

ASTRONOMY 100 - SUMMER 2020 (ONLINE INSTRUCTION)

***** Please make sure to see me ASAP if you were not present on the first day of class or enrolled late for the course*****

Prof. Vahé Perroomian

Email address: peroomia@usc.edu

Office: SHS 360

Office hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, 2:00pm – 3:00pm, *and by appointment*

Welcome to ASTR 100Lg: The Universe! The marvelous ballet of the starry sky has fascinated mankind since prehistoric times. The questions, for instance, “Where are we?” and “What is the universe?” have spurred the development of astronomy. Since I am both a physicist and an astronomer, the course will also include discussions of the physics underlying the astronomical phenomena we will discuss. I will show how the quest for the nature of the universe has tremendously helped the development of physics. Physics, in turn, has paid back generously, by delivering the very concepts that allow us to understand the seemingly weirdest things in the universe. This course is designed specifically for those non-science majors who have very little, if any, background in the sciences and mathematics. The course is non-mathematical by prerequisite, but you will have to learn to do some calculations. However, these calculations will be very simple and will employ formulae that are easy to remember. You will have the opportunity to note that formulae represent ideas. Mathematics is the language of science.

1. TEXTBOOK AND OTHER RESOURCES

Seeds, Michael A., and Dana Bachman, *Foundations of Astronomy*, 14th Edition.

We will be using the WebAssign online homework system for this course. Your best options for purchasing WebAssign and an electronic version of the textbook are:

- A WebAssign + eBook package can be purchased from the USC Bookstore or directly from Cengage.com for \$80.
- If you are taking other courses that use Cengage textbooks this semester, then you may want to consider Cengage Unlimited, which gives you access to all of Cengage’s textbook offerings for \$119.99 for the semester (\$179.99 for the entire year).

Astronomy on the Internet

There is a vast amount of information (and lots of pretty pictures) on the internet. I’ve listed some of these sites on a separate list published on Blackboard. You can also find many more sites by simply Googling the specific topic you’re looking for. Also, Wikipedia is considered a (mostly) reliable source for astronomy, so don’t shy away from using Wikipedia in your web searches.

2. GUIDELINES

2.1 Registration and administration

Your registration for this course consists of three separate parts: the lectures, a “quiz section,” and the laboratory. You must register for each of them. The “quiz section” is the time slot allocated to the midterms and **will not be used** for this course.

The Undergraduate Physics Office deals with all administrative aspects of this class. Additional help regarding administrative issues is available from Kimberly Burger, email address burgerk@usc.edu.

2.2 Disabilities

Students who need to request accommodation based on disability are required to register each semester with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (DSP). This office can be found at STU 301 with phone number 231-740-0776. A letter of verification to the instructor from the DSP is needed for the semester you are enrolled in. If you have any further questions please contact the DSP or the instructor.

2.3 Grading

Your grade will be determined according to the following key:

80% lectures:

10% Homework

40% Midterms (best two out of three, 20% each)

30% Final exam

20% laboratory

Broadly speaking, grading is done by the distribution curve of the combined scores of exams, homeworks and lab. No rigid percentage marks (such as, e.g., a rule that 90% corresponds to an A–, or similar) are used. Further details about the grading procedure are given in class. **You cannot pass the course if you do not earn a passing grade (14/20 or 70%) on the lab portion of the course.**

Students taking the course Pass / No Pass must reach a minimum overall score of 70% to pass the course, regardless of the manner in which letter grades are assigned to students taking the class for a letter grade.

2.4 Attendance

Attendance is not mandatory in this course. All lectures will be recorded and will be available via the “Recordings of Zoom Lectures” section of Blackboard.

2.5 Exams

There will be three one-hour midterm exams and one two-hour final exam. The midterms will be given during class on the day they are scheduled. Of the three midterms, only the scores of the two highest will be counted, and the score of the lowest of the three will be dropped. The midterms will cover the course material incrementally throughout the semester, and the final exam will cover the whole course. **All exams will be administered via Blackboard and are open book and open notes.**

Please note that the third midterm exam can serve as a make-up exam for either of the first two exams. There will not be any other make-up exams. Any student missing two of the three midterms will only have recorded the points scored on the one exam taken. Please inform me ASAP if you intend to miss the first or second midterm exams.

2.6 Homework

We will be using the WebAssign online homework system for this course. To access the assignments for this class, please go to <http://webassign.net>, click on the gray “Enter Class Key” button on the upper right, and enter **USC 0437 2849** for the class key. You will then be required to enter the WebAssign access code you purchased.

Homework assignments will be due every week, at 11:59pm on Thursdays. Homework can be turned in up to 24 hours late for 50% credit. You can set up reminders for assignments that are due through WebAssign. Please note that exceptions will not be made to homework deadlines.

Homework will count for 10% of your total score. Each homework assignment will be worth 100 points. To earn the full 10% on your homework grade, you’ll need to accumulate 400 points out of the total 500 points possible, and your percentage grade for homework will be determined based on a maximum score of 400.

