**AST 100: General Information**

**Fall 2021**

Meeting: Mondays 2:40-3:35 PM  
Humanities 3014

**Instructor**: [Prof. Frederick M. Walter](http://sbast3.ess.sunysb.edu/fwalter/plan.html) (ESS 459; 632-8232; [frederick.walter at stonybrook.edu](mailto:frederick.walter@stonybrook.edu))  
Office Hours: TBD, or by appointment

*Updated 17 August 2021*

Note: all this information is subject to change up until the first day of the semester.

**Course Description** (from the course catalog): *Seminar designed to introduce students to the excitement of modern astronomy, focusing on the most recent discoveries, as reported in the media. The course provides sufficient scientific background to enable students to understand the impact of these discoveries.*

**Course Structure:** Astronomy 100 was originally designed for first and second year students, to let them gauge their interest in astronomy prior to enrolling in the major, or signing up for AST 203. Since the inception of the SBC SPK requirement, this goal has been largely ignored.

The first two weeks will be lectures on the art of scientific presentation, and an introduction to modern astrophysics. After that each enrolled student will be responsible for writing and delivering a 20 minute power-point (or equivalent) presentation to the class.

Each student will be responsible for writing a question for each speaker during or immediately after the presentation. These will be handed to or e-mailed to the instructor by the end of the class period. They will be graded (based on relevance, insight, perspicacity, etc), and forwarded to the speaker for answering. Answers will be graded for clarity and correctness.

A list of acceptable topics [is listed here.](http://www.astro.sunysb.edu/fwalter/AST100/ast100_topics.html) Other topics should be cleared with the instructor in advance. We do not want multiple presentations on the same topic, so choice of topics is first-come, first served by e-mail to the instructor, starting on September 1. If you cannot give your presentation on your assigned date, you may trade with another student, but please inform the instructor.

Presentations must be in powerpoint or pdf format. Students wishing an advance critique of their presentations, and a chance to update them, must send them to the instructor no later than 8:00 AM the Thursday prior to the presentation. All final presentations must be sent to the instructor no later than 8:00 AM on the morning of the presentations, or a 10% penalty will be assessed.

Presentation dates will be assigned by the instructor. There will be two presentations per class period beginning September 13.

**Pandemic Contingencies**: As of this writing, Stony Brook University will hold most classes in person. But CoViD-19 infection rates are climbing nationwide, and the SARS-CoV-2 delta variant is a major concern. Official University Policy is stated on [this SBU page](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/strongertogether/latest.php).

* All students should be vaccinated, but the university has not yet required this.
* Unvaccinated students must be tested weekly.
* Social distancing is not possible while in the classroom.
* All students must wear masks while in the classroom.
* Students who do not wear masks will be asked to leave the lecture.

Note that the delta variant is highly transmissible. Young and healthy persons are catching the virus. Vaccination does not prevent you from catching and spreading the virus, hence the need for masks. Vaccination does not prevent infection, but greatly lessens the likelihood that the virus will make you sick. Vaccinated persons rarely need to be hospitalized. Masks lessen the likelihood that you will become infected, whether or not you have been vaccinated.

In the case that the pandemic worsens and classes need to go on-line, or become hybrid, this syllabus will be revised.

**Prerequisites**: None.

**Expectations**: This is a science course at the college level. Students are expected to do sufficient background research to make a credible presentation. All students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

**Learning Objectives:** Students are expected to be able to research a specific topic, generate a presentation, and deliver a 20 minute talk on that topic. Students should be able to think critically about scientific issues, and synthesize a summary understandable to the rest of the class.

If passed, this course satisfies the *SBC* SPK requirement.

**Required Books**: None.

**Grading**:  
Grades will be based on:

* A 20 minute oral presentation on a topic of the student's choice, selected from a list of approved topics on after consultation with the instructor (50%).
* A question for the speaker written down during or after the presentation (25%).
* Answers to the student questions (25%).

Requests for extra credit assignments will not be entertained.

**Classroom Decorum:**  
Students are expected to exhibit common courtesy.

* Please do not arrive late. This is discourteous and disruptive.
* Please do not leave early. This is discourteous and disruptive.
* Please do not carry on conversations with your friends during lecture.
* Please turn off cell phones and pagers. If you must use the phone, please leave the room. We don't want to know about your emergencies.
* Students must be masked.
* Students who are disruptive will be asked to leave.
* You must have a mobile device or a pen and paper in order to record your questions.

**Attendance Policy:**  
Students who know in advance that they will miss a test because of university-related activities (including athletics) or civic obligations (e.g., jury duty) should contact the instructor as soon as possible in advance of the date of absence. Students so-engaged, who inform the instructor in a timely manner, will not be penalized, and will be allowed to make up any work missed. Students are allowed one unexcused absence.

**Academic Dishonesty:**  
Students suspected of plagiarizing their writing assