



ASTR 1304, 20139.01E, Solar System

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

Class meets T/R 11-12:15 pm, STC 125 (a.k.a. the Planetarium)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Cheri Davis

Office Location: McFarland Science Building, Suite 148

Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 9:30-10:30 am

Office Phone: 903 468 8650

University Email Address: Cheri.Davis@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email please

Communication Response Time: 24 hours or less during the week (usually a few hours)

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook Available: 21st Century Astronomy 7th Edition; available at the campus bookstore or online edition through Norton. The text can be purchased or rented but **it is not required** and you can easily manage this class without purchasing the text provided you do not miss class and you take good notes.

Again, the textbook is **not required**-it is simply an option if you prefer something to read.

21ST CENTURY ASTRONOMY -REG.CODE ACCESS

Author: PALEN

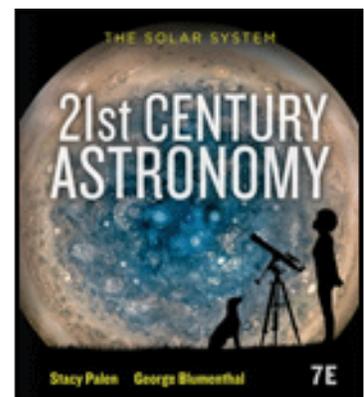
Edition: 7TH 22

Published Date: 2022

ISBN: 9780393877007

Publisher: NORTON

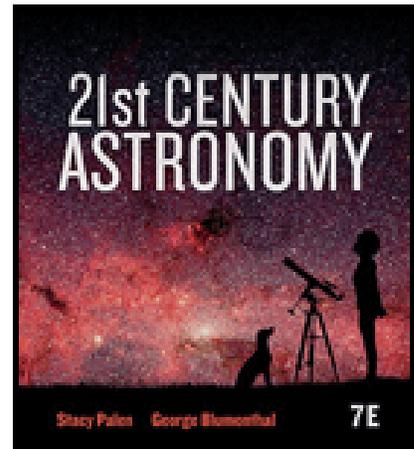
\$105.65 Bookstore **Access Code Only**



The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

21ST CENTURY ASTRONOMY (LL)-W/ACCESS

Author: PALEN
Edition: 7TH 22
Published Date: 2022
ISBN: 9780393877038
Publisher: NORTON
\$152.00 New



21ST CENTURY ASTRONOMY-W/ACCESS

Author: PALEN
Edition: 7TH 22
Published Date: 2022
ISBN: 9780393877021
Publisher: NORTON
\$190.00 New
Rental options available from the book store

Course Description

This course includes a descriptive survey of the Solar System specifically including the Sun, planets and their satellites, comets, and other members of the Solar System. The goal of this course is to give students a broad understanding of the Solar System, how observations are taken, the development of tools used in observations, and the evolution of scientific theories. The course will also examine the history of astronomy and the contributions of those who have helped mankind develop the theories recognized today.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances or data.
 - Students will understand basic celestial navigation.
 - Students will be able to explain the differences in types of eclipses.
2. In written, oral, and/or visual communication, ETAMU students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
 - All writing assignments will be typed and uploaded into the course shell
 - Proof work for errors
3. Students will be able understand and utilize mathematical functions and empirical principles and processes.
 - Students will understand the development and advancement of astronomy, astronomical equipment, and research/processes.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

D2L BrightSpace will be used for grades and as a venue/repository of review material and PowerPoints. All written work will be typed (not handwritten except for diagrams) and uploaded into the course shell. All students are expected to have basic computer knowledge and skills, able to manage MS Office programs such as PowerPoint, Excel, Word, or similar. Google is not compatible with our system, Google links are not acceptable.

Instructional Methods

This class will meet in STC 125 from 11-12:15 Tuesdays and Thursdays. The instructional methods for this course will primarily be lecture and students will provide the instructor their full attention. Questions are welcomed and encouraged during lecture; however, students will not engage in "personal discussions" thus disrupting class.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

This class **requires regular attendance** as much of the content is delivered in a hands-on format that will build from one lesson to the next. If you miss a class you may miss the skills or content needed for the next and future lessons. Missing even one class can cause a significant gap in your learning and understanding. The best thing you can do to be successful in this class is to not miss a single class. Seek assistance early if you do not understand or if you are struggling.

GRADING

The following scale will be used for determining final course grades:

Daily assignments/homework/attendance	40 %
Mid-Term Tests (2 @ 20% each)	40 %
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20 %</u>
Total	100 %

90% < A < 100%

80% < B < 89%

70% < C < 79%

60% < D < 69%

F < 60%

Tentative Exam Dates

1) February 5

2) March 19

3) Final, Tues, May 5th 10:30-12:30 pm, in the Planetarium

The syllabus and/or schedule are subject to change.

Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated for any reason and violation will provide the individual(s) involved with a failing grade and a referral to the dean's office for further disciplinary action.

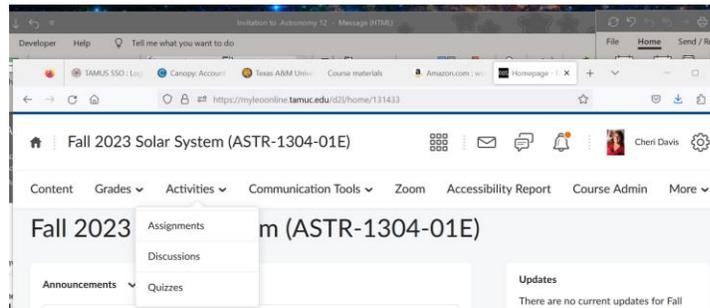
Assessments

Daily work-The daily assignments and homework are designed to help prepare you for the tests and are necessary for you to be successful in this course. The best thing you can do to help yourself is to complete all of the work. Complete each assignment to the best of your ability. Turn all assignments in on time as they will be graded in a timely manner. The majority of assignments will be submitted online in the course shell; unless instructed otherwise. You should be able to read the feedback and

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corrections on the assignment which will contain remarks and grading. Check the feedback window before emailing about a grade or corrections.

Assignments are graded on a 10-point scale and due dates are given when the assignment is made. Most assignments will be due by the next class; late work will be deducted 3 points (30%) per day. When assignments are uploaded into the course, they will be listed by the assignment name under the “Activities” tab at the top of the course. When you click on activities, you will find the options for “Assignments, Discussions, or Quizzes”.



The lowest grade (ONE) will be dropped at the end of the semester. For credit on handouts, you must show all work. For clarity draw pictures or show your math on all handout assignments. Scan your assignment and upload into the course under assignments. When in doubt, make the extra effort or you may not get credit for the work.

If you struggle seek help early; do not wait until time for the test to ask for assistance. For assistance, take advantage of office hours to see me or visit the Jump room (STC 110/111) for tutoring.

Lectures-There will be regular lectures and some mini-lectures. If you miss notes, I recommend asking a couple of people for a copy of their notes so that you have a good coverage of the material missed. You will be responsible for all material at the time of the test.

This class is web enhanced which means that PowerPoints may be available online to help you review and prepare for the tests. Take advantage of the PowerPoints at any time; do not wait until a test has been announced. The material has been developed specifically for this purpose so that you will have access throughout the semester, use it.

Exams-If you know you are going to miss an exam, **please make arrangements in advance** to take it early. If you miss an exam it should be scheduled and completed before the graded exams are returned to the class, generally by the next class day.

For example, if the test is given on Tuesday, they should be returned to the class the following class time, which will be in two days on Thursday, allowing only Wednesday for the makeup test to be completed. I do my best to get tests graded and returned as soon as possible, that means that you will not have much time to get the make-up test completed before they are returned.

There will be three exams for this course, totaling 60% of your grade. Each of the mid-term exams will cover the material taught leading up to and including only that test. Each mid-term exam is worth 20%. Only the final exam may be cumulative covering content for the full term and counts as 20% of your semester grade.

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Extra Credit-There will be an opportunity for extra credit by attending a planetarium show. You will be allowed to attend a total of two different shows, for a total of 5 points extra credit per visit. Each show must be a different planetarium show. Credit is not given for the music videos, only astronomy related programs. For credit, you must attend the full program, give your name to the planetarium staff at the end of the show, and by the next week, turn in to the professor a ½ page typed summary describing the topic of the show.

In addition, I will schedule one night lab (weather permitting) at the observatory where you may come and participate in the lab for the possibility of earning 5 points extra credit. The date will be determined and announced in class, be aware conditions such as moon phase and weather limit observing options that can make this a challenge. I do not recommend that you rely on these as extra credit points as weather has prohibited an observatory visit in years past.

Students will have the option to **earn a total of 15 points extra credit for the full semester** from the combination of a night lab and planetarium shows. The additional points will be added at the end of the semester when finals are recorded. This is extra credit, not required participation therefore, no other options will be available nor will missed dates be made up.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local/university library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

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COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. You are welcome to email at any time, I will respond to all email as soon as possible. You are also welcome to stop by my office. If I am not meeting with another student, I will be happy to assist. If you are having computer or technical issues, contact the help desk.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Please take advantage of office hours; they are scheduled for you. Otherwise please email any questions you may have.

Students are welcome to visit during office hours or at any other time I am in my office and available. For a specific time outside of the scheduled office hours please feel welcome to call my office (903 468 8650) or email to schedule an appointment.

