

Astronomy 320: Philosophy and History of Astronomical Thought

Fall 2019

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 14:00-15:15
Steward Observatory, Room 204¹

Course Instructor: Prof. Philip A. Pinto
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Office Hours: Tuesdays after class, and by appointment

Description: This course follows the development of astronomy from its earliest beginnings to the present and connects the history of astronomical thought to broader currents of intellectual history. While we will touch on early astronomy in China and the Americas, we will spend the large majority of our time studying the evolution of astronomy in Western Civilization up until the science becomes international in the 20th century.

Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course. A familiarity with modern physics and astronomy will of course be useful background and context, but should not be necessary.

Texts: Reading will be assigned periodically, which you should complete before coming to class. The texts for this course have not yet been finalized, but will be announced next week. This will be plenty of time for ordering texts online.

Assignments: Two essays will be assigned in this course, one due near the middle of the semester and one due on the last day of class. I will provide a list of suggested topics, though you may consult with me in advance about a topic of your choice. In both cases, you will submit a draft which I will review with you and give suggestions for improvement. You will then have the opportunity to revise your text before submitting the final version; only this final version will be graded. The papers should be between five and ten single-spaced pages in length, followed by a bibliography (and references where appropriate).

Grading: Your grade for this class will be determined by the average of the grades on the two essays, plus a contribution from your participation in class.

There will be no exams, and specifically no final exam, in this course.

Late and missing assignments: Late essays will not be graded, except when you have made *prior* arrangement with me. If you have a legitimate reason for tardiness, such as a family emergency or travel to attend a conference or intercollegiate competition, you will find me to be very accommodating.

Office Hours: I will be available for office hours after class on Tuesdays. I am also happy to see you at any other time. Unfortunately, the building will be undergoing construction for the first month (or so!) of the semester; during that time, I will not have use of my office! This may make it difficult for you to find me as I may be working in the library or at home. Please do not hesitate to email me to set up a meeting.

Attendance: You are not *required* to come to class – but neither am I required to explain to you what you missed by not coming to class. You are responsible for knowing everything that goes on in class, including all course material, handouts, what has been assigned and any modifications

¹Nota Bene: The first two classes will be held in Steward Observatory room N305 due to construction.

thereto, as well as any hints, help, due dates, extensions, *etc.*. In particular, due dates may be changed, and these changes may only be announced in class.

If you know that you will be absent from class on a given day (for a legitimate reason, of course), please let me know in advance. I may be able to give you the appropriate class notes. If you have such an absence, be sure to contact me promptly upon return to find out what you may have missed.

All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.

Incompletes: A grade of "Incomplete" will only be given in this course if a student has satisfactorily completed the majority of the work in the class and has a valid reason, *e.g.* a medical problem, for not completing the remainder of the course. Students must make arrangements with me *in advance* in order to receive an incomplete.

Dropping the Class: Please note that the last day to drop this class from your schedule without a grade is September 8, 2019.

Academic Integrity: Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed (see above). Students are responsible for understanding and following the UA Code of Academic Integrity (<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity>). Students engaging in academic dishonesty diminish their education and bring discredit to the academic community and the campus. Students should avoid situations likely to compromise academic integrity.

Special Accommodation: If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we may discuss ways to ensure your full participation. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate these.

Decorum: Students are expected to maintain a high level of decorum in the classroom. In particular, the use of cell phones, computers, or other devices to communicate (by voice or by text) during class is bad manners and should be eschewed. I will follow all University policies on disruptive behavior in an instructional setting: see <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/disruptive-behavior-instructional-setting>

Disclaimer: Information contained in this course syllabus is subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor. NB: notice of such changes may only be given in class.