ASTR 101L: Introduction to Astronomy Laboratory: Our Place in Space

The course syllabus will cover the following topics:

- Course Overview
- Labs
- Required Materials
- Course Components
- Grades
- Academic Policies

COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to ASTR 101L, Descriptive Astronomy Laboratory! ASTR 101L will consist of eight labs. In some of these labs, you will observe astronomical objects using robotic telescopes, called PROMPT, a research group built and maintained in the Chilean Andes. In other labs, you will use observations that we have already made for you with these and other Skynet telescopes around the world. Finally, some of the labs will be traditional in that you will collect data using materials in your lab kit. We should have a fun semester!

LABS

Lab 1: Introduction to Skynet
Lab 2: Earth and the Seasons
Lab 3: The Galilean Revolution: Earth’s Place in the Solar System
Lab 4: The Cosmic Distance Ladder I: Parallax
Lab 5: The Cosmic Distance Ladder II: Standard Candles
Lab 6: The Great Debate: The Solar System's Place in the Galaxy and the Galaxy's Place in the Universe I
Lab 7: The Rotation Curve and Mass Distribution of the Galaxy: Dark Matter
Lab 8: Hubble's Law: The Galaxy's Place in the Universe II

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

See course description for an up-to-date list of materials.

**WebAssign**

This course requires you to purchase a WebAssign access code for submission of lab reports. Even if you already have a WebAssign account, you will need to purchase an access code for this course. Access can be purchased in person or online. You can find information on how to purchase textbooks and required materials on the Textbooks page of the Friday Center website.

**COURSE COMPONENTS**

**Lab Reports (75 percent)**

Lab reports consist of answering all questions in the labs. Lab reports will be administered through WebAssign. Blank lab report forms will be available at WebAssign at the beginning of each lab. The due date and time will always be listed in Webassign. There is a link to WebAssign on the left-hand sidebar of Sakai.

*Do not wait until the last minute to submit your lab reports!* After submitting your lab reports, check to make sure that WebAssign received your submission before logging off. Late lab reports will not be accepted without a medical excuse. I strongly encourage you to make use of the discussion forums on the Sakai site to work on the labs and the lab reports with your classmates.
Discussion Forums (25 percent)

Participation in the discussion forums is an important component of the course and will count for 25 percent of your final grade. I strongly encourage you to use the discussion forums to discuss the labs and the lab reports, as well as any burning astronomy questions that you might have.

I also encourage you to present questions to the group and to discuss what you think the answers to others' questions might be. I will monitor the discussions and jump in from time to time to help out, but know that you can still ask me questions directly—I live to answer astronomy questions!

For example: An appropriate question for the discussion forum might be, “How can astronomers detect black holes if they don't emit any light?” An inappropriate question might be, “What's the answer to question 3?” An appropriate response to the first question might be, “I think that one way is that they detect gas flowing into them. But how do they know that it's a black hole that the gas is flowing into?” Feel free to be more verbose than in these abbreviated examples.

GRADES

Final grades will be assigned on a curve at the end of the course. Roughly, the top 25 percent of the class will receive As, the next 35 percent will receive Bs, the next 25 percent will receive Cs, and the next 15 percent will receive Ds and Fs. However, you have to do very poor work to get an F. Your grade will be determined as follows:

Lab Reports: 75 percent of your final grade
Participation in the discussion forums: 25 percent of your final grade.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of online resources. Please consult the Acceptable Use Policy on topics such as copyright, net-etiquette, and privacy protection. As part of this course, you may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other students in the course. Please be respectful of the rights and protection of other participants under the UNC-Chapel Hill Information Security Policies when participating in online classes.
When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, please note that the terms and conditions of these companies and not the University’s Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill. When links to sites outside of the unc.edu domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that visiting websites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

Honor Code

Remember that as a student of UNC-Chapel Hill, you are bound by the University’s Honor Code, which states that “It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University students or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.”

An especially serious Honor Code violation is plagiarism. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult your instructor and/or familiarize yourself with this plagiarism tutorial courtesy of UNC Libraries.

Accessibility Resources & Service

If you are a student with a documented disability, you can receive services through Accessibility Resources & Service. You must self-identify through Accessibility Resources to receive services or accommodation from either of these offices. Accessibility Resources works closely with programs, offices, and departments throughout the University to help create an accessible environment.

The office is located in Suite 2126 of the Student Academic Services Building (SASB), 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC, and is open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. You can contact them by phone at 919-962-8300 or 711 (NC-RELAY), or by email at accessibility@unc.edu.