



Department of Physics and Astronomy  
Online Syllabus

**Important Note:** Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule, but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcements or through Stony Brook email.

### Part 1: Course Information

**Course title:** Introduction to Astronomy: The Solar System

**Course catalog # and section:** AST 105-01

**Credit hours:** 3

**Semester:** Fall 2020

**General education designation(s) (SBC) (*undergraduate only*):**

**Prerequisites:** None

**Instructor name:** Rosalba Perna

**Instructor's Stony Brook email, phone number, and time zone:**

[rosalba.perna@stonybrook.edu](mailto:rosalba.perna@stonybrook.edu), 631-632 1558, EST

**Office hours:** Tue 1:00-3pm Wed: 3:30-5:30pm

**TA Information:** Alec Wills

[Alec.Wills@stonybrook.edu](mailto:Alec.Wills@stonybrook.edu)

#### Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the Solar System. We start with by exploring the modern science of Astronomy, continue with a development of the physical concepts necessary to understand the Solar System, and then focus on what we know about our Solar System. This course is presented at a level appropriate for non-science majors. In the process, students will also learn 'how science works', and the history of our current knowledge. With science being a very collaborative effort, students will also learn the process by working on some projects together.



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**Required Course Textbook and Materials:****Recommended Readings/Bibliography:**

*The Cosmic Perspective*, by Bennett, Donahue, Schneider and Voit (required). It does not need to be the latest edition.

**Course Delivery Mode and Structure:**

This is an online course, delivered via zoom, and making use of the Blackboard learning management system (LMS). Students must be mindful of all course expectations, deliverables and due dates, especially because the online portion of the course requires significant time management. All assignments and course interactions will utilize internet technologies. See “Technical Requirements” section for more information. In Blackboard, you will access online lessons, course materials, and resources.

**How We Will Communicate:**

Course-related questions should be posted in the General Questions Forum in the course Discussion board. For personal/private issues, email me directly. If you use Blackboard’s **email tool** from the course site, it will automatically include your full name, course name and section when you send me an email. **Please allow between 24-48 hours for an email reply.** Your Stony Brook University email must be used for all University-related communications. You must have an active Stony Brook University email account and access to the Internet. All instructor correspondence will be sent to your SBU email account. **Plan on checking your SBU email account regularly for course-related messages.** To log in to Stony Brook Google Mail, go to <http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud> and sign in with your NetID and password.

Regular announcements will be sent from Blackboard. These will be posted in the course site and may or may not be sent by email.

Regular communication is essential in online classes. Logging in once a day, checking the discussion board and participating with your peers ensures that you are able to remain an active member of the class and earn full points for participation.

**Technical Requirements:**

This course uses Blackboard for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades and feedback. The Blackboard course site can be accessed at <https://blackboard.stonybrook.edu>

If you are unsure of your NetID, visit <https://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/finding-your-netid-and-password> for more information. You are responsible for having a reliable computer and Internet connection throughout the term. **Caution!** You will be at a disadvantage if you attempt

to complete all coursework on a smart phone or tablet. It may not be possible to submit the files required for your assignments.

Students should be able to use email, a word processor, spreadsheet program, and presentation software to complete this course successfully.

The following list details a minimum recommended computer set-up and the software packages you will need to have access to, and be able to use:

- PC with Windows 10 or higher (we recommend a 3-year Warranty)
- Macintosh with OS 10.11 or higher (we recommend a 3-year Warranty)
- Intel Core i5 or higher
- 250 GB Hard Drive
- 8 GB RAM
- Latest version of Chrome or Firefox; Mac users may use Chrome or Firefox. (A complete list of supported browsers and operating systems can be found on the My Institution page when you log in to Blackboard.)
- High speed internet connection
- Word processing software (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.)
- Headphones/earbuds and a microphone
- Webcam (recommended)
- Printer (optional)
- Ability to download and install free software applications and plug-ins (note: you must have administrator access to install applications and plug-ins).

**Technical Assistance:**

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Blackboard you can:

- Phone: 631-632-9800 (client support, Wi-Fi, software and hardware)
- Submit a help request ticket: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>
- If you are on campus, visit the Walk-Up Tech Support Station in the Educational Communications Center (ECC) building.