Homework Schedule

Homework #1	Due: May 27, 2021
Homework #2	Due: June 3, 2021
Homework #3	Due: June 10, 2021
Homework #4	Due: June 17, 2021
Homework #5	Due: June 24, 2021

2.6 Laboratory

The course Astronomy 100 has a **mandatory** laboratory component, and you should already be signed up for one of the laboratory sessions. The purpose of the laboratory is to give you some feeling for making and interpreting observations, thereby reinforcing some of the course material by direct experience. Indeed, without such experience, some of the theoretical material could appear a little too abstract. Another purpose is that you can get some hands-on experience in using a telescope: Often one can see spectacular pictures taken from large telescopes around the world or from the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) and you might be curious about what is possible from a small, but good “amateur” telescope.

I hope that our laboratory will enhance your experience and enjoyment of this course. Please appreciate the great logistical complexity of arranging laboratories for so many people with such a broad variety of backgrounds: I therefore kindly request your good will and patience in this enterprise.

Questions concerning the laboratory should be referred to the Lab Director, Joseph Vandiver (SGM 309; Phone: (213) 740-8889; Email: vandiver@usc.edu).

All of the labs for this course will be conducted online. During your first lab meeting, on May 19 or 20, your lab TA will conduct a Zoom meeting and will go over the details and mechanics of the labs. The TA will also share the schedule for labs and their due dates.

3. SUPPORT

You have a variety of opportunities for support available to you.

3.1 Lecture

Do not underestimate the value of questions during the lecture period. In large lectures, many students are reluctant to pose questions that they fear might seem silly to their instructor or to their peers. Almost always, if one student asks a question, there are several other students who were wondering about the same issue. Often such questions tell the instructor what material might benefit from a more detailed discussion.

3.2 Instructor office hours

I will have three hours of office hours each week. Office hours will be held in my personal Zoom meeting room, which can be accessed via <https://usc.zoom.us/j/9724034151>. You can also make an appointment to talk to me if you cannot make it to any of the office hours listed on the first page of the syllabus. In this case, it is best to contact me by email at least one day before you'd like to meet, or see me immediately after class.

3.3 Electronic assistance

Everyone registered in this course should find a link to the course in their *Blackboard* account. All information about the course will be posted on *Blackboard* at

<http://blackboard.usc.edu>.

At this address, you will find this Syllabus, important announcements, homework sets, etc. Solutions to your homework sets (after the due date) will be placed on *Blackboard*.

4. OBTAINING YOUR GRADES

You will be able to access your grades in Astronomy 100 via *Blackboard* at

<http://blackboard.usc.edu>.

5. STUDENT OMBUDSMAN

All courses in the Department of Physics & Astronomy have an assigned Student Ombudsman to serve students as a confidential, neutral, informal, and independent resource when they wish to discuss issues concerning their course without directly confronting their instructor. The Student Ombudsman for this course is Prof. Chris Gould, gould@usc.edu, 213-740-1101, SSC 204.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback regarding all aspects of these lectures is very much appreciated and welcome at any time. Please get in touch with your instructor via email, after lectures, or during office hours.

7. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

7.1 ACADEMIC CONDUCT:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

7.2 SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

8. SOME USEFUL DATES

May 19	Summer Session classes begin
May 27	Last day to add this class
May 31	Memorial Day (University Holiday)
June 1	Midterm 1
June 7	Last day to drop class without a mark of “W,” and last day to change enrolment option
June 10	Midterm 2
June 22	Midterm 3
June 22	Last day to drop class with mark of “W”
June 29	Final exam

9. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Start date	Required reading
1	5/19	Chapter 1: Here and Now Chapter 2: A User's guide to the Sky
2	5/24	Chapter 3: Moon Phases and Eclipses Chapter 4: Origins of Modern Astronomy Chapter 5: Gravity Chapter 6: Light and Telescopes
Midterm 1 on 6/1		
3	5/31	Chapter 7: Atoms and Spectra Chapter 18: Origin of the Solar System and Extrasolar Planets Chapter 19: Earth: the Active Planet
4	6/7	Chapter 20: The Moon and Mercury: Comparing Airless Worlds Chapter 21: Venus and Mars Chapter 22: Jupiter and Saturn Chapter 23: Uranus, Neptune, and the Kuiper Belt Chapter 24: Meteorites, Asteroids, and Comets
Midterm 2 on 6/10		
5	6/14	Chapter 8: The Sun Chapter 9: The Family of Stars Chapter 11: The Formation and Structure of Stars Chapter 12: Stellar Evolution
6	6/21	Chapter 13: The Deaths of Stars Chapter 14: Neutron Stars and Black Holes Chapter 15: The Milky Way Galaxy Chapter 16: Galaxies: Normal and Active Chapter 17: Modern Cosmology
Midterm 3 on 6/22		
7	6/28	Chapter 25: Astrobiology: Life on Other Worlds
Final exam on 6/29: Chapters 1-24		