

AST202 LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE

SPRING 2014 Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Yancy Shirley 626-3666
yshirley@email.arizona.edu (please include "AST202" in title)
Office Hours: MWF 11-12 (after class) or by appointment
(N310 Steward Observatory)

Teaching Assistant: Charlie Kilpatrick 626-6535
ckilpatrick@email.arizona.edu
Office Hours: TuTh 10-11
(201F Steward Observatory)

Life in the Universe is a scientific introduction to the burgeoning field of astrobiology. The main goal for students in this course is to have fun learning about the possibilities for life in the Universe and, in the process, gain an appreciation for the methods used in science. The prerequisites for this course are two courses from Tier One, Natural Sciences (Catalog numbers 170A, 170B, 170C).

The reference textbook for the course is Life in the Universe by Bennet & Shostak (3rd edition).

The course webpage is

<http://eldora.as.arizona.edu/~yshirley/Arizona/AST202/>

Please check the webpage for weekly reading assignments

Your grade in this course will depend on your performance on the in-class activities/homeworks (45% of total), exams (40% of total), and the semester-long creative project (15% of total). Exams are closed-note and no calculators are allowed. The exams will consist of short written problems. There is **NO FINAL EXAM** for this course. Your lowest activity/homework and your lowest exam will be discarded in the calculation of the final grade. There will be no extra credit. **No late homework or projects will be accepted. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. No makeup exams with no exceptions. If you miss an exam, it will count as your lowest (dropped) exam.** The final grades may be curved. The maximum scale is set at: A(>90%), B(>75%), C(>60%), D(>50%).

The creative class project is a project of your choosing that focuses on an aspect of astrobiology. Ingenuity and risk-taking will be rewarded! Possible ideas might include a short story, photographic project, a short movie, a scientific display, etc. Be creative! Projects will be graded on: timely completion (50%), scientific accuracy (20%), creativity (20%), and relevance to astrobiology (10%). Short (1 paragraph) summaries of your plans for the creative project are due at the beginning of class March 12th. You are encouraged to consult with the instructor and the TA on your project ideas.

POLICIES:

- Do your own work. Modern science is a collaborative, and people learn from talking to each other. Feel free to talk to the instructor, TA, or other students about homework assignments. But the work you turn in must be your own -- **don't just copy assignments**. Copying is cheating and will be handled according to the university policies. The instructor subscribes to the University's Code of Academic Integrity (<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academicintegrity>). **The Code prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty by others. The repercussions for those found guilty of violating the Code will include loss of credit for the work and may include failure of the course or more extreme measures.**
- Attendance, participation, and conduct. Attendance and participation in class are important -- especially as the exam material will be drawn from the lectures, and only supplemented from the textbook. We will have in-class activities throughout the semester for which you must be present for to obtain credit. ***You are strongly encouraged to participate in class by asking questions.*** Please be courteous to your fellow classmates: please turn off cell phones; don't surf the Internet in class, etc.
- Grading. You have one week from the time an assignment or exam is returned to challenge any perceived errors. The exception is for the creative project - final grades will be submitted on May 7th.
- Students with Disabilities: If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with Disability Resources (621-3268 or email drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Feb 10	EXAM #1
Mar 03	EXAM #2
Mar 12	Creative project proposals due (short written description)
Apr 07	EXAM #3
May 02	EXAM #4
May 05	CREATIVE PROJECTS DUE @ beginning of class