

Physics Z134: Planetary Astronomy

Syllabus and Course Information – Spring 2005

Initial Version – 2005 January 11

Course Information

Lectures:

TR 3:30-4:45pm, 157 Monroe, beginning January 11 and ending May 3

Holidays (no lecture):

Feb. 8 & 10: Mardi Gras; Mar. 22 & 24: Easter Break

Textbook:

Voyages to the Planets, by Andrew Fraknoi, David Morrison, and Sidney Wolff

Instructor:

Dr. John T. Whelan; 464 Monroe; 865-3641;
jtwhelelan@loyno.edu (*More reliable than voicemail*)

Office Hours: TW 11:00am-12:00pm, R 11:00-11:30am & 2:30-3:00pm, or by appointment

Prerequisites:

Any MATH course

Scope of Course:

This course will cover a range of topics including historical/observational astronomy, planetary science, and scientific exploration of the solar system.

Exams:

Two preliminary exams, to be given in class.

Final exam to be held Thursday, May 12, 11:30am-1:30pm.

Homework:

Problem sets will be assigned and collected, and solution sets distributed. Homework will only contribute 5% to your final grade, with the grades based on whether or not you've done the problems. You are expected to check your own returned problem sets for correctness against the solution sets and come to me with any questions. The problem sets are primarily intended as a learning and self-evaluation tool.

Additionally, you are expected to do the on-line quizzes for each chapter; we will have in-class quizzes with the same or very similar questions, which will contribute another 5% to your grade.

Course Website: <http://www.loyno.edu/~jtwhelan/Z134/>

Course Listserv: physz134001@loyno.edu

Please subscribe ASAP by sending email to majordomo@loyno.edu with **subscribe physz134001** in the *body* of the message.

All students are expected to be subscribed to the course listserv from address which they read frequently, as organizational announcements may be sent there. Students are also encouraged to use the listserv to discuss concepts and issues related to the course. Anyone subscribed to the listserv before the second lecture will receive an extra credit bonus of 0.01; anyone not subscribed by the third lecture will receive a penalty of 0.01 per lecture until they are subscribed.

I will also use the listserv to respond to student questions, so that the entire class can benefit from the exchange. If you email me a question which you don't want shared with the class, you must specify that explicitly in the email. (Similarly, if you want to ask a question anonymously, specify that you'd like your name left out of any reply posted to the listserv.)

Course Policies

Attendance:

Attendance to every class is expected, since class time may involve interactive exercises as well as lectures. The dates of in-class quizzes will not generally be announced ahead of time. If you need to be absent for a valid reason, please contact me ahead of time. If you miss class due to illness, please explain your situation when you get back. Any student with more than two absences after the first week will receive a penalty to his or her overall course grade. Beyond the first two absences, excused absences will carry a penalty of 0.01 per occurrence, while the penalty for unexcused absences will grow (0.01 for the first, an additional 0.02 for the second, an additional 0.03 for the third, etc).

If you have an excused absence on the day of an in-class quiz (**NOT** an exam), you should arrange to make up the quiz as soon as possible. Quizzes missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up.

Exam Attendance:

The standard for missing exams is considerably higher than for excused absence from lecture. Unless you have a documentable emergency or an illness which requires medical attention, you should not expect to be able to make up a missed exam. If you do have a serious illness or emergency, please contact me as soon as possible.

Extra Credit:

From time to time, extra credit will be given for participation in extracurricular activities

open to the entire class. Unless otherwise stated, this will be a bonus of 0.01 per event to the final score.

Class Disruptions:

Please try to avoid disrupting the class by arriving late and/or leaving early. Please switch off all cell phones and beepers if possible. In case of an urgent need to be reachable during 75 minutes of lecture (on-call EMT, critically ill loved one, etc.), please use silent/vibrate mode.

Collaboration:

There is no rule against collective brainstorming on the homework assignments, but note that their primary purpose of giving you practice with the material is best served if you actually do your own work.

Working together on exams or quizzes, or copying off of someone else's test, is of course cheating and will not be tolerated.

Grades:

Grades will be based on homework (5%), in-class quizzes (5%), the prelim exams (25% each) and the final exam (40%). Your score on each component of the course (each prelim, the final, all the homeworks together, and all the quizzes together) will be converted to a numerical "grade point" score, and the weighted average of those four scores (minus any penalty for absences or failing to subscribe to the listserv, plus any extra credit) will be your final grade, converted to a letter grade according to the scale below. Midterm grades will be based on homework and quizzes to date and the first prelim.

Grading Scale:

3.75–4.5	A	1.75–2.25	C
3.25–3.75	B+	1.25–1.75	D+
2.75–3.25	B	0.75–1.25	D
2.25–2.75	C+	(–0.5)–0.75	F

Special Arrangements for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations in this class should contact Disability Services at 865-2990 as soon as possible so that warranted accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Disability Services are located in the Academic Enrichment Center, Monroe Hall 405.