All written communication should be through email at this address: Cheri.Davis@etamu.edu

Students will be expected to regularly check their email provided by the University through D2L as this address is provided to the instructor. In **ALL email**, students are required to include the following information in the subject line: **the course name, last then first name, and a (very) brief statement/inquiry.**

e.g. Subject ASTR 1304, Dr. Davis, assign #3 question



Send	From	Cheri.Davis@tamuc.edu
	To	
	Cc	
	Subject	e.g. Subject ASTR 1304, Dr. Davis, assign #3 question

Dear Dr. Davis,

I'm providing an example email. You should type your question in this area. Be clear, polite, and check for errors before sending email.

Sincerely,

|
Type your name
Your email address
CWID

This will allow all inquiries to be answered as soon as possible. If a response is not received within 2-weekdays then assume there was a problem with the email and please follow-up through other contact options. I have had recent IT issues, if you do not hear back, stop by the office or give me a call.

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Course Specific Policies

Violation of any class policies will be reflected on the student's final grade for the course.

1. Be polite, listen, and participate. The more you are involved in class the more you will retain and enjoy the course.

2. Be on time. It is important that you arrive to class on time; tardiness is a direct reflection of your attitude. Tardiness is a bad habit & very impolite to the entire class. This **class meets T/R 11-12:15 pm**. This is a very short amount of time and must be utilized effectively. If we are working in dark conditions (using the dome) the door will be closed to prevent light from entering the facility. If the door is closed, you will need to *patiently wait until it is opened* again. Knocking on the door will not gain entrance; again, be on time to class.

3. Be courteous. Cell phones will be turned off; failure to comply will result in the student being excused from class and receiving a zero for the daily assignments. I will give you my undivided attention and I expect the same of each student. For clarity-I do not want to see your phones, ear buds, headphones, or other devices.

No electronic devices! This includes use of a computer/tablet/iPad. No electronic devices will be permitted during class unless arrangements are made in advance and approved by me. Research has proven that students who take notes by electronic devices do not retain information as well as those who take notes by hand. I want you to be successful. Additionally, the dome does not get good WIFI reception and any light from devices will interfere with night vision thus interrupting instruction.

4. This class meets in the planetarium, which means **all food and drinks are prohibited**. I realize the time of day can make this difficult, try to plan ahead and grab a quick snack on your way to class. We are only in the dome for 75 minutes.

Course Specific Procedures

1. Students are required to make arrangements to make up all missed work including exams **at the time material is missed** (not 2-weeks later). Daily assignments are worth 40% and combined exams total 60% of the course grade.

2. Students will be responsible for their learning and participate in all class activities with a positive attitude. The more that you participate, the more you will enjoy the class and you will better retain the information.

3. Students will have all homework completed and uploaded by the start of class. Students will not attempt to work on any material for another class. It is strongly recommended that you use black/blue ink or pencils in the planetarium. Due to lighting conditions other ink colors may not be visible.

4. Students are welcome to visit during office hours, or make an appointment if the posted hours do not fit the need.

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If you are struggling, seek assistance early. Students have the ability and option to earn an A for this class. Although I have the right to drop a student for excessive absences, I rarely do so. Students have the right to earn an F if they decide to not complete the work. I generally do not offer or approve drops/incompletes for poor effort.

5. **Be here, be responsible, do the work, and most importantly learn and have fun.** 😊

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

https://inside.tamuc.edu/student_guidebook/Student_Guidebook.pdf

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.05.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesprocedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf>

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

AI Use in the course: AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

ETAMU acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

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In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Student Disability Services](https://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/) <https://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

ETAMU will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

ETAMU Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at ETAMU, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to

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the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

The syllabus and/or schedule are subject to change.

<u>Lecture</u>	<u>Topic</u>	
1	Overview of Class - Intro to Solar System	Unit 1
2	Constellations - Seasons	
3	Time	
4	Moon Phases	
5	Eclipses	
6	Ancient Greek Astronomers	Unit 2
7	Copernicus	
8	Copernicus - Kepler	
9	Galileo-Newton	
10	Basic Physics of Motion	
11	Electromagnetic Spectrum	
12	Blackbodies – Doppler Effect	
12	Spectroscopy	
13	Telescopes and Detectors	
13	Radio Telescopes – Interferometry	
14	Sun as a Star	Unit 3
15	Planet Classification, Solar System Formation	
16	Mercury	
17	Venus	
18	Earth	
19	Moon	
20	Mars	
21	Jupiter	
22	Saturn	

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- 23 Uranus - Neptune
- 23 Dwarf Planets
- 24 Moons in the Solar System
- 25 Asteroids
- 25 Comets, Meteors, Exo-Planets

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