

**Texas A&M International University**  
**ASTR 1110 – Principles of Astronomy Laboratory**  
**Fall/Spring/Summer Syllabus**

**Professor:** TBD  
**Class Time:** TBA  
**Laboratory:** TBA  
**Office:** LBV Science Center 373B  
**Office Hours:** TBA, and by appointment.  
**Telephone:** 956.326.2595  
**E-Mail:** TBD

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Laboratory course to accompany ASTR 1310. Practical exercises reinforce ASTR 1310 lecture material. Topics include unaided-eye observation, telescopic observation, telescope manipulation, and experiments/exercises. Must be taken concurrently with ASTR 1310.

## **II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)**

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. explain the use of basic astronomical tools, such as a telescope and a spectroscope.
2. conduct experiments and collect experimental data
3. perform calculations, interpret results, and identify sources of errors
4. compare experimental data with theoretical predictions.
5. plot experimental data and determine physical parameters from a graph.
6. use astronomical data from tables and graphs to explain concepts in astronomy.
7. prepare and submit laboratory reports
8. design and implement a scientific experiment to test basic astronomy principles
9. deliver oral presentations with appropriate visual aids.

## **III. CORE-CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES (CCOs)**

1. Critical Thinking: includes creative thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6).
2. Communication Skills: Students will demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively by using oral and visual communication (SLO 9).
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills: Empirical and Quantitative Skills: includes the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions (SLOs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8).

## **IV. TEXTBOOK(S)**

### **A. Required**

Ferguson, D.C., 2001, Introductory Astronomy Exercises, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Wadsworth Publishing Company.

## **B. Supplementary Texts and Other Relevant References**

Chaisson, E., and S. McMillan, 2008, Astronomy Today: The Solar System, Vol. I., 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Seeds, M.A., and D.E. Backman, 2011, The Solar System, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Shipsey, I., 2005, Introductory Astronomy Lab Manual, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., McGraw-Hill Company.

## **V. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND METHODS**

An explanation of the experiment/exercise will be given by the instructor at the beginning of each laboratory session. The instructor's explanations will be supplemented with demonstrations, multimedia presentations, overhead transparencies, digital images, movies, and animations, and/or the World Wide Web.

Students will work in groups. Safety will be observed at all times in the laboratory. After each experiment/exercise, a laboratory report will be prepared and turned in for a grade. The laboratory report will be finished in class, except as noted by the instructor.

ANGEL will be used for syllabi, handouts, and grades. Questions and discussion are welcomed and encouraged.

### Schedule of Exams and Percentages:

Laboratory Reports	60%
Final Exam	25%
Design Experiment Project	15%

### Grading Scale:

A:	90 - 100
B:	80 - 89
C:	70 - 79
D:	60 - 69
F:	below 60

## VI. UNITS OF INSTRUCTION

Tentative Schedule:

<b>Lab</b>	<b>Experiment/Exercise</b>
01	Introduction and Laboratory Safety / Ex 1: Introduction to Experimental Measurements
02	Ex 2: Measurement of Astronomical Distances – Part I
03	Ex 2: Measurement of Astronomical Distances – Part II
04	Ex 3: Planetarium Exercise
05	Ex 4: Kepler’s Third Law and Masses in Astronomy
06	Ex 5: Measuring the Gravitational Acceleration
07	Ex 6: Optics in Astronomy
08	Ex 7: Planetarium Exercise
09	Ex 8: Spectroscopy in Astronomy
10	Ex 9: Density, Gravity, and Weight in the Solar System
11	Ex 10: Impact Craters in the Solar System
12	Ex 11: Planetarium Exercise
13	Ex 12: The Herzprung-Russell Diagram
14	Make-Up
15	<b>Final Exam</b>

