

Astronomy 110-4C Lab Syllabus

Fall 2007

1 General Information

LAB TIME: Wednesday 4:30 - 6:30 PM, BX 102

Instructor: Roberto J. Avila

E-mail: ravila@nmsu.edu (This is the preferred way to get in touch with me)

Office: Astronomy 212

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00pm - 1:00pm

But I'm almost always in my office in the afternoons.

Phone: 505-646-3000 (office)

Mailbox: 1st floor Astronomy building, near department office

Lab webpage: <http://astronomy.nmsu.edu/ravila>

2 Things to Keep in Mind

2.1 Lab Philosophy

The labs are used as tools to aid in the understanding of the concepts explored in the lecture. Most of the concepts you will need to know for this course will be further explained and solidified during the lab sessions. Lab should also be fun. Use the labs as an interesting way to learn about astronomy.

2.2 Requirements

You are expected to fulfill the following four general requirements:

1. **ATTEND ALL LABS:** There will be NO make-up labs. The course design is already set. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a lab, you can **usually** make arrangements with me to attend a different lab section that week. The earlier I know, the better for both of us! If you miss a lab altogether, you cannot make up your lab later. Since emergencies and illnesses do occur, your two lowest lab grades will be dropped. **But please make the utmost effort to attend ALL labs, since you will be tested on ALL of the material taught during this course.** The labs offer the perfect opportunity to apply what was taught in class, which is often an essential part of learning the material.
2. **COMPLETE LAB PROJECTS:** All in-class labs are due the next time your lab meets, usually the next week. Keep in mind that each lab is worth 100 points which includes a summary at the end that is worth 35 points.
3. **PREPARE FOR LAB:** To be adequately prepared, you need to read over the lab before coming to class. **Scientific Calculators are mandatory.** Cell phone calculators are not good enough for the purposes of this lab.
4. **PARTICIPATE:** You are encouraged to ask questions at any point during the lab about anything that is related to the material being covered. Remember, you are in this class to learn about astronomy, not to just finish the labs (or so we like to think). Participating in class is not only a good way to help you learn, but it also helps others in the class.

If you stick to these guidelines, you should do fairly well in the class. If you have questions about an upcoming lab or about one that you have completed, be sure to stop by during office hours.

3 Policies

1. Please come to class ON TIME. Feel free to bring food for yourself if you have not had time to eat, but please do not make a mess. We have a very hard working janitorial staff who have to clean up the room after we are done.
2. Attendance is mandatory. You may be asked to sign an attendance sheet during class. If you leave the lab very early or part-way through, you will not receive full credit.
3. Read the labs before coming to class. Weekly quizzes based on the lab you are about to do could be given.
4. Please write legibly for the labs. If I cannot read it, I may not grade it. So if you have poor penmanship, spend an extra few minutes making your summaries/labs legible so that no one gets a 0! Summaries must be typed. If you do not have access to a home/personal computer, NMSU has the facilities to accomodate you. You can turn in your labs via email but they must be timestamped by lab meeting time. It is your responsibility to make sure the assignment is sent correctly. If I don't receive the file on time a late penalty will be assesed. I will accept Microsoft Word or RTF (for those of you using Mac) formats ONLY.
5. Proof read your Labs and Summaries. It is helpful (for me, and your grade) to write your answers in complete sentences.
6. You will work in groups of 3-4. Each group will turn in **ONE** lab, but **EVERYONE** will turn in their own summary. The one exception is Lab 1, for which everyone will turn in their own lab. There is no summary for Lab 1. Note that the Summary may or may not consist of the 'summary questions' at the end of the lab, in the manual. I will tell you what the assigned summary is during lab. **Both the labs and the summaries will be due the follwing week, at the start of the lab period.**
7. Do NOT copy the summaries from each other. If I catch two people copying off of each other I will split the grade you receive in half. Also, do not plagiarize! I can tell when you have copied your answers from the lab manual or other sources. Trust me, I know the tricks.
8. For monthly observations at the campus observatory, do NOT wait until the end of the month! The observatory is open (if it's not cloudy or raining) different nights per week, so check the schedule and conduct these observations as early as possible, as weather is unpredictable. Graduate Assistants will be there to help you. I want a good description of each object (shape, size, color, etc.). In addition, I would like for you to look up **TWO** facts about each object you observed and write them down in the object description section. Document where you get these facts as you would a reference for a term paper. (Google is a great place to start for this type of thing).

OBSERVATORY NUMBER AND WEBSITE:

646-6278

<http://ganymede.nmsu.edu/astro/observatory/>

9. Please turn off your cell phones!

Remember, I am here to help you guys, so feel free to ask me questions during the lab, during my office hours, or just drop by anytime (I am usually around, at least in the afternoons). If you would like to set up an appointment to see me outside of office hours, the best way to get in touch with me is via e-mail.