

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

This course is taught by a team of almost 40 people. That means there are lots of people you can turn to for help. To help us help you, please direct your questions as follows:

1. Please direct all non-private inquiries to the discussion boards on Quercus.
2. Private questions must be sent to ast201@astro.utoronto.ca. Inquiries sent to other addresses, including the individual addresses of instructors and TAs, **will not receive replies.**
3. Detailed questions requiring a lot of discussion are best dealt with during office hours.

Example public questions: Post on the discussion boards

I need a little more explanation about topic X. Can you help?
How do I write the midterm?
Will topic X be on the exam? Can you explain topic X?

Example private questions: E-mail to ast201@astro.utoronto.ca

My posted midterm grade is wrong--can you fix it?
I am registered with Accessibility Services and wanted to notify you of the accommodations I require...

Example questions for office hours:

Can you help me understand why I did poorly on the midterm?
How should I study for the final exam?
I'm confused about the following list of topics: _____

Astronomy 201--Stars and Galaxies Winter 2021

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Classes: Delivered asynchronously on Quercus

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Course Description and Prerequisites

AST 201 is one of two general-interest courses in astronomy taught at the University of Toronto. This course deals with the universe beyond our solar system, including the lives and deaths of stars, black holes, galaxies, the Big Bang, dark matter, and dark energy. The complementary course, AST 101, deals with our solar system, newly-discovered planets in other solar systems, and the search for life in the cosmos.

The course is largely non-mathematical and is designed for students with no science or engineering background, but if you're uncomfortable with any of the course material, you should read the Study Guide (posted on Quercus) to get a clear idea of what will be expected of you.

Please make sure that you are eligible to take this course for credit. Check the most current list of exclusions in the course calendar. If you are unsure whether you can take this course for credit, please consult the undergraduate administrator (admin@astro.utoronto.ca) in the main astronomy office.

Course Learning Goals

Our hope is that you will see AST 201 as an opportunity to indulge your curiosity about the universe you live in. You should **enjoy** taking this course. We will cover some essential topics, but we will make every effort to leave time for questions, which are strongly encouraged! Our overall goals in this course are:

- to discover our place in the universe
- discover **what** the universe is like and **why** it is like that
- to develop our capacity to ask and answer important questions about science
- to learn how to think critically about concepts in astronomy, physics, and space science

E-mail

Please post all science questions, general inquiries, and any other material for which privacy is not a concern to the discussion boards on Quercus. For efficiency, these types of questions **will not be answered by e-mail**. For matters where privacy is a concern, please e-mail:

ast201@astro.utoronto.ca

Please note that we will only answer emails from official utoronto.ca email addresses. Any emails from gmail, yahoo, hotmail or other non-UofT accounts will be ignored.

Lectures

Lectures are being delivered asynchronously. Two lecture videos per week will be released every Monday at 10:00 am EST on Quercus via the Lecture Module.

Office Hours

Online office hours for your instructors will be posted on Quercus in the course calendar. If you need to talk to one of the instructors one-on-one, but you are not able to attend office hours due to a scheduling conflict or reasons related to accessibility, please send us an email to the address above indicating the nature of the conflict, and with a copy of your timetable or other relevant documentation.

Course Materials

All of the following may be obtained through the university Bookstore website.

- **Required Text: The Cosmic Perspective**, 9th ed., by Bennett et al. (8th or 7th editions are also acceptable)
 - We **do not** recommend the 6th edition or earlier, nor any of the “Essentials” versions of the textbook. If you choose to use one of these editions, you will have to be careful to make sure you are reading the right material.
 - A physical copy of the textbook can be purchased in person at the UofT Bookstore. It cost \$190.
 - An eText (electronic) version of the textbook can also be obtained with your Mastering Astronomy access.
- An access code for Mastering Astronomy. It comes with new copies of the book or, if you bought a used book, you can buy the code separately through the UofT Bookstore. These are your options for online purchase:
 - [Mastering Astronomy Access Code with Cosmic Perspective eText - \\$79.99](#)
 - [Mastering Astronomy Access Code – No eText - \\$49.99](#)

Lecture Quizzes

Each lecture will be associated with a quiz to be taken online via Quercus. While we recommend the quiz be taken right after viewing the lecture, the quizzes are not due until Monday of the following week at 11:59 pm (see the course schedule for more details).

