Astronomy 5 Lab
Spring 2012 Tentative Schedule, Thursday Afternoon, Section 3077

Time & Place: Thursday 3:30 – 6:40 pm, Science Building room 216 and Observing Deck (3rd floor, north end of SB)
Materials: Astronomy 5 Lab Manual (required), Edmund Mag 5 Star Atlas (optional)
Instructor: Dean Arvidson; Dept. phone (323) 953-4000 ext. 2920; arvidsd@lacitycollege.edu
Class Website: http://faculty.lacitycollege.edu/arvidsd/index.html
Office & Hours: Science Building room 222 J; Mon. & Wed. 3:20 pm – 5:15 pm, Tues. 3:20 pm – 5:00 pm; & by appointment!

Introduction: Welcome to Astronomy 5 Laboratory class! As a laboratory class, we will be performing hands on exercises each week with the goal of learning astronomy through the doing of astronomy. Since this class meets in the afternoons, we will primarily perform indoor exercises most class meetings, however we will go outside on occasion and perform observational exercises. For our outdoor exercises we will use unaided eyes, binoculars, and telescopes to assist our observations. In addition to our regular meetings there will be some optional activities during the semester (including a star party!) for which you can earn extra credit.

Goals of Course: I have several goals that I will try to engage each of you in as the semester progresses. Through completing and submitting the lab reports for each exercise, I hope you will gain knowledge of and a deeper appreciation for the stars, planets, constellations and other objects in the sky, including some of their names and legends. I also hope that you gain working knowledge of, and an appreciation for some of the astronomical instruments (binoculars, telescopes) that are used to observe the sky. Finally I hope you gain some appreciation of the vastness and beauty of the heavens and a deeper recognition of our place within the universe.

Things to Bring: All the exercises we will perform are found in the Astronomy 5 lab manual which is available for sale at the LACC bookstore. Please be sure to bring the manual each week. Since we may go outside and perform observational exercises the first few class meetings, please come prepared for this. In particular, please bring warm clothes!

Lab Exercises: Each exercise from the manual includes specific procedures for performing the exercise together with questions to answer as you go along. Space is provided to answer the questions on the exercise sheet. Each exercise also has some questions and suggestions for the writing of a conclusion at the end of the exercise. Most indoor exercises will be performed in groups of 3, 4 or 5 students. For these exercises only one answer sheet per group will be collected, and every member of the group will receive the same score on the exercise. The exercise sheets will usually be collected at the end of the class period, but occasionally you will have until the following week before the exercise is due.

Extra Credit: This semester we will be organizing one or two ‘star parties’! These are field trips to a dark sky location where we can observe the sky with our telescopes away from the light pollution of the city. Extra credit will be offered for attending a star party, and details will be discussed in class. There will be other extra credit opportunities as well (including presenting a ‘constellation legend’ to the class).

Grades: Your grade for the course will be based on: Exercise performance and exercise sheets 65%, Midterm 10%, Final Exam 20% and Participation and Attendance 5%, and your grade will be determined as follows: A ≥ 85%, B ≥ 70%, C ≥ 55% of the total points.

Attendance, and lab exercise make up policy: Regular attendance and performance of the lab exercises is essential for this class. If you miss a class, talk with your instructor as soon as you return. You can make up the exercise by attending one of the other Astronomy lab classes when that exercise is being done. When you make up a lab exercise, you must get the instructor’s signature on your lab exercise. There is a late penalty for exercises submitted after the due date. A maximum of two make up exercises is allowed for the semester. More than three unexcused absences for the semester may result in the student being dropped from the class.

Note on Equipment Handling: We are quite fortunate to have some very nice pieces of astronomy equipment including a nice set of celestial globes, several different sets of astronomical binoculars and some Meade LX 200 and LX 200 R telescopes. It is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT to handle all the astronomy equipment carefully so it can last for many years. Please pay very careful attention when using, handling or moving the equipment!!! Handling of equipment counts in the ‘Exercise performance’ part of your grade.

(Note: Students with a verified disability who may need a reasonable accommodation(s) for this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact the Office for Special Services (CH 109, 323.953.4000 x 2270) as soon as possible. All information will remain confidential.)