**AST 100: Astronomy Today**

**Spring 2023**

**M 4:25-5:20 PM, SBS N102**

**PREREQUISITES: None. Students who have taken any college-level astronomy classes are discouraged from taking AST 100.**

**INSTRUCTOR: James Lattimer, james.lattimer@stonybrook.edu, Office Hours MW 1:00 - 2:00; F 2:30 - 3:30; or as requested by Zoom.**

**GRADING: In this course, students give a single 20-minute presentation concerning a recent discovery or activity in astronomy which counts for 50% of your grade. A letter grade will be assigned. I have pre-assigned presentation dates for each enrolled student. To prevent too many talks on the same or similar topics, you have to reserve your topic in advance by emailing your request to me at least one week ahead of time. The presentation schedule is kept on this webpage, see below. We will meet on Jan. 23 and Jan. 30 for orientation and questions. The first presentations are scheduled for February 13. The persons presenting on February 13 will be graded more leniently since they will not have seen other presentations by that time. Students will submit short summaries and critiques of other students' presentations through Blackboard assignments. Each summary is due by Sunday midnight following a talk. Late summaries are not accepted without a valid excuse. These summaries count for 30% of your grade. Each summary will be assigned as a letter grade. Students will sign-in at the beginning of each class. Attendance forms 20% of the grade. The attendance percentage will be converted to a letter grade.**

** The threshold scores for letter grades are as follows: A 95-100; A- 90-94; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 65-69; D 60-64; F < 60. These letter grades are threshold scores only. Actual final scores needed to earn a certain letter grade may be lowered if warranted based on class averages. In other words if your score is 95% you would earn not less than an A, but I may set the threshold for an A to a lower score when all talks, summaries and attendances have been recorded.**

**I will use the summaries to provide feedback to speakers to help their future presentations, so be considerate and attentive.**

**You should prepare your presentation as a powerpoint or adobe acrobat pdf file which must be emailed to me at least 1 day before your talk; points will otherwise be deducted. I can then verify that the talk works on my laptop which is the backup for presentation. If you have videos in your talk, they may not work on my laptop, so you could bring your laptop that can connect with an HDMI cable to the projection system. Or, if you place your talk online, you could log in on the classroom computer and access it for presentation. If your talk is emailed to me even earlier, I will be able to review your presentation and offer suggestions or corrections in time for you to make modifications. Presentation slides will be posted on the course website after the presentation is delivered. You should practice your talk and make sure it works on your device or online (including any videos). It is your responsibility to make sure your talk projects properly, and it affects your grade if it does not. Be prepared to answer questions during and following your talk (this will not take away from your talk time).**

**Your grade is based on how well you keep to your time limit, the accuracy and quality of your presentation, and your contact with the audience during your talk. If you are asked to respond to questions during your talk, you will receive additional time to compensate; plan your talk to last between 16 and 20 minutes. I will end your talk after 25 minutes elapse (not including questions) so we don't run over the scheduled time. Be prepared for a few questions during and following your talk.**

**Grades for presentations and summaries will be posted on Blackboard.**

**I will be available by email and during posted office hours with prearranged Zoom meetings by request for other times.**

**PRESENTATION SCHEDULE: I arbitrarily preassigned selected dates for each presentation, which are shown below. This is now preliminary and will be revised as students add and drop the course; it will be finalized by the end of January. If necessary, the time scheduled for the final exam for our class period, Tuesday May 16 at 2:15PM, will be used for overflow (we will finish as soon as possible and not use the entire period, but this will depend on the number of talks).**

**You may switch presentation dates with another student if the two of you agree and both provide me the new information at least 2 weeks in advance. (I will need emails from both of you to confirm the change.) Topics are reserved by email, and they will be posted with the speakers' names on the schedule as soon as possible when received. Speakers' slides will also be posted following the presentation. If you accidentally select a topic already chosen, I will alert you to change your topic. This schedule is subject to change, especially during the first few weeks, because of adds/drops, so check it regularly. I will directly inform students of any changes to their presentation dates occuring after January.**

** 23 Jan: Overview, review of the presentation schedule, and questions**

** 30 Jan: Overview and questions**

** 13 Feb: Vye Harrison Lippman ; Edward Daniel Majeika**

** 20 Feb: Minseo Jang ; Michelle Makowski**

** 27 Feb: Yibo Hu ; Erica Moon**

** 6 Mar: Mark David Garas; Aisha Nazir**

** 20 Mar: Patrick Joseph Dickson ; Muriel Achiaa Oppong**

** 27 Mar: Pete Nicholas D'Amore ; Alan Patron**

** 3 Apr: Danielle Collier ; Daniela Pereira**

** 10 Apr: John Cho ; Alex Sam**

** 17 Apr: Seungjun Chae ; Laura Sedra**

** 24 Apr: Farzana Ahmed ; Jimmy Xu**

** 1 May: ;**

** 16 May, 2:15PM: Reserved for cancellations and overflow**