

MEMO TO UNDERGRADUATE ASTRONOMY STUDENTS REGARDING ASTRONOMY COURSES

Welcome to this undergraduate Astronomy course. To prevent misunderstandings, we wish to clarify the ground rules set by the Astronomy Department for our undergraduate courses. These courses operate with mutual responsibilities between faculty and students.

For each of our classes:

- A written syllabus will be handed out or posted on Canvas the first class day containing a description of the course, the material that the course will cover, all requirements in the course, and an explanation of what fraction of your grade is derived from each activity. These requirements or percentages are not to be changed during the semester.
- Special note for AST 301 students: This course, although designed for non-science majors, is nevertheless a **science** course. You will be exposed to scientific reasoning in the course, which you will be required to use on tests and in solving homework problems. Only simple mathematics is used; the level varies from instructor to instructor.
- Students in the College of Natural Sciences should note that AST 301 and AST 309 courses do NOT count towards fulfilling your degree requirements, thus CNS students are restricted from enrolling into these courses. We encourage you to consider our AST 307 course for science majors instead. If you have questions about this, please contact the Student Office in PMA 15.204 or studentinfo@astro.as.utexas.edu.
- There will normally be help available outside of class at least once a week (more often in the larger sections); if you have too much trouble understanding the material, or other problems arise, such as illness, *please let your instructor know as soon as possible*. Don't let the problem continue until the end of the semester, for it may then be too late to find a solution.
- You should not need to pay for any outside tutoring. The help that is provided with the courses should be adequate. If you need extra help, please see your instructor first. He or she can probably arrange help at no cost. Should you still feel the need of a tutor, please remember that astronomy graduate students cannot tutor for money without special permission from their chair and college dean. The Sanger Learning Center maintains a list of tutors, and runs sessions on general study techniques and math review. Many of their services are free. Please see <https://ugs.utexas.edu/slc> for hours and contact options.

Note that our undergraduate courses are taught by faculty members who are also professional astronomers. In addition to their obligations to you and the other students in this and other courses, members of our faculty have responsibilities to their graduate students and to remain professionally competent through individual research. As a consequence, your instructor may occasionally need to be away conducting research or attending a scientific meeting. Usually another faculty member will conduct the class when the regular instructor is absent.

We expect, and usually find, honesty in our students. Your instructor will explain any special rules, such as the encouragement of genuine collaboration (not copying!) among students on homework assignments and projects. However, submission of another's work or cheating on examinations are automatically grounds for failure in the course and reporting to the Dean of Students.

If you have any complaints or problems, please try to work out a solution with your instructor first. If you and your instructor cannot find an amicable solution, then please see either:

Adam Kraus
Astronomy Undergraduate Studies Chair
(Office: PMA 15.310B, Phone: 471-7774)
or
Volker Bromm
Chair of the Astronomy Department
(Office: PMA 15.218, Phone: 471-3302)

Emergencies: If you are in crisis and need immediate assistance, please call the Office of the Dean of Students Emergency Staff: 512-471-5017. They can help you with a number of services, and may be able to contact your professors for you if you have an emergency that prevents you from attending class. (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>).

For general questions about undergraduate courses, please consult the Astronomy Student Office, PMA 15.204, studentinfo@astro.as.utexas.edu. This office handles many student matters including departmental adds at the beginning of the semester.

Astronomy Department Outreach Activities: All students enrolled in undergraduate Astronomy courses are encouraged to attend our free Astronomy events (e.g. star parties, public lectures) and/or visit the 9- inch telescope on the roof of Painter Hall and the 16-inch one on the roof of PMA. For more information, read the flyers posted on the 4th floor of PMA, call our Skywatchers' Report at 471-5007, or check the Astronomy Department webpages at <https://astronomy.utexas.edu/>.

Academic Accommodations: Upon request The University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Some students are eligible for certain accommodations on course requirements through authorization by **Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)**. If you have a disability or think you may have one and need accommodations, please contact SSD as soon as possible. SSD authorizations must be renewed each semester. See diversity.utexas.edu/disability/ for information. Once an Accommodation Letter is sent, you must meet individually with the Instructor to discuss your accommodations and arrange for them to be implemented.

BCCAL: If you are worried about yourself or another student, or need support or resources, please call the Behavior Concerns Advice Line at 512-232-5050 or submit a concern online at <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>.
