

Astronomy 300A
Dynamics and Mechanics in Astrophysics
(Fall 2017)

Lectures: 11:00AM-11:50AM MWF in Steward 204

Instructor: Prof. K. Kratter

Office: SO N328 (emphasis on the N)

Class Email: ASTRKratter@as.arizona.edu

Prof. Kratter's Office hours:

2:30-4:00PM Wednesdays

TA: Rachel Smullen

Office: 302

Rachel Smullen's Office hours:

Parker Library 2:00-3:30, Tuesdays

Course Description

In this course we will survey the role of gravity in astrophysics. We will begin with the study of simple Keplerian orbits, and then explore progressively more complex dynamical systems. We will cover basic fluid dynamics and astrophysical applications towards the end of the semester. This class will focus heavily on problem solving skills including the use of dimensional analysis and order of magnitude reasoning. We will also touch on computational methods for problem solving throughout the course of the semester.

Topics to be covered

Dimensional Analysis
Order of Magnitude Reasoning
Stellar & Planetary dynamics
Galactic dynamics
Atmospheres
Fluid Dynamics

GRADING: Your course grade will be based on:

- Homework (drop lowest score): 25%

- In class activities / problem solving: 25% (drop lowest two scores)
- In class tests (drop lowest score): 35%
- Final Project: 15%

The class will not be curved. The correspondence between final percentages and letter grades will be: **A:** 85% – 100%; **B:** 70% – 85%; **C:** 50% – 70%, **D:** 30% – 50%; **E:** 0% – 30%.

TEXTBOOK For this course we will primarily use “Principles of Astrophysics,” by Charles Keeton. This book is available for **FREE** from the UofA online library system as a PDF document. You can find it [online here](#). Supplementary material will be provided online throughout the semester.

MIDTERM TESTS There will be three in class tests during the semester. Only your best two scores will count. No makeup tests without a prior approved Deans Excuse. They are tentatively scheduled for:

Friday, September 29th

Monday October 30th

Friday, December 1st

FINAL PROJECTS In lieu of a final exam, students will carry out a small research project during the course of the semester. Students will work in groups of two or three to pick a journal article (or two) related to the course material. Each group will give a presentation of the article and develop a related problem set for the rest of the class to solve. More information will be given during the semester.

Course Conduct and Expectations

Please come to class ready to learn and engage with your peers. While there is no mandatory attendance policy, participation and in-class activities make up a substantial portion of your final grade. We will be doing a lot of in class problem solving. In order to ensure a productive learning environment for all students, please note the following class rules:

1. NO cellphones in class. They must be kept in a bag or pocket and on silent.
2. Laptops / tablets ONLY for note taking.
3. No class disruptions (talking, note passing, etc).
4. Obey the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity: [available here](#)
5. Follow the University of Arizona Non-threatening behavior policy: [available here](#)
6. Adhere to the University of Arizona nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policy: [available here](#)

Course Email and Websites:

In this class we will make regular use of D2L . It is your responsibility to check D2L regularly for course notifications / updates / and assignments.

Email: All emails regarding the course should be sent to ASTRKratter@as.arizona.edu. Expect response times of 48 hours or less. This email address goes to both the instructor and the TA.

Course Updates: The information contained in the course syllabus and schedule, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice.

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities or meet course requirements are encouraged to register with the Disability Resource Center (<http://drc.arizona.edu>) and contact Prof. Kratter to discuss accessibility issues.