**Part 2: Course Learning Objectives and Assessments**

Upon completion of the course, students will have a global understanding of our Solar System, how it was formed, and its place within a larger scale. They will also learn the history of the science which led to our current knowledge. While working in groups towards solving class assignments, students will experience the collaborative nature of science, especially today.

**How to Succeed in this Course:**

- Complete all assigned readings in the course
- Attend the lectures
- Do not miss any of the tests and class projects.
- How much time should students devote to an online course? Time on task information, see NY State Education Department: <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/distance-education-program-policies>

**Part 3: Course Schedule by Topic**

The topics discussed in this class are listed in the following, in the order in which they will be taught:

Perspective and Astronomy

Introduction / Scale of the Universe

Observations around us: Star Motions on the Sky

Light and Matter

The Solar System

Solar System Formation

Terrestrial Interiors

Moon, Mercury, Mars, Venus and Earth

Atmospheres of Terrestrial Planets

Jovian Planets and Moons

Asteroids, Comets and Meteorites

Exoplanets

(Depending on how the course progresses, we may add or subtract from these topics)

<b>Part 4: Assessment and Grading</b>
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**Viewing Grades on Blackboard:** Points and feedback for graded activities will be posted to the My Grades tab in the Tools area of Blackboard. The goal is to have grades for each assessed activity within a week.

In this course, you will be assessed based on the following:

Activity/Assignment	Percentage	When
Clicker questions	10%	Almost every class
2 in-class group projects	20%	1 mid-semester, the other at the end
1 randomly selected among the in-class study groups	5%	5-6 times during the semester
3 midterms	10% each (30% total)	Roughly after each 1/3 of semester
Final Exam	35%	December 17, 2020 8am-10:45am
Total	100%	

More details on each of the above assessments/graded activities:

[Clicker Questions](#)

A few times during each class I will ask questions to get you to think carefully about some of the concepts we have covered. These are multiple choice questions, and the answer will be provided via the Turning Technology poll system. Each student will need to download their App: <https://www.turningtechnologies.com/>

Clicker questions:

- Improve your grade
- Give YOU immediate feedback regarding what you do and do not understand

- Give ME immediate feedback on a concept not clear to the class
- Greatly improve class participation and attention

Points will be assigned as follows:

- Correct answer: 2 points
- Wrong answer: 1 point
- No answer: 0 point

### Group Projects

These will have both qualitative and quantitative questions. Students will work in groups of 3, with students in each group randomly selected. The groups will be enabled via zoom by the instructor. Each project will cover material from the previous half of the course.

### Study Groups

These will have both qualitative and quantitative questions. Students will work in groups of 3 (via the zoom chat rooms), randomly selected. The style is similar to that of the group projects, but with a smaller number of questions, and will cover only material in the previous 2-3 classes. They will be held every 2-3 classes, in the last 20-30 minutes of class. At the end of the course, one of those study group reports will be randomly selected for grading and will count for 5% of the grade. If a student missed that particular report, another one will be randomly selected for the grading.

### Midterms

Each of the three midterms will cover the previous 1/3 of the course material. They will be administered after roughly 5, 10, 14 weeks of class. The expectation is for them to be multiple choice questions, administered either via Turningpoint or Blackboard.

### Final Exam

The final exam will cover the entire course. It will be online using the proctoring platform recommended by SBU, which will be announced at a later time.

**University Policies:****Student Accessibility Support Center Statement:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, 128 ECC Building, (631) 632-6748, or at [sasc@stonybrook.edu](mailto:sasc@stonybrook.edu). They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and the Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website: <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu/programs/fire-safety/emergency-evacuation/evacuation-guide-people-physical-disabilities> and search Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.

**Academic Integrity Statement:**

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty is required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic\\_integrity/index.html](http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html)

**Important Note:** Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, will be reported to the Academic Judiciary.

**Critical Incident Management:**

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

**Course Policies:****Understand When You May Drop This Course:**

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider withdrawing from a course. Refer to the Stony Brook Academic Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration: [http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/academic\\_calendars](http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/academic_calendars).

