student learning outcomes will be assessed through a combination of assignments submitted each week online. Every question is underwritten by a specific learning objective and a reference to Bloom’s taxonomy. (I doubt most of you will care much about this.)

Course Delivery

This is an online course offering that will be delivered via Blackboard. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard there is basic set of guidelines posted on the Blackboard site for the course (in the main menu). You may also request this from me, your instructor.

Required Texts and Materials

All reading assignments are in the text, *Understanding Our Universe*, 3rd ed., by Palen, Kay, Smith, Blumenthal. Each week the reading assignments will be posted. You will need an access code for Smart Work and that code is included in your text (if you get it new). If you get your book second hand, then you can get the access code from Norton Publishers for $30. The course cannot be done successfully without this access code.

This is an 8 week course (10/5—11/24). Each “module” covers one week of the course. Each week’s work is available Monday morning at 12:01 AM. Each week’s work closes at midnight Sunday. [Even though a holiday may occur during the 8 weeks, the course will be open at 12:01 AM on Monday, and all work is due by Sunday night at midnight.] ONE EXCEPTION: The Discussion Board for weeks and 8 requires all threads and comments be posted by midnight.
Thursday of the last 7 week (11/19/20) so final grades may be determined by the University
deadline.

You may obtain the course material from the Angelo State Bookstore. The website is:

http://shopangelo.com

All versions of the texts are available through the bookstore. The bookstore phone is 325-942-
2335. To order, you must supply your Angelo State e mail and your CID to the bookstore.

Technology Requirements

You must have access to a good enough Internet connection to be able to use Blackboard and e
mail. You will require a computer. You will not be able to do the course using a phone or a pad.
You also need an Access Code to go with the text, Understanding Our Universe (3rd edition).

Communication

In this class, we will communicate primarily by writing, mostly in e mail. In any form of
communication, you are expected to treat your fellow students and your instructor with
courtesy and respect. In this class, the following rules of etiquette apply:

• Spelling and grammar count. Don't use slang terms or shorthand "text-speak"
  abbreviations.
• It's okay to disagree, but it's not okay to insult. Flame-wars and ad-hominem attacks are
  not acceptable.
• No profanity. Offensive language will not be tolerated.
• No racial, ethnic, or cultural slurs. This may result in your removal from the class.

Grading

Evaluation and Grades

Above are listed the course requirements and the points available for each activity. The base
points for the course are 1000. It is possible to earn more than 1000 points by doing extra
credit activities (listed on Blackboard).

Since this is an ONLINE COURSE, it is really important that you feel part of a group instead of a
lone wanderer trying to navigate astronomy. To that end there is a Discussion Board. There are
non-graded forums where you may ask questions, and offer suggestions for the course. In week
1 you are to introduce yourself. The forum explains what you are to do. This can be significant
in your grade, since you may earn up to 10 points for a set of posts each week (your thread and responses to at least two other students’ threads). For every graded forum to get full credit you must create a thread and post at least two responses to threads created by other students. Threads must be set by Thursday midnight, and responses by midnight, Sunday.

There are three astronomy papers, described in Blackboard. Projects require very little time. They are due at the end of the 3rd, 5th, and 7th weeks (Sunday, Midnight). Each project is worth 22 points, total points for Research Projects is 66.

Extra credit is also available for attending Planetarium shows. An optional final will also be available for extra credit. Other extra credit may be earned as described in the Extra Credit tab in the Main Course Menu on Blackboard.

This is an 8-weeks course, and things become due awfully fast. NO MAKEUPS unless you can justify (to my satisfaction) dire circumstances, beyond your control. You just have to keep up with the course. Getting a late start for whatever reason is not, in itself, justification for makeup work.

For this semester, owing to COVID-19 we will finish before Week 8 so your score will be computed on the basis of the total of Week 1 through Week 7. Week 8 is available for extra credit (cannot hurt you).

**Grading System**

Course grades will be dependent upon completing course requirements and meeting the student learning outcomes.

A = 90 – 100 %.
B = 80 – 89 %
C = 70 – 79 %
D = 60 - 69 %  
F = 59 % and below.

General Policies Related to This Course

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in these documents:

- Angelo State University Student Handbook
- Angelo State University Catalog

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

The College of Science and Engineering adheres to the university’s Statement of Academic Integrity.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation.

Student Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at ADA@angelo.edu. For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the Student Disability Services website. The employee charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing accommodation requests is:

Dallas Swafford  
Director of Student Disability Services  
Office of Student Affairs  
325-942-2047  
dallas.swafford@angelo.edu
Incomplete Grade Policy
It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 Grading Procedures for more information.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU’s Academic Integrity policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center.

Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Days
A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day for more information.

Title IX at Angelo State University
The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:
Michelle Boone, J.D.
Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
325-942-2022
michelle.boone@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

1 https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/
2 https://www.angelo.edu/catalogs/
3 https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/community-policies/academic-integrity.php
4 https://www.angelo.edu/services/disability-services/
5 https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14197-op-1011-grading-procedures
6 https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/community-policies/academic-integrity.php
7 https://www.angelo.edu/dept/writing_center/academic_honesty.php
8 https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14206-op-1019-student-absence-for-observance-of