

AST 301 - Unique No. 50528
Introduction to Astronomy
Fall 2007 MWF9-10
RLM 15.216B

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Text: Horizons: Exploring the Universe by Michael A. Seeds, 10th Edition

Prerequisites: This is a course for non-science majors. We will use elementary algebra in class and on homework. For anyone needing help with the math, the TA and I will always be willing to provide it. The quiz and exam questions will be conceptual, not mathematical. If you are a math or science major, this is not an appropriate course for you.

Grading: Grades will be based on homework (25% of the grade), the exams (10% each), and quizzes (20%), the final (25%), and attendance (5%). Quizzes will happen roughly once a week during class.

Help: The TA's and I will do everything we can to help you do well in the course. Help will be available outside of class several times every week. Help sessions and office hours are listed in Table 1. These times and locations are subject to change. Please check the on-line version of this syllabus next week and periodically thereafter. Since we will be going over the problems in the homework assignments, we ask you not to be late to the help session if you want to hear a discussion of the first problem in the assignment. Endless repeating of the first problem discussion for the benefit of latecomers bores the students who were on time and drives the instructor crazy.

Extra help sessions will be held before exams. Check the Notices section of the course web page for locations and times.

Observing: If you wish, there is a 9-inch telescope available for observing planets and stars, operated by an astronomy graduate student. It is available to you each *clear* Friday night 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. and each *clear* Saturday night 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Contents and Approach: The emphasis in this course will be seeking an explanation for the phenomena and objects that occur in the Universe. We will discuss physical laws and how astronomers use them to understand their observations. Much of the time during class will be spent discussing explanations and concepts rather than descriptions of astronomical objects. You will have to learn some of the descriptive material from the reading assignments. This will be a small class where you will get personal attention and be able to interact directly with the prof. To succeed in this class you will have to keep up with the reading and come to class and be willing to participate in discussions and activities.

Homework: A homework assignment will be handed out most Wednesdays beginning 9/12 and be due the next Wednesday. Some assignments may involve observations of the sky. You must hand in homework to the prof in class. If you are unable to deliver your homework in person, you are

responsible for seeing that it gets delivered. *Late homework or homework not handed directly to the prof. will be worth 50% of its grade up to one week past due.*

Students are encouraged to work and learn together. The homework you hand in, however, must be your own. Copied or paraphrased homework will receive no credit and may result in academic penalties.

Tests: There will be three 50 minute exams (September 28, October 26, and November 28). There will also be a short quiz almost every week about the reading and about what we have done in class.

Most questions will require short written (grammatically correct) answers. We will take points off for poorly written or illegible answers. Cheating will absolutely not be tolerated. We prosecute!

If you are unable to attend a quiz or exam due to illness, you must notify me IN ADVANCE. You can do this by e-mail or by phone (leave a message). If you fail to do this, you cannot be excused unless you were demonstrably unconscious at the time of the exam.

Class Participation/Attendance: Active participation in class discussions and activities is required. This means do the reading ahead of time and come to class and get involved. You are not expected to know the "right" answer to every question. Attendance in class is a requirement for this course.

Help Sessions/Office Hours: There will be several help sessions and office hours each week (see Table 1). We urge you to take advantage of these sessions to get help with homework or to ask questions about the material. You are welcome to arrange another time if you can't make one of the fixed times. If you have personal issues to discuss, please see Prof. Jaffe during his office hours or make an appointment to see him at another time.

Reading Assignments: It is essential for the success of this class and for your success in it that you do the reading BEFORE we discuss it in class. We will be going through the book in order. I will give you the reading assignments about 10 days ahead of time.

Table 1: Help Sessions and Office Hours

Day	What	Time	Room	Instructor
Monday	Office	2PM-3PM	TBD	Falcon
Monday	HWK Help	6PM-7PM	RLM 15.216A	Falcon
Wednesday	Ofc	10AM-11AM	RLM 17.218	Jaffe
Thursday	Ofc	2PM-3PM	RLM 17.218	Jaffe