## VII. COURSE POLICY

- Safety will be observed at all times in the laboratory.
- It is the student's responsibility to be up-to-date on all of the experiments and laboratory reports.
- It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of any special needs that the student might have.
- Each student will prepare his/her own laboratory report for submission.
- Laboratory reports are due at the conclusion of the laboratory session, except as noted by the instructor. Laboratory reports will have 10 points deducted for each day late. Laboratory reports will not be accepted after the last day of classes.
- All experiments must be performed as scheduled. In case of an emergency, however, a maximum of two (2) missed lab sessions may be made up on the day at the end of the term reserved for make-ups (refer to the schedule for the specific date). Missed lab sessions may be made up only with a valid, written excuse. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of the student’s intent to make up a lab session well in advance of the day of the make-up. The lowest grade on the laboratory reports will be

dropped.

- Tape recorders, laptop computers, cameras, earphones, iPods, iPads, MP3/4 players, and other electronic equipment brought by the student will not be permitted in class (the only exceptions being the classroom response pad, i.e., “clicker”, and a scientific calculator). In addition, students **MUST** turn off their cellular telephones at all times while in the classroom and/or laboratory. The calculator feature on cellular telephones will not be used in class – a separate calculator must be used. Failure to comply with any of the above will result in a penalty of 10 points for each case of non-compliance, applied to the day’s lab.

## VIII. POLICIES OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

### **Classroom Behavior**

The College of Arts and Sciences encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The College will always tolerate diverse, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s work as your own. **1)** When you borrow someone else’s facts, ideas, or opinions and put them entirely in your own words, you must acknowledge that these thoughts are not your own by immediately citing the source in your paper. Failure to do this is plagiarism. **2)** When you also borrow someone else’s words (short phrases, clauses, or sentences), you must enclose the copied words in quotation marks as well as citing the source. Failure to do this is plagiarism. **3)** When you present someone else’s paper or exam (stolen, borrowed, or bought) as your own, you have committed a clearly intentional form of intellectual theft and have put your academic future in jeopardy. This is the worst form of plagiarism.

Here is another explanation from the 2010, sixth edition of the *Manual of The American Psychological Association* (APA):

*Plagiarism:* Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotations marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. *Each* time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you need to credit the source in the text.

The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own words. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If authors model a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the Discussion section of someone else's article, the person should be given credit. Given the free exchange of ideas, which is very important for the health of intellectual discourse, authors may not know where an idea for a study originated. If authors do know, however, they should acknowledge the source; this includes personal communications. (pp. 15-16)

Consult the Writing Center or a recommended guide to documentation and research such as the *Manual of the APA* or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for guidance on proper documentation. If you still have doubts concerning proper documentation, seek advice from your instructor prior to submitting a final draft.

**Use of Work in Two or More Courses:** You may not submit work completed in one course for a grade in a second course unless you receive explicit permission to do so by the instructor of the second course.

**Penalties for Plagiarism:** Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism, the student should receive a grade of 'F' in that course and the matter will be referred to the Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. The faculty member, however, may elect to give freshmen and sophomore students a “zero” for the assignment and to allow them to revise the assignment up to a grade of “F” (50%) if they believe that the student plagiarized out of ignorance or carelessness and not out of an attempt to deceive in order to earn an unmerited grade. This option should not be available to juniors, seniors, or graduate students, who cannot reasonably claim ignorance of documentation rules as an excuse.

**Caution:** Be very careful what you upload to Turnitin or send to your professor for evaluation. Whatever you upload for evaluation will be considered your final, approved draft. If it is plagiarized, you will be held responsible. The excuse that “it was only a draft” will not be accepted.

**Caution:** Also, do not share your electronic files with others. If you do, you are responsible for the possible consequences. If another student takes your file of a paper and changes the name to his or her name and submits it and you also submit the paper, we will hold both of you responsible for plagiarism. It is impossible for us to know with certainty who wrote the paper and who stole it. And, of course, we cannot know if there was collusion between you and the other student in the matter.