Tutorials

This course has mandatory weekly synchronous online tutorials. Consult the “Term Schedule” on Quercus to see which weeks the tutorials will run. Tutorials start in the week of January 25.

Grading Scheme

Tutorials (Participation and Performance)	9%
Lecture Quizzes (Participation and Performance)	9%
Mastering Astronomy Assignments	5%
Term Project Plan	4%
Term Project #1	9%
Term Project #2	9%
Midterm Assessment	25/30%
Final Assessment	30/25%

The final assessment will cover material over the entire course (with more focus on the second half). Your final grade will be calculated using **EITHER** a midterm assessment weight of 25% and final assessment weight of 30% **OR** a midterm assessment weight of 30% and final assessment weight of 25% (depending on which scheme results in the higher grade).

We will **automatically** disregard the following:

- Up to **TWO** missed assignments
- Up to **TWO** missed tutorials
- Up to **TWO** missed lecture quizzes

IMPORTANT - please note that as soon as you start an assignment, start a quiz, or attend a tutorial, it no longer counts as being missed. A missed assignment or quiz is one that is not started and a missed tutorial is one that you did not attend.

Quercus/Canvas

All students are responsible for **daily monitoring** of the course Quercus page at:

q.utoronto.ca

All important announcements will be posted on Quercus. It is your responsibility to check for them. Class notes and grades will also be posted on Quercus. If you can't access the Quercus page for this course, please refer to these troubleshooting instructions:

<https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/46670/pages/student-quercus-guide>

Illnesses, Absences, and Missed Work

What did you miss?

1. **The midterm assessment:** If you're not able to write the midterm (the date is in the term schedule), please contact ast201@astro.utoronto.ca as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for you. You will be required to show us documentation explaining why you missed the midterm (letter from your registrar, verification of illness form, etc.). Note that there will be two windows 12 hours apart in which to write the midterm timed multiple choice quiz. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will students be allowed to re-write tests.
2. **The final assessment:** Speak to your college registrar as soon as possible. You DO NOT need to notify us. We can't help with missed final assessments.
3. **Up to two assignments or quizzes:** Do nothing. Two missed assignments or quizzes will be disregarded automatically at the end of the semester. Please note that if you miss a third assignment or quiz you will be required to submit documentation for all three.
4. **Three or more assignments or quizzes:** Submit documentation covering your absence from all missed assignments or quizzes **including the first two**. If you miss an assignment or quiz due to illness or other valid reasons, please have documentation regardless of which one it is, and only submit it to us once you've missed three or more.
5. **Up to two tutorials:** Do nothing. Two missed tutorials will be disregarded automatically at the end of the semester. Please note that if you miss a third tutorial you will be required to submit documentation for all three.
6. **Three or more tutorials:** Submit documentation covering your absence from all missed tutorials **including the first two**. If you miss a tutorial due to illness or other valid reasons, please have documentation regardless of which one it is, and only submit it to us once you've missed three or more.

Please note that if you miss more than the allotted number of tutorials or assignments, you must provide us with documentation for ALL of the missed work. You must prove to us that you have missed additional work besides the allowed two tutorials or two assignments for valid reasons (medical, etc.).

Assignments

In this course, assignments will be completed online using the Mastering Astronomy web site, which can be accessed via Quercus by clicking "MyLab & Mastering" in the sidebar. Full

instructions on how to purchase an access code and register for the system can be found on the Quercus site for this course, under the “Mastering Astronomy Assignments” module.

You will need to register for Mastering Astronomy, as it contains a number of useful tutorials and other helpful supplements to the textbook, and we use it for our weekly assignments.

You can purchase an access code to Mastering Astronomy it in one of three ways:

1. Purchase the textbook "The Cosmic Perspective, 9th edition" from the University Bookstore. It comes with the required Mastering Astronomy access.
2. Purchase the e-text version of “The Cosmic Perspective, 9th edition” online through the [bookstore website](#).

If, instead you are using a used copy of the textbook (including the 8th or 7th edition) you can instead...

3. Purchase a copy of the standalone Mastering Astronomy access code through the [University Bookstore website](#).

See the “Purchasing Mastering Astronomy via UofT Bookstore” page on Quercus for direct links.

