

Parkland College

Astronomy Courses

Natural Sciences Courses

2015

Astronomy 101 Online The Solar System Summer 2015

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Astronomy 101 – The Solar System Online Summer 2015

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Offices: M159, L240 **Office hours:** online, or by appointment only (email to set a time)

Text: Discovering the Essential Universe, 6th edition by Neil F. Comins

Required software: access to **Stellarium**, an open source night sky program available for download here:

<http://www.stellarium.org/>

Grading:		Final Grade:
Pre & Post Assessment (30 points each)	60 points	900-1000 points = A
7 Quizzes (40 points each)	280 points	800-899 points = B
14 Labs (20 points each)	280 points	700-799 points = C
Observation: Off-Campus or Alternate	100 points	600-699 points = D
Lunar Observation Project	80 points	<599 points = F
Discussions	100 points	
Final Exam	100 points	
Total:	1000 points	

Before you begin, make sure you're prepared for an online class by reading through the information on the Parkland website here: <http://online.parkland.edu/index.cfm?page=ready>

Class Homepage: <https://cobra.parkland.edu>

Course Overview:

The online Astronomy class is organized by units and designed to allow students to cover the material at your own pace, but there are specific deadlines for each unit and assignments for each unit must be submitted by the deadline. All the due dates are on the class calendar, so you may want to print one out or save it to your desktop.

Unit Based Lessons:

Each unit includes lecture notes posted under the Content tab at the top of the class webpage in Cobra, a reading assignment from the text, one or two labs, and a quiz. Due dates for each assignment are on the class calendar. You may work ahead on most of the unit assignments, but assignments must be submitted by the due date to be eligible for full credit.

Weekly Assignments:

Weekly assignments include Lessons, Labs and Quizzes in the Unit folders, postings to the class Discussions and assignments for the Lunar Observations Project. A brief outline of assignments is included in the syllabus. All details are in the folders for the specific assignments under the Content tab in Cobra.

Census Drops, Withdrawals and Midterm:

On the third day of summer 8-week classes we are required to assess your participation. If you have not participated to that point, you will be dropped with no refund of tuition and fees. Online class participation is determined by student activity in online learning assignments and/or contact with the instructor. After this census date, do not plan on an instructor withdrawal if you decide to drop the course. You are ultimately responsible for your own withdrawal by the withdrawal date. Non-participation after the census date will result in a failing grade if you do not withdraw from the class yourself. To be kept on the class roster, you must submit the following assignments by the Census Roster due date on the class calendar.

1. **Pre Course Assessment & Syllabus Quiz**
2. **Make 1 post to Discussion 1**
3. **Submit Lab 1: Stellarium Tutorial**

To be kept on the Midterm roster, you must have submitted the following assignments by the midterm date on the class calendar:

1. **7 Labs**
2. **3 Quizzes**
3. **6 posts to the Weekly Discussions (2 each week for 3 weeks)**
4. **3 weeks of observations for the Lunar Observation Project**

Email:

*You will need to use email for this class. As a Parkland student, you have a Parkland email account. If you haven't already set up your account, go to <http://stu.parkland.edu>

*Email is probably the quickest way to contact us, but **all assignments, labs, etc. must be submitted into the specific drop box for that assignment in order to get credit for the assignment.**

*On rare occasions an email will not go through. If you send an email and do not get a reply within 24 hours, consider it 'lost' and send it again.

*If you are having trouble reaching us through email, post a message on the "Technical Difficulties" Discussion.

Study Groups:

In campus classes students have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss concepts with other students. Since this is an online class, you are encouraged to work with other students on assignments through the Open Q & A Discussion, through email, by phone or in person, but **for all assignments submitted all answers must be in your own words and each student must submit your own assignment.**

Discussions:

*Weekly discussions are an important part of the class, since you may not get a chance to meet the instructors or the other students. Discussions are your chance to get to know us and your fellow students, and are intended to act as a virtual classroom. There are specific topics for the weekly discussions, but you can post to the Open Q & A Discussion to ask questions or comment on material in the lessons or current events in Astronomy.

*At least two posts to each weekly discussion are required in order for you to get full credit.

*The weekly discussions open on Fridays and close a week from the following Sunday, so they're open for ten days. Once a weekly discussion has closed, you cannot earn points for that discussion.

*Discussion postings are 10% of your grade for the class, and are a relatively painless way to rack up a few points each week.

*Each posting is worth up to 6 points, but should be at least three full sentences. "I agree.", "I disagree.", "That's cool!" are fine as comments, but do not count as a full credit post. Write a few sentences about what you find interesting about the weekly topic, or why you agree or disagree with another post or something about the subject.

*Parkland College supports diversity. Please be sensitive in your posts to the discussion board. Inappropriate use of language (profanity, racism, sexism, etc.) is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

*The total score for Discussion Board participation is 100 points. This includes 12 points each week for posts to the weekly discussions (8 weeks x 12 points per week = 96 points). Because this is an 8 week class, you will need to make at least two extra posts during the semester to get the full 100 points of credit. You may make up to 10 additional posts (2 points each) for a maximum of 20 points extra credit. You can make as many posts as you wish (but 20 points extra credit is the maximum allowed).

