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Astronomy 101-051W The Solar System Fall 2015

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**Astronomy 101-051W - The Solar System
Online Fall 2015**

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Office: M159 – Staerkel Planetarium **Office Phone:** 217-351-2566

Office hours: Tuesdays 10 AM - noon, or by appointment

Text: Discovering the Essential Universe, 6th edition by Neil F. Comins

Access to **Stellarium**, an open source night sky program available for download here: <http://www.stellarium.org/>

Grading:		Final Grade:
Pre-Course & Post-Course Assessments (30 points each)	60 points	900-1000 points = A
7 Quizzes (40 points each)	280 points	800-899 points = B
14 Labs (20 points each)	280 points	700-799 points = C
Observation: Off-Campus or Alternate	100 points	600-699 points = D
Lunar Observation Project	80 points	<599 points = F
Discussions	100 points	
Final Exam	100 points	
Total:	1000 points	

Before you begin, make sure you're prepared for an online class by reading through the information on the Parkland website here: <http://online.parkland.edu/index.cfm?page=ready>

Class Homepage: <https://cobra.parkland.edu>

Course Overview:

The online Astronomy class is organized by units and designed to allow students to cover the material at your own pace, but there are specific deadlines for each unit and the assignments for each unit must be submitted by the deadline. All the due dates are on the class calendar so you should either print a copy or save the file to your desktop.

Unit Based Lessons:

Each Unit includes:

- Lessons in the Unit folders
- Reading assignments from the text
- One or two labs
- A quiz

Due dates for each assignment are on the class calendar and on the dropbox for each assignment. You may work ahead on most of the unit assignments, but assignments must be submitted by the due date to be eligible for full credit.

Weekly Assignments:

- Lessons, Labs and Quizzes in the Unit folders
- Postings to the Weekly Discussions
- Assignments for the Lunar Observations Project

A brief outline of assignments is included in the syllabus. All the details for assignments are in the Unit folders for the specific assignments under the Content tab in Cobra.

Census Date Drops, Withdrawals and Midterm:

At the end of the first week of a full semester class I am required to assess your participation. If you have not participated to that point, you will be dropped with no refund of tuition and fees. Online class participation is determined by student activity in online learning assignments and/or contact with the instructor. After this census date, you should not plan on an instructor withdrawal if you decide to withdraw from the course. You are ultimately responsible for your own withdrawal by the withdrawal date. Non-participation after the Census date will result in a failing grade if you do not withdraw from the class yourself. To be kept on the class roster, you must submit the following assignments by the Census Date Drops due date on the Cobra class calendar.

1. **Syllabus Quiz & Pre Course Assessment**
2. **2 postings to Discussions 1**

To be kept on the Midterm roster, you must have submitted the following assignments by the midterm date on the class calendar:

1. **7 Labs**
2. **3 Quizzes**
3. **14 postings to the Weekly Discussions (2 each week for 7 weeks)**
4. **5 weeks of observations for the Lunar Observation Project**

Email:

* You will need to use email for this class. As a Parkland student, you have a Parkland email account. If you haven't already set up your account, go to <http://stu.parkland.edu>

* Email is probably the quickest way to contact me, but all assignments, labs, etc. must be submitted into the specific drop box for each assignment in order to get credit for the assignment.

* On rare occasions an email will not go through. If you send an email to me and do not get a reply within 48 hours, consider it 'lost' and send it again.

* If you are having trouble reaching me through email, post a message to me in the "Technical Difficulties" Discussion Board.

Study Groups:

In campus classes students have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss concepts with other students. Since this is an online class, you are encouraged to work with other students on assignments through the Open Question & Answer Discussion forum, through email, by phone or in person.

For all assignments submitted all answers must be in your own words and each student must submit your own assignment.

Discussions:

*Weekly discussions are an important part of the class, since you may not get a chance to meet the instructor or other students in the class. Discussions are your chance to get to know me and your fellow students, and are intended to act as a virtual classroom. There are specific topics for the weekly discussions, but you can post to the Open Question & Answer Discussion forum to ask questions or comment on material in the Lessons or current events in Astronomy.

*At least two posts to each weekly discussion are required in order for you to get full credit.

*Discussions are done weekly, rather than by Unit. Weekly discussions open on Fridays and close a week from the following Sunday, so they're open for ten days.

*Discussion postings are 10% of your grade for the class, and are a relatively painless way to rack up a few points each week.

*Each posting is worth up to 3 points, but should be at least three full sentences. "I agree.", "I disagree.", "That's cool!" are fine as comments, but don't count as a full credit posting. Write a few sentences about what you find interesting about the weekly topic, or why you agree or disagree with another post.

*Parkland College supports diversity. Please be sensitive in your posts to the discussion board. Inappropriate use of language (profanity, racism, sexism, etc.) is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

*The total score for Discussion Board participation is 100 points. This includes 6 points each week for posts to the weekly discussions (16 weeks x 6 points per week = 96 points). There is a Final Discussion the last week of class worth 4 points for one post to complete the 100 point total. You may make additional posts (1-2 points each) for a maximum of 20 points extra credit. You can make as many posts as you wish but 20 points of extra credit is the maximum allowed for discussions.

