Syllabus
Astronomy 103 Laboratory
Section 8, Fall 2020

The laboratory is a mandatory part of Astronomy 103/104, and it is to provide practical experience with astronomical observations, measurements in general, and with the underlying scientific concepts. Half of the labs are indoors, so they are kept rain or shine.

Time and Place of Laboratory
Lewis Hall Astronomy Laboratory
(Located in Lewis Hall basement; entrance from the bus terminal.)
Thursday at 9:00 – 10:50 PM

Lab Instructor
Stephen Steenwyk
Send email through the home page:
www.phy.olemiss.edu/Astro/Lab/Lab.html
(Click on the name of the instructor on the home page.)
Office Hours: Contact instructor through email to set up time

Lab manual and other materials
A calculator is needed in each class.
Buy the lab manual at Printing Services.

The organization of the labs
- In general, each student will attend only a one-hour period of the lab only, either 9:00-9:50 or 10:00-10:50. All the observations and measurements will be done during this period. Students will finish their work (on paper) at home and turn in their lab reports within two business days, using the turn-in boxes located outside the laboratory. It is important that each report carries a cover page with the name, code and section of the student only.

- A few times students will work only at home and still turn in the reports the same way within two business days. Such labs will be internet-based exercises or paper writing. The instructor will inform the students about such instances in email.

- Each section will be divided into two subsections, A (normally 9:00-9:50) and B (normally 10:00-10:50). Each student will be notified by August 29 which section he or she is in by email. (Labs start on the week of Aug. 31.) However, students should reserve the other hour of lab time for possible lab work; the instructors will notify their sections of such exceptional situations by email. Important: read your email before lab so you do not miss any changes! Such flexibility is needed due to the quickly changing weather conditions in Oxford and the short duration of the in-class labs.

A warning: do not believe what your classmates say about having to show up. Misunderstandings often happen and may easily hurt your work and your grade.
General information

- Students will need to bring the lab manual and a calculator to in-person labs. A cell phone’s calculator is not acceptable.

- Attending a different section of the lab or switching sections after the first lab started will not be possible.

- Lab grade averages usually are usually around 90%, which is borderline A/ B.

- The lowest nonzero grade will be dropped. However, when a student misses an in-class lab or does not turn in a report, s/he receives an “M” grade, which cannot be dropped. One such “M” graded lab may be made up, and another may be made up for 50% of the credit.

- Medical or family-related excuses will be accepted with a doctor’s note or with detailed supportive documentation. (A pharmacy bill or a simple statement from the student is not sufficient.) In such cases the instructor assigns an “E” grade, and it may be made up. However, if the student fails to make up an “E”, it automatically turns into “M” at the end of the semester.

Field trip

A field trip to the Dark Site may be organized once a semester, contingent on the severity of social distancing requirements at the time of the visit. Transportation will be provided, and the visit may take as long as two full hours.

Special arrangements and rules related to the covid pandemic

- Students will work alone on each lab and not form pairs to work together.

- Students are required to wear a face mask and gloves during in-class labs.

- Before the beginning of each lab and before going home, everyone must wash hands with soap. The bathrooms are located in the South wing, first floor, of Lewis Hall.

- Students are expected to sanitize (wipe off) all the equipment they have touched before leaving class. The instructor will oversee this and provide cleaning materials.

- If a student is having symptoms that may indicate a covid infection, or else tested positive for the virus, they must notify the instructor by email and not show up for class until cleared to do so.

- Compliance with social distancing and sanitization rules is extremely important. The instructor will remove any student from class who refuses compliance.

- In case of protracted illness or quarantining due to covid infection the student must contact the lab instructor in email immediately. In such (documented) cases fully online substitute labs may be done. However, the timing of such labs may be outside regular lab hours.