
Introduction to Astronomy

4 Credits

Instructor- Dr. Mark Conde



Breaking news in Astronomy: In August 2020 scientists working with NASA's Dawn spacecraft announced evidence for a slushy salt-water ocean beneath the surface of the dwarf planet Ceres, which is the largest object in our solar system's asteroid belt. Surprisingly, despite its small size, Ceres does not appear to be geologically dormant. There is evidence of an active surface in the current epoch, including liquid water reaching the surface from the ocean below. These characteristics likely result from heat left over from a large impact that occurred as recently as 20 million years ago. This impact left deep fractures that are the pathways by which the water is

No regular lab sessions are scheduled during the first week of class, or during the week of Thanksgiving. Labs in the final week of semester will consist of telescope observing sessions and/or recitations in preparation for the final exam.

There will be a total of 11 labs. In a normal semester, lab write-ups would be completed during the lab, and turned in to the TA at the end of the session. However, because you will only be in lab for 1.25 hrs this semester, write-ups are to be completed at home and submitting a scanned version through Blackboard. Your worst lab score will be discarded; the remaining 10 scores for your lab participation and write-up will contribute to your final grade. Complete lab policies are outlined in more detail in a separate document that will be available from the PHYS 165 Blackboard site.

Laboratory sessions are a vital part of this course, and should not be missed. To pass this course,

. Any student failing to reach this number will automatically fail.

Homework will be assigned each week during the Thursday lecture, and will be due by 5:00 pm on Thursday of the following week.

This means your completed work must be either scanned or photographed, and uploaded to Gradescope. Here is a link to a short video explaining the homework submission process in Gradescope:

https://youtube.com/watch?v=KMPdb5g_rE

The reason the homework deadlines are on Thursday is to allow both the Tuesday and Wednesday lab groups the chance to speak to the lab instructor if you need help with the homework problems. Further, since you will already be on campus to do the lab, this is also an opportunity to use the campus network for your homework submission if you have limited or no internet access from your home.

Please realize that even if you submit a correct solution to a problem, your grader may not recognize it as correct if it's poorly presented. To maximize your chance of scoring well, your homework should

Be neatly laid out

Be largely free from crossing out and overwriting

Include some verbal description explaining the approach and reasoning that you used to solve the problem

Use grammatically correct English and be well enough written that the grader can understand what you're trying to say

There will be six 20-minute quizzes during the semester and one two-hour final exam. The preliminary dates for these are

Quizzes: Sep 10, Sep 24, Oct 8, Oct 29, Nov 12, and Dec 3

Final: 11:15 am - 2:15 pm, Tuesday, December 8

Quizzes and the final exam will again be conducted using Gradescope. I will discuss the mechanics of this with the class, to make sure it works for everyone. Quizzes will (most likely) be held at the end of the Thursday lecture, during the last 20 minutes of our regularly scheduled class time.

Only your best 5 quiz scores will contribute to your final grade. Your lowest quiz score will be discarded and will make no contribution. Quizzes and the final exam make a large contribution to your final grade. It is to make these as easy as possible, and past experience has been that most students perform well on these tests.



The course grade will consist of the following components

Homework	24% (2% each for 12 assignments)
Best 10 out of 11 labs	30% (3% each for 10 labs)
Best 5 out of 6 quizzes	25% (5% each for 5 quizzes)
One two hour final exam	21% (Makes up 100%)

It is the responsibility of all students to be aware of the various requirements of the class. This includes knowing what work is required, when the deadlines are, and how this work should be turned in. These requirements are clearly outlined in the syllabus, and multiple reminders will be given in class. Lack of awareness of a requirement will not be regarded

