

Instructor: Judit Györgyey Ries

Office hours: RLM 13.134, Tuesday, Thursday 1:30 -3:00 pm, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: James Diekmann

Office hours: RLM 13.132, Monday, Wednesday 10:00 -11:30 pm

Text: “The Cosmic Perspective” by Bennett et al., 5th or 6th ed. (paperback)

In the first day of the class you will be provided with a “voting card”, you need to bring it to every class, and you are responsible for replacing it if lost.

Prerequisites: No prior college science or math courses are required. We will use high-school level algebra.

Contents: This is a course for non-science majors, and no knowledge of physics is assumed. We will discuss some physical laws and their applications to explaining astronomical observations. The emphasis in this course will be on relationships between objects that occur in the Universe, how astronomers learn about them and how to explain their behavior, even though they sometimes seem bizarre.

Course Schedule:

July 9	Our Place in the Universe	(Chapter 1)
July 10	Viewing the Universe from Earth	(Chapter 2)
July 11	Viewing the Universe from Earth	(Chapter 2)
July 12	The Science of Astronomy – Historical Overview	(Chapter 3)
July 13	Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo	(Chapter 3)
July 16	Short Quiz – Telescopes Our Planetary System,	(Chapter 6)
July 17	Understanding Motion, Energy, and Gravity	(Chapter 4)
July 18	Our Planetary System, Terrestrial Worlds	(Chapter 7 and 9)
July 19	Jovian Planets	(Chapter 11)
July 20	Asteroids, Comets, and Dwarf Planets	(Chapter 12)
July 23	Short Quiz - Formation of the Solar System	(Chapter 8)
July 24	Light and Matter	(Chapter 5)
July 25	Light and Matter	(Chapter 5)
July 26	Other Planetary Systems	(Chapter 13)
July 27	Our Star	(Chapter 14)
July 30	Surveying the Stars	(Chapter 15)
July 31	Short Quiz - Birth of Stars	(Chapter 16)
August 1	Stellar evolution	(Chapter 17)
August 2	Death of Stars	(Chapter 18)
August 3	Our Galaxy	(Chapter 19)
August 6	Galaxies and Cosmology	(Chapter 20)
August 7	Short Quiz – Galaxies: past and present	(Chapter 21)
August 8	Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Fate of the Universe	(Chapter 22)
August 9	The Beginning of Time	(Chapter 23)
August 10	Life in the Universe	(Chapter 24)

Date and time of final exam for this course will be announced later

Course requirements

As in-class interactive learning activities will be an important part of this course, **attendance and participation is required**, and they will count as part of your grade. The interactive discussions will help you reinforce the concepts in class, helping you complete your homework assignments and prepare you for the final exam.

Homework: A homework assignment will be handed out each Wednesday, due the following Monday at the beginning of class (except for the last week it is due Friday, before class). You are encouraged to discuss the homework and work on it together, but you must write what you turn in on your own, using your own words. Duplicate works will not receive credit; make the work your own. Late homework will be accepted for half credit until the homework is returned. If there is a reading assignment, it should be completed **before** the date specified. Otherwise, the lectures and tutorials will be less useful in helping you develop a deep understanding of the course topics. It is important to remember that the exams will cover material from the text readings that may or may not be discussed in class.

Tests: There will be a short in-class written Quiz each Monday on the topics covered the previous week, starting with the second week (for a total of four short exams) and a final exam. Late exams will not be given; however, you are allowed to miss one (or drop the worst, see below). Exams will emphasize material discussed in class, but may include topics covered only in the reading assignment. All quizzes and exams will be closed book and closed-notes, and calculators will not be allowed (or needed). It is important to remember that the exams will cover material from the assigned reading that may or may not be discussed in class.

Grades: Grades will be based on attendance and in class participation (15% of the grade), homework (25%), four short exams (30%), and the final (30%). Your lowest quiz and homework scores (one of each) will be dropped. The final exam cannot be dropped.

There will be no get extra credit assignments available for this course. Just come to class and participate.

Collaboration: The interactive lessons are designed around student collaboration, such as Think-Pair-Share activities; fill in the words, or tutorials. You are also encouraged to study and work on homework assignments with other students and to get help during office hours, but you must write out your own answers. If you copy someone's homework or let someone copy yours, both of you will receive zero credit. But you will likely find that discussions with your fellow students can help identify and solve the problems, and help with clarifying concepts.

Grading Scheme:

93 – 100	A
90 – 92.9	A-
87 – 89.9	B+
83 – 86.9	B
80 – 82.9	B-
77 – 79.9	C+
73 – 76.9	C
70 – 72.9	C-
67 – 69.9	D+
63 – 66.9	D
60 – 62.9	D-
< 59.9	F

Course Conduct

Please turn off cell phones before you enter the classroom. Also, **please do not leave class early unless you have talked to me in advance**, as consideration for your fellow students.

Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication, as defined in the U of Texas Honor Code (<http://registrar.utexas.edu/archived/catalogs/gi07-08/app/appc03.html> - [Sec-11-802-Scholastic-Dishonesty](#)), is serious offense for which a disciplinary proceeding may be initiated. This includes copying any homework assignments or exams. If very similar work is submitted, all parties involved will receive a zero for their assignment.