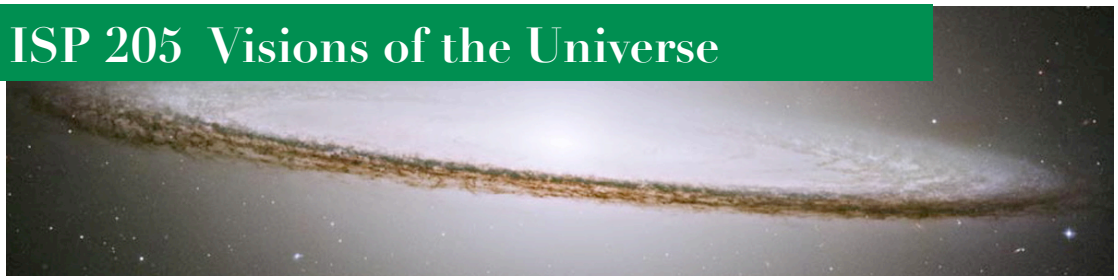
Spring 2013

ISP 205 Visions of the Universe



Introduction

Welcome to **Integrative Studies in the Physical Sciences (ISP) 205 Visions of the Universe**. In this course, you will learn about the science of astronomy and our current understanding of planets, stars, and galaxies, and the overall structure and evolution of the universe. You will also learn what science is and just as importantly, what science is not.

The above image is of the Sombrero Galaxy, 50 million light-years from Earth, in the direction of the constellation Virgo (Image credit: NASA/Hubble Heritage Team).

Instructor

Assoc. Prof. Edward Brown
3258 BPS
office phone: 884.5620
browned@msu.edu

Teaching Aide

Erin May
Collaborative Learning Laboratory, BPS 1248
(Look for ISP 205 sign)
mayerin1@msu.edu

Office Hours and Email

Prof. Brown is available for drop-in questions Mondays and Fridays immediately following lecture, or by appointment. Erin is available Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00-1:30. You may contact Prof. Brown or Erin via ANGEL's email feature (preferred). If you do use regular email, please put the phrase "[ISP205]" in the subject line to avoid having the message flagged as spam.

Lectures

MWF 10:20 11:10 in 1410 BPS. Notes will be posted on ANGEL.

Online Information

All course information is posted on ANGEL.

Course Material

- **Textbook and Online Assignments:** Bennett, Donahue, Schneider & Voit, *The Essential Cosmic Perspective*, 6th ed. (2011) Pearson Education, San Francisco. Access to masteringastronomy.com is bundled with the purchase of a new book; if you buy a used book, you can purchase an access code from the web site. Alternatively, you may purchase access to Mastering Astronomy with the eText option, in which case there is no need to purchase a used textbook. **To access this class on Mastering Astronomy you will need to enter the course ID: BROWN65775**

- **Clickers** We are using i>clicker™ (both new and used are available at bookstores).

Coursework and Grading

Your performance in this course is assessed via the following four activities.

1. Mastering Astronomy **Reading and Homework Assignments**

1.1. Reading Assignments are short exercises to guide your reading and to prepare you to be an **active participant** in the lecture. Each Reading Assignment is due before the lecture covering that topic and should be easy to do if you've kept up with the reading. Late reading assignments are not accepted.

1.2. Homework Assignments consist of longer, more challenging exercises that review material we've already covered. Late homework will have its score reduced by 10% for each day late, with a maximum penalty of 50%.

All homework and reading assignments will remain posted until the final.

2. **In-class clicker questions** All clicker questions receive at least two points participation credit. That is, you receive two points for responding, regardless of your answer. For selected questions, giving a correct answer will earn a bonus point. The lowest 6 class scores are dropped, no questions asked, so don't worry if you miss a lecture or two. There are no makeups for missed classes.

3. **Midterms** There are three midterm exams. The lowest score is not counted toward the final grade. The exam schedule is as follows.

Midterm 1	Friday, Feb 8	Foundations of astronomy (chapters 1 5)
Midterm 2	Friday, Mar. 1	Planets and the solar system (chapters 6 9)
Midterm 3	Wednesday, Apr. 3	Stars (chapters 10 13)

If you have any conflicts with these proposed exam dates, such as a religious holiday or extracurricular activity, you must notify Prof. Brown in writing by the end of class on Jan. 23 to arrange for an alternate exam. There are no makeups for unscheduled missed exams: if you should miss an exam, it will count for the lowest score and will be the one dropped.

4. **Final exam: Thurs., May 2, 2013 from 10:00 12:00**
One-half of the final will be on material covered up through midterm 3; the other half will be on new material introduced after midterm 3 (chapters 14 18).

Grade scale and weights

≥90%	4.0	58% 66%	2.0
82% 90%	3.5	50% 58%	1.5
74% 82%	3.0	42% 50%	1.0
66% 74%	2.5		

Mastering Astronomy exercises	18%
In-class Activities	7%
Midterms (2 ×20% each)	40%
Final	35%

Grades are not curved. I do reserve, however, the right to move the grade boundaries downward.

Grade Booster

You can elect to do extra work and receive a grade "boost." The amount of boost is based on a sliding scale and is worth 1% if your grade is at the 2.5/3.0 boundary. More details will be given in the second week of class.