**Penalties for Cheating:** Should a faculty member discover a student cheating on an exam or quiz or other class project, the student should receive a “zero” for the assignment and not be allowed to make the assignment up. The incident should be reported to the chair of the department and to the Honor Council. If the cheating is extensive, however,

or if the assignment constitutes a major grade for the course (e.g., a final exam), or if the student has cheated in the past, the student should receive an “F” in the course, and the matter should be referred to the Honor Council. Under no circumstances should a student who deserves an “F” in the course be allowed to withdraw from the course with a “W.”

**Student Right of Appeal:** Faculty will notify students immediately via the student’s TAMIU e-mail account that they have submitted plagiarized work. Students have the right to appeal a faculty member’s charge of academic dishonesty by notifying the TAMIU Honor Council of their intent to appeal as long as the notification of appeal comes within 5 business days of the faculty member’s e-mail message to the student. The *Student Handbook* provides details.

### **UConnect, TAMIU E-Mail, and Dusty Alert**

Personal Announcements sent to students through TAMIU’s UConnect Portal and TAMIU E-mail are the official means of communicating course and university business with students and faculty – not the U.S. Mail and not other e-mail addresses. Students and faculty must check UConnect and their TAMIU e-mail accounts regularly, if not daily. Not having seen an important TAMIU e-mail or UConnect message from a faculty member, chair, or dean is not accepted as an excuse for failure to take important action. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to sign-up for *Dusty Alert* (see [www.tamiau.edu](http://www.tamiau.edu)). *Dusty Alert* is an instant cell phone text-messaging system allowing the university to communicate immediately with you if there is an on-campus emergency, something of immediate danger to you, or a campus closing.

### **Copyright Restrictions**

The Copyright Act of 1976 grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to \$100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to \$250,000 and imprisonment.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

### **Incompletes**

Students who are unable to complete a course should withdraw from the course before the final date for withdrawal and receive a “W.” To qualify for an “incomplete” and thus have the opportunity to complete the course at a later date, a student must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have completed 90% of the course work assigned before the final date for withdrawing from a course with a “W”, and the student must be passing the course;
2. The student cannot complete the course because an accident, an illness, or a traumatic personal or family event occurred after the final date for withdrawal from a course;
3. The student must sign an “Incomplete Grade Contract” and secure signatures of approval from the professor and the college dean.
4. The student must agree to complete the missing course work before the end of the next long semester; failure to meet this deadline will cause the “I” to automatically be converted to a “F”; extensions to this deadline may be granted by the dean of the college.

This is the general policy regarding the circumstances under which an “incomplete” may be granted, but under exceptional circumstances, a student may receive an incomplete who does not meet all of the criteria above if the faculty member, department chair, and dean recommend it.

### **Student Responsibility for Dropping a Course**

It is the responsibility of the STUDENT to drop the course before the final date for withdrawal from a course. Faculty members, in fact, may not drop a student from a course without getting the approval of their department chair and dean.

### **Independent Study Course**

Independent Study (IS) courses are offered only under exceptional circumstances. Required courses intended to build academic skills may not be taken as IS (e.g., clinical supervision and internships). No student will take more than one IS course per semester. Moreover, IS courses are limited to seniors and graduate students. Summer IS course must continue through both summer sessions.

### **Grade Changes & Appeals**

Faculty are authorized to change final grades only when they have committed a computational error or an error in recording a grade, and they must receive the approval of their department chairs and the dean to change the grade. As part of that approval, they must attach a detailed explanation of the reason for the mistake. Only in rare cases would another reason be entertained as legitimate for a grade change. A student who is unhappy with his or her grade on an assignment must discuss the situation with the faculty member teaching the course. If students believe that they have been graded unfairly, they have the right to appeal the grade using a grade appeal process in the *Student Handbook* and the *Faculty Handbook*.

### **Final Examination**

Final Examination must be comprehensive and must contain a written component. The written component should comprise at least 20% of the final exam grade. Exceptions to this policy must receive the approval of the department chair and the dean at the beginning of the semester.

*(N.B. - This syllabus is subject to change).*