- [Undergraduate Course Load and Course Withdrawal Policy](#)

- [Graduate Course Changes Policy](#)

**Incomplete Policy:**

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. Circumstances must be documented and significant enough to merit an incomplete. If you need to request an incomplete for this course, contact me for approval as far in advance as possible.

**Course Materials and Copyright Statement:**

Course material accessed from Blackboard, SB Connect, SB Capture or a Stony Brook Course website is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.

**Online Communication Guidelines and Learning Resources:**

Maintain professional conduct both in the classroom and online. The classroom is a professional environment where academic debate and learning take place. I will make every effort to make this environment safe for you to share your opinions, ideas, and beliefs. In return, you are expected to respect the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of other students—both in the face-to-face classroom and online communication. Students have the right and privilege to learn in the class, free from harassment and disruption. The course follows the standards set in the Student Code of Conduct, and students are subject to disciplinary action for violation of that code. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer. I reserve the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content.

**Online Etiquette:**

- Offensive language or rudeness will not be tolerated. Discuss ideas, not the person.
- Avoid cluttering your messages with excessive emphasis (stars, arrows, exclamations).
- If you are responding to a message, include the relevant part of the original message in your reply, or refer to the original post to avoid confusion;
- Be specific and clear, especially when asking questions.
- Use standard punctuation and capitalization. Using all UPPERCASE characters gives the appearance of shouting and makes the message less legible;
- Remember that not all readers have English as their native language, so make allowances for possible misunderstandings and unintended discourtesies.

**Online Classes Require Better Communication:**

It is important to remember that we will not have the non-verbal cues that occur in a face-to-face classroom. I cannot see the confused, frustrated, or unhappy expressions on your face if you encounter problems. You MUST communicate with me so that I can help. To make the



experience go smoothly, remember that you're responsible for initiating more contact, and being direct, persistent, and vocal when you don't understand something.

**My Role as the Instructor:**

As the instructor, I will serve as a "guide" in our online classroom. While I will not respond to every post, I will read what is posted, and reply when necessary. Expect instructor posts in the following situations:

- To assist each of you when it comes to making connections between discussion, lectures, and textbook material.
- To fill in important things that may have been missed.
- To re-direct discussion when it gets "out of hand."
- To point out key points or to identify valuable posts.

<b>Part 6: Student Resources</b>
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Academic and Major Advising (*undergraduate only*): Have questions about choosing the right course? Contact an advisor today. Phone and emails vary-please see website for additional contact information; website: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/for-students/academic-advising/>

Academic Success and Tutoring Center (*undergraduate only*):  
<https://www.stonybrook.edu/tutoring/>

Amazon @ Stony Brook: Order your books before classes begin. Phone: 631-632-9828; email: Bookstore\_Liaison@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/bookstore/>

Bursar: For help with billing and payment. Phone: 631-632-9316; email: bursar@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/bursar/>

Career Center: The Career Center's mission is to support the academic mission of Stony Brook University by educating students about the career decision-making process, helping them plan and attain their career goals, and assisting with their smooth transition to the workplace or further education. Phone: 631-632-6810; email: sbucareercenter@stonybrook.edu; website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/career-center/>

Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS staff are available by phone, day or night.  
<http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/caps/>

Ombuds Office: The Stony Brook University Ombuds Office provides an alternative channel for confidential, impartial, independent and informal dispute resolution services for the entire University community. We provide a safe place to voice your concerns and explore options for productive conflict management and resolution. The Ombuds Office is a source of confidential

advice and information about University policies and procedures and helps individuals and groups address university-related conflicts and concerns. <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ombuds/>

Registrar: Having a registration issue? Let them know. Phone: 631-632-6175; email: registrar\_office@stonybrook.edu; <http://www.stonybrook.edu/registrar/>

SBU Libraries: access to and help in using databases, ebooks, and other sources for your research.

- Research Guides and Tutorials: <http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/>
- Getting Help: <https://library.stonybrook.edu/research/ask-a-librarian/>

Student Accessibility Support Center: Students in need of special accommodations should contact SASC. Phone: 631-632-6748; email: sasc@stonybrook.edu; <https://www.stonybrook.edu/sasc/>

Support for Online Learning: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/online/>

Writing Center: Students are able to schedule face-to-face and online appointments. <https://www.stonybrook.edu/writingcenter/>