

PHYS 162 – Elementary Astronomy, Fall 2017

Introduction to astronomical and cosmological science covering current understanding of origin, formation and evolution of structure, at various scales (planets, solar system, galaxies, cosmos), in the universe.

Instructor: Dr. Vishnu Zutshi (vzutshi@niu.edu)

Lectures: M, W and F (10:00 am – 10:50 am), La Tourette Hall, Room: FW201

Office Hours: M(3:30–4:30 pm), F(1:30 pm–2:30 pm) or by appt., Room: FR221

Text: Astronomy, At Play in the Cosmos by Adam Frank.

What to expect:

- Each of you will be part of a team of 4-5 students.
- Homework, given every week, will typically be a reading assignment.
- You will be involved in classroom activities both as individuals and teams.
- No exams will be given. Your grade will largely be determined by your (and your team's) performance in classroom activities and quizzes.
- The quizzes and activities will account for 85% of your final grade. The composite quiz/activity grade will be calculated from individual and team scores with a 65:35 weightage.
- Paper (1, due anytime in the month of November. Needs to be 3-4 pages on any factual astronomy/cosmology topic of your choice. 15% of final grade)
- You may elect to give a 15 min. presentation to the whole class, on any factual astronomy/cosmology topic of your choice, in lieu of the paper.
- Mandatory: Trip to the NIU Observatory (<http://www.physics.niu.edu/physics/observatory/index.shtml>)

Class participation:

Full attendance at all class meetings is expected. Tardiness or leaving early must be avoided in order for the class to be productive for all. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussion and ask questions during class.

In-class electronic communications:

I ask that you do not take phone calls, text, email, update your status, or tweet during lectures.

Reading assignments:

To familiarize yourself with the material covered in class, please read your textbook in advance (ideally more than once).

Academic Integrity:

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to

have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university. (NIU UC)

Incomplete grades:

Incompletes will only be given under extraordinary circumstances such as extended illness or call-up to active military duty.

Receiving assistance:

Students are urged to contact me should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have a disability or any other special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Disability Resource Center (DRC)

<http://niu.edu/disability/>