



# PENSACOLA STATE COLLEGE

## SYLLABUS

### Descriptive Astronomy

AST1002-D9157

### Summer 2026, Session A

**Instructor:** Mr. Andrew Vanden Heuvel

**Office:** Virtual by appointment

**Phone:** (616) 724-7188

**Email:** avandenheuvel@pensacolastate.edu

**Office Hours:** TBD

**Department Head:** Dr. Vasanth Ramachandran

**Department Head Office:** 1760-A

**Department Head Phone:** (850) 484-1106

**Department Head Email:** vramachandran@pensacolastate.edu

**Last Date of Drop/Add:** May 14, 2026

**Last Date for Student to Withdraw:** July 13, 2026

**Final Exam Date:** TBA

**Class Meeting Time:** Online (Asynchronous)

**Class Location:** Canvas

**Prerequisites:** Placement at the college level or completion of the appropriate exit-level developmental course(s) with a grade of C or better.

**Course Description:** This course provides a comprehensive look at modern astronomy, emphasizing the use of the scientific method and the application of physical laws to understand the universe including Earth and its environment. Throughout this course, students will develop the ability to discern scientific knowledge from non-scientific information by using critical thinking.

**Credit Hours:** 3 credit hours

**Semesters Offered:** Fall, Summer, Spring

**Course Designations:** College Transfer, Meets AA General Education Core, Natural Sciences (Physical Sciences) requirement.

**General Education Core Course Standard: Per Florida Statute 1007.25,** "Natural science courses must afford students the ability to critically examine and evaluate the principles of the scientific method, model construction, and use the scientific method to explain natural experiences and phenomena."

#### Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Expand the student's knowledge of the universe around them.
2. Show that astronomers are continuing to make new discoveries and learn more about the universe every day.
3. Utilize, and provide a foundation, for exploring other physical sciences.
4. Experience finding and identifying objects in the sky and learn to observe these objects with, or without, enhancements using technology like binoculars or a telescope.
5. Inspire students to ponder some of the great unanswered questions in astronomy and hold interest in the pursuit of the solutions in the future.
6. Provide context for understanding the students' own unique place in the cosmos.

## General Education Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1. Critical Thinking:** The student analyzes, evaluates, and, if necessary, challenges the validity of ideas, principles, or data in order to develop informed opinions, probable predictions, or defensible conclusions.
- 2. Scientific and Mathematical Literacy:** The student properly identifies and applies scientific or mathematical principles and methods.
- 3. Information Literacy:** The student effectively locates, evaluates, and applies information from a variety of sources.

**Methods of Evaluation:** At minimum, the instructor will cover content which aligns with statewide and institutional learning outcomes for the course. The instructor will measure student performance using the following:

### Grade calculation:

#### Scoring

|                  |                   |     |
|------------------|-------------------|-----|
| Discussions (14) | 140 points        | 24% |
| Quizzes (14)     | 210 points        | 37% |
| Tests (3)        | 225 points        | 39% |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>575 points</b> |     |

#### Scale

|    |           |
|----|-----------|
| A  | 100 - 90% |
| B+ | 89 - 88%  |
| B  | 87 - 80%  |
| C+ | 79 - 78%  |
| C  | 77 - 70%  |
| D+ | 69 - 68%  |
| D  | 67 - 60%  |
| F  | Below 60% |

## COURSE POLICIES:

### *Communication*

Correspondence between the instructor and student should generally be done via the Canvas Inbox. I will respond to all messages in less than 24 hours (Monday – Friday).

### *Late Work*

Late work will be accepted with a 10% penalty for each week it is late. There are no extra credit opportunities in this course.

### *Grading and Feedback*

Assignments will generally be graded within one week of the due date. Students are always welcome to ask the instructor for more detailed feedback on any graded assignment.

**Student Expectations:** Students enrolled in this course can expect the following:

1. Clearly identified course objectives;
2. Productive class meetings;
3. A positive learning environment;
4. Opportunities for appropriate student participation;
5. Effective instruction;
6. Positive and appropriate interactions;
7. Assistance with meeting course objectives during and beyond class hours;
8. Evaluation of student performance and appropriate and timely feedback; and
9. Clear and well-organized instruction.

**Academic Dishonesty Statement:** Pensacola State College is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic conduct. All forms of academic dishonesty, to include plagiarism and cheating, are prohibited. Penalties for academic

dishonesty include but are not limited to one or more of the following: the awarding of no credit on the assignment, a reduction in the course grade, or the assignment of a final course grade of F and removal from the course. See the College Catalog for more details: [Academic Integrity](#)

**ADA Statement:** Students with a disability that falls under the Americans with Disability Act Amendments Act of 2008 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should contact the Student Resource Center for ADA Services to discuss academic accommodations. Appropriate academic accommodations are determined on an individual basis with careful consideration of the course learning outcomes and the documentation of the disability. For more information, students should visit the Student Resource Center for ADA Services on the Pensacola campus in building 6, room 603; call 850-484-1637; email [ADAservices@pensacolastate.edu](mailto:ADAservices@pensacolastate.edu); or complete the online intake form in the ADA Services app within the MyPSC apps dashboard.

**Emergency Statement:** In the case of severe weather or other emergency, the College administration maintains communication with appropriate state and local agencies and makes a determination regarding the cancellation of classes. Notices of cancellation will be made through the College's PSC Alert system and on the College's website.

**Flexibility Statement:** It is the intention of the instructor to accomplish the objectives specified in the course syllabus. However, circumstances may arise which prohibit the fulfilling of this endeavor. Therefore, this syllabus is subject to change. When possible, students will be notified of any change in advance of its occurrence.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** Pensacola State College does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex (as defined by applicable federal and state law), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or marital status in its educational programs, activities, or employment. For inquiries regarding the College's nondiscrimination policies, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Officer at (850) 484-1759, Pensacola State College, 1000 College Blvd., Pensacola, Florida 32504.

**Security Statement:** Pensacola State College is committed to encouraging all members of the College community to be proactive in personal safety measures. In case of emergency, students should ensure that they are aware of the building exit closest to each of their classrooms, as well as all alternative building exits in case circumstances require using a different route.

**Student Email Accounts:** Pensacola State College provides an institutional email account to all students enrolled in courses for credit. PirateMail is the official method of communication, and students must use PirateMail when communicating with the College. In cases where companion software is used for a particular class, email may be exchanged between instructor and student using the companion software.