Labs:

* One or two labs are assigned for each Unit with specific deadlines for each lab. You may turn labs in early, but all labs must be submitted by the Due Date for that lab in order to be considered for full credit.

*** Students must have at least 60% of the lab points in order to pass the course.**

* Students may work together on the labs, but you must turn in your own copy of the completed lab – no group labs are accepted. All answers to explanation questions (over 3 or 4 words) must be written in your own words.

* Labs are available in Word and pdf format. You should download one of the files, answer the questions, and then upload the completed lab file into the dropbox for that assignment.

* Any labs submitted after the due date will get 1 point deducted for each day late. Dropboxes for the labs close two weeks after the initial due date.

* I encourage you to start the labs early when possible. You will usually find it difficult to complete the labs if you wait until the day they are due to start. Read through the labs early so you can let me know if you have questions.

Quizzes:

* There are quizzes for the first seven Units of the class. You are given two chances to take each of the seven unit quizzes. The higher of the two scores counts toward your final grade. You must take the first attempt at each quiz before the Due Date, or your grade for the first try will be zero. You can re-take a quiz any time up until the last day of class before the Final Exam.

* Quiz questions are a combination of multiple choice, essay, fill-in-the-blank, true/false and matching. Quizzes are available in the Unit folder or on the Quizzes page. Quizzes have a 40 minute time limit, but there is a five minute grace period.

* Quizzes cover material from the posted Unit lessons, assigned reading from the text and the labs.

* You may use any material at your disposal while working on the quizzes, but you must write out answers in your own words. Using text directly from the lecture notes, textbook, or any other source is plagiarism. You may work with other students, but you must write your answers to the questions in your own words. If you have questions about what is considered plagiarism, you can get more information at: www.parkland.edu/studentLife/policies Click the link for Academic Honesty.

Final Exam:

The Final Exam for the class is cumulative and given in the same format as the quizzes, but much longer. It will be available on the Quizzes page Monday through Thursday of Finals week. Once you begin you will have two hours to complete the Final Exam, and must be finished by midnight Thursday of Finals week. You are not allowed to begin the Final Exam and save it to finish later. There is no retake for the Final Exam.

Lunar Observations Project:

The Lunar Observations Project includes daily observations of the location, rise time, constellation, disk illumination, and phase of the Moon for five weeks followed by an Analysis of your observations and a Report on the project. Details are in the Lunar Observations Project folder on the Content page. Due dates are on the class calendar.

Observations:

*The Stellarium program we use with the text is a wonderful tool, but nothing can compare to the real night sky. If at all possible, please plan to attend an off-campus observation. Possible dates and times for Off-Campus Observations will be posted in the Observations folder on the Content page.

*If you attend an Off-Campus Observation, you will need to submit a 2-page report on the observation within one week of the observation in order to get full credit.

*Details for the Off-Campus Observation and report are in the Observations folder on the Content page.

*If you are unable to attend an Off-Campus Observation, an online Alternate Observation is available in the Observations folder on the Content page and is worth the same amount of credit.

Late or Missing Work:

If you miss deadlines for assignments for any reason, you should contact me as soon as possible. If the situation continues, you will need to contact the Dean of Students at Parkland. Late work will be not accepted except where specified above. No assignments other than the Final Exam will be accepted after 11:59 PM the Sunday before Finals week begins.

Extra Credit:

A maximum of 20 points extra credit is possible for additional postings to the Discussions.

Some extra credit may be awarded for outstanding efforts on labs or other assignments.

If you attend a planetarium show or another astronomy related lecture or program, you may submit a write-up of the event for five to ten points of extra credit. Check with me for details.

Software:

For this online course you are expected to be able to use email, surf various websites, install software and download and upload files. If you have questions about this, please send me an email.

You will need the following software:

1) The Stellarium program and Internet access. Download the open source (free) Stellarium night sky program here:

www.stellarium.org The Stellarium program is also on most of the computers in the open computer lab at Parkland.

2) Flash - used for some of the animations in the labs; A copy of the latest flash player can be downloaded at the following website: http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash

Technical difficulties:

There is a discussion thread for technical problems. Please post there and/or email me directly if you have any difficulties with software issues.

Parkland College Policies and Services:

The Syllabus Addendum has a partial listing of Policies and Services available at Parkland College and is always available on the home page of the class site in Cobra. Contact links for Disability Services are listed below.

Disabilities:

If you believe you have a disability for which you may need an academic accommodation (e.g. an alternate testing environment, use of assistive technology or other classroom assistance), please contact: Cathy Robinson, Room X148, 217-353-2082, crobinson@parkland.edu

Disability Services: <http://www.parkland.edu/resources/disabilityservices>