

*PHYS 1304 – Solar System  
Astronomy*

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# *Opening Discussion*

- I will start each class with a discussion posing different questions.
- Did anyone see anything over the summer related to this course in the news?

# *A Little About Me*

- I'm starting my 5<sup>th</sup> year here in the Department of Computer Science.
- My Ph.D. is in Astrophysics and Planetary Science.
- I do research on numerical simulations of planetary rings and some general integration of planetary dynamics.

# *Course Webpage*

- You can find the information on this course located at [www.cs.trinity.edu/~mlewis/PHYS1304-F05](http://www.cs.trinity.edu/~mlewis/PHYS1304-F05).
- I have linked to this off Blackboard also.
- This site has the syllabus, a schedule, some links of interest for this course, and a link to the applet that you can use to check your grades.
- 12:30pm MWF

# *My Office and Office Hours*

- My office is in Halsell 201K. My office hours are 9:30-11:30 MWF, 10:30-12:00 T, and 1:00-4:00 R. or by appointment.
- If you come by and I'm not in the office, check the labs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. I'm often working with students there.
- I'm around a lot outside of these times also.
- E-mail is the best way to reach me normally.

# *Text*

- The text for this course is “The Cosmic Perspective” by Bennett, Donahue, Schneider, and Voit.
- We will be working through the first half of the book. Readings are posted on the schedule and should be done before you arrive at class. Assignments will come from the book.

# *Course Description*

- In this course you will learn not only about planetary astronomy, but also about the basics of the night sky and motions of various objects in it. The course will also teach you about the scientific method and how sciences learn about the Universe.
- Hopefully this course will also give you a better perspective of the scale of our Universe. Inevitably, my highest goal is to make you think.

# *Common Curriculum*

- This course counts toward the Natural Science part of both common curriculums. The lab is difficult to get into. If you are under the new common curriculum note that taking a 1 hour lab is less beneficial than taking a 3 hour course under "Using Scientific Methods". (Such as CSCI 1320)
- Astronomy is a branch of applied physics and we will be doing algebra based physics in this course.



# *Grades*

- Your grade in this course comes from 4 components.
  - 7 assignments count as 30% of the grade.
  - 2 exams are 50%. The midterm is 20% and the final is 30%.
  - 6 quizzes count as 10%. One quiz is dropped. Quiz questions will be a good prep for exam questions.
  - Class participation is 10% of your grade. You have to show up and participate.

# *Schedule*

- The course webpage includes a list of the topics we will cover during the semester. Each topic will be linked to a PDF of the slides for the day. They should be up the night before and you can print them 6-up to bring to class.
- Also listed are required readings, quiz dates, midterm date, and assignment dates.
- Assignments will be handed in at the beginning of class on the day listed.

# *Minute Essay*

- We will end each class with you writing a few sentences to answer a question. You will turn in your answers with your name on the piece of paper. This is what tells me you were in class.
- Why are you taking this class? What do you hope to get out of it?
- Remember to read 1.1 and 1.2 for next class.