

Astronomy 101: Descriptive Astronomy

Instructor: Dr. Itai Seggev (dök' • tər ē • tī' sě' • gěv)

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1 Contact Information

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Office Hours: Fridays 1:00-2:00. “Office Hours” means that I promise I will be there and will give you priority over students from my other courses. You are welcome to make an appointment or to drop by my office anytime, with the understanding that I may be busy.

2 Course Goals

Welcome to Astronomy! In this course we will study the myriad objects which make up the universe, survey its history, and explore the microscopic basis behind the many phenomena we observe. Specific course goals include:

1. Understanding the scale (size) of different astronomical objects,
2. learning the subatomic constituents of matter, and
3. mastering problem solving using proportions.

3 Textbook

The textbook for this course is *The Cosmos: Astronomy in the New Millennium*, 3rd ed. by Jay Pasachoff and Alex Filippenko. We will cover all the chapters in the book, but some will be emphasized more than others.

4 Grades

The course grade will be based on the following formula:

- Homework (15 %)
- Midterms (4 @ 15% each = 60%)
- Final Exam (25 %)

There will also be at night some “observations” at which extra credit can be earned. Grades will be assigned on the standard 90/80/70/60 ABCD scale, though I may adjust this scale (usually downward) so that it coincides with gaps in the grade distribution. This way, a few points do not make a difference in the overall grade.

4.1 Homework

Homework will assigned through Blackboard. It will generally be assigned on Friday and be due at noon the following Friday. “Technical difficulties” are **not** grounds for an extension or special consideration. Start your homework early so that you can fix or work around any problems you may run into.

4.2 Exams

The midterms will be on the Friday of every third week of the semester. The final exam will be on Thursday, December 7 at 4pm. All tests will be in-class, closed-note, and closed-book. You will need to bring an NCS General Purpose Answer Sheets Form No. 16485 (the “purple form”) to each exam. Barring a documentable emergency (e.g., being hospitalized), **you must contact me well in advance of the exam in order for me to consider providing any sort of makeup.** For the final no accommodation is possible unless *required* by University regulation. In particular, **purchasing an airline ticket that forces you to leave before the end of finals week is not grounds for taking the exam at another time.**

4.3 Academic Dishonesty

Any case of academic dishonesty will be reported to the University (in keeping with University regulations) and dealt with harshly. In particular, any instance of cheating on an exam will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.

5 *Tentative* Schedule

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
08/21 – 08/25	Chapter 1	Chapter 1	Chapter 2
08/28 – 09/01	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 3
09/04 – 09/08	Labour Day	Chapter 4	Midterm: Chaps. 1–3
09/11 – 09/15	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 5
09/18 – 09/22	Chapter 6	Chapter 6	Chapter 7
09/25 – 09/29	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Midterm: Chaps. 4–7
10/02 – 10/07	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
10/10 – 10/14	Chapter 11	Chapter 12	Chapter 12
10/17 – 10/21	Chapter 13	Chapter 13	Midterm: Chaps. 8–13
10/24 – 10/28	Chapter 14	Chapter 14	Chapter 15
10/31 – 11/04	Chapter 15	Chapter 16	Chapter 16
11/07 – 11/11	Chapter 17	Chapter 17	Midterm: Chaps. 14–17
11/14 – 11/18	Chapter 18	Chapter 18	Chapter 19
11/21 – 11/25	Thanksgiving break—happy holidays!		
11/28 – 12/02	Chapter 19	Chapter 20	Chapter 20