Labs:

*One or two labs are assigned for each Unit with specific deadlines for each lab. You may turn labs in early, but all labs must be submitted by the deadline for that lab in order to be considered for full credit.

*Students may work together on the labs, but **you must turn in your own copy of the completed lab – no group labs are accepted.** All answers to explanation questions (more than 3 or 4 words) must be written in your own words.

*Labs are available in Word and pdf format. You should download one of the files, answer the questions, and attach the completed lab file into the dropbox for that assignment.

*Any labs submitted after the due date will get 5 points deducted. Dropboxes for the labs close two weeks after the initial due date.

*Read the labs before the due date and contact us if you have any questions about the labs.

*You are encouraged to turn in labs early when possible. You will usually find it impossible to complete the labs if you wait until the day they are due to start. Read through the labs early so you can contact your instructors if you have questions.

Quizzes:

*There are quizzes for the first seven Units of the class. You get two tries for each quiz. The first attempt at each quiz must be completed by the deadline for that unit.

*Quiz questions are a combination of multiple choice, essay, fill-in-the-blank, and matching. Quizzes are available in the Unit folder. Quizzes have a 30 minute time limit, but the quiz does *not* submit automatically when the time is up.

*Quizzes cover material from the posted Unit lessons, assigned reading from the text and the labs.

*You may use any material at your disposal while working on the quizzes, but **you must write out answers in your own words. Using text directly from the lecture notes, textbook, or any other source is plagiarism. You may work with other students, but you must write your answers to the questions in your own words.** If you have questions about what is considered plagiarism, you can get more information

at: www.parkland.edu/studentLife/policies Click the link for Academic Honesty.

*You are given two chances to take each of the seven unit quizzes. The higher of the two scores counts toward your final grade. You must take the first attempt at each quiz before the deadline or your grade for the first try will be zero. You can re-take a quiz any time up until the last day of class before the Final Exam.

Final Exam:

The Final Exam for the class is cumulative and given in the same format as the quizzes, but much longer. **The Final Exam will be available on the Quiz page and on the Content page on August 5 & 6.** You will have two hours to complete the Final Exam, and must be finished by midnight Thursday, August 6. You only have one try at the Final Exam.

Lunar Observations Project:

The Lunar Observations Project includes daily observations of the location, rise time, constellation, disk illumination, and phase of the Moon for five weeks, followed by an Analysis of your observations and a Report on the project.

Details are in the Lunar Observations Project folder on the Content page. Note that this project begins the first week of class, and has assignments due every week.

Observations:

*The Stellarium program we use with the text is a wonderful tool, but nothing can compare to the real night sky. If at all possible, please plan to attend an off-campus observation. Possible dates and times for Off-Campus Observations are on the class calendar and in the Observations folder on the Content page.

*If you attend an Off-Campus Observation, you will need to submit a 2-page report on the observation within one week of the observation in order to get full credit.

*Details for the Off-Campus Observation and report are in the Observations folder on the Content page.

*If you are unable to attend an Off-Campus Observation, an online Alternate Observation is available in the Observations folder on the Content page and is worth the same amount of credit.

Late or Missing Work:

If a situation arises that causes you to miss deadlines for assignments for any reason, you should contact your instructors as soon as possible. If the situation continues, you should contact the Dean of Students at Parkland. Late work will NOT be accepted *except* where specified above. **No assignments other than the Final Exam will be accepted after 11:59 PM Tuesday, August 4, 2015.**

Extra Credit:

A maximum of 20 points extra credit is possible for additional posts to the Weekly Discussions.

Posts to the Current Events Discussion may help add a few points at the end of class if your grade is near the border. Some extra credit may be awarded for outstanding efforts on labs or other assignments.

Software:

For this online course you are expected to be able to use email, navigate various websites, install software and download and upload files. If you have questions about this, please send an email.

You will need the following software:

1) The *Stellarium* program. Download the open source (free) *Stellarium* night sky program here:

www.stellarium.org Choose the correct version for your computer's operating system. The program is also on the computers in the open computer lab in the Parkland library.

2) Flash - used for some of the animations in the labs; A copy of the latest flash player can be downloaded at the following website: http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash There is a discussion thread for technical problems. Please post there and/or email directly if you have any difficulties with software or technical issues.

Parkland College Policies and Services:

The Syllabus Addendum has a partial listing of Policies and Services available at Parkland College and is always available on the Homepage of the class site in Cobra. Contact links for Disability Services are also listed below.

Disabilities:

If you believe you have a disability for which you may need an academic accommodation (e.g. an alternate testing environment, use of assistive technology or other classroom assistance), please contact: Cathy Robinson, Room X148, 217-353-2082, crobinson@parkland.edu

Disability Services: <http://www.parkland.edu/resources/disabilityservices>