Make sure you are purchasing an access code to Mastering Astronomy, and not something else that looks similar. Do not purchase your Mastering Astronomy Access code through the Pearson site. It will cost you a lot more!

New assignments will be posted Monday and be due the following Monday at 11:59 p.m. **It is your responsibility to monitor the Mastering Astronomy web site and ensure that you complete all of the assignments by their posted due dates. Due dates for all assignments are noted on the Term Schedule. There are no late penalties for Mastering Astronomy Assignments, and all late assignments will be given a score of 0%.**

Although you are free to discuss the assignments with each other in general terms, any evidence of copying or other forms of academic dishonesty will be treated very seriously. If we find that you have cheated on even one assignment, the penalty might include losing all of the assignment marks for the entire semester.

Examinable Material

The examinable materials for this course will consist of the materials covered in classes and tutorials, assignments, and the assigned readings. Portions of the text not covered in class are not examinable. The final exam will be cumulative, but with more emphasis placed on the second half of the course.

Grade Checks and Disputes

You are encouraged to review your graded materials to ensure that they have been graded accurately and the marks added correctly. After the midterm, we will have a Grade Check Session during which you will have the opportunity to meet with the grading TAs and discuss your marks.

Academic Integrity

The University of Toronto is deeply committed to the free and open exchange of ideas, and to the values of independent inquiry. As such, academic integrity is also fundamental to the University's intellectual life.

From Appendix D of the **Academic Integrity Handbook**

Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of the University of Toronto. It is critically important both to maintain our community which honours the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility and to protect you, the students within this community, and the value of the degree towards which you are all working so diligently.

According to Section B of the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>) which all students are expected to read and by which they are expected to abide, it is an offence for students to:

- Use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging **explicitly** with a citation that those ideas/words are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism. In particular, to copy answers to short answer assignment problems or the observing project from any website, the textbook, another student, or any other source, even if reworded.
- Include false, misleading, or concocted citations in their work.
- Obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment
- Provide unauthorized assistance to another student. This includes showing another student your own work.
- Submit their own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required by the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether the record be in print or electronic form.

There are other offences covered under the Code, but these are the most common. You are instructed to respect these rules and the values which they protect.

Note also that "study" websites such as Chegg.com do not protect your data and if you are suspected of having posted or copied material from this or a similar site, we are able to ask for identifying information of students who posted or viewed this material. If you require help in the course, please use the course resources, such as Office Hours, the Discussion Boards or the course email.

For more information on academic integrity at The University of Toronto please review:

[Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#)

[U of T Academic Integrity](#)

- [Information Literacy and Academic Integrity](#)
- [Citation, quoting and paraphrasing](#)
- [Group Work](#)
- [First Point of Contact](#)

Turnitin

For the Term Projects, the text portions of your project will automatically be submitted through TurnItIn to help avoid plagiarism. You may opt out of using TurnItIn, but you must let us know within the first three weeks of the course, i.e., by **Friday, January 29th**. For more information on Term Project submission, please see the Term Project Instructions on Quercus.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Accessibility

The University of Toronto offers a wide variety of services to ensure that all students have equal access to education. Most of these services are coordinated through Accessibility Services. See:

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

If you have (or develop) any kind of physical, mental, or emotional condition that might interfere with your schoolwork, we strongly encourage you to register with Accessibility Services as early as possible. Examples of such conditions include learning disabilities, concussions, chronic health issues, mobility issues, low vision, anxiety, and depression. Accessibility Services will assess your needs and work on your behalf to arrange accommodations with your professors so that you can achieve at your optimum potential.

VERY IMPORTANT TO-DO ITEMS

1. Sign up for a tutorial section on ACORN if you have not already done so.
2. Make sure your e-mail address on ACORN is an @utoronto.ca address or you may miss crucial e-mails.
3. Make sure that ast201@astro.utoronto.ca and your Quercus notification emails are not going to your spam folder. You may miss important announcements and communications otherwise.
4. Sign up for Mastering Astronomy following the instructions on the 'Assignment' page of the course Quercus site.
5. Read all sections of this course outline.
6. Read the university's policies on academic honesty and integrity:
<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>
7. Read the university's Code of Student Conduct:
<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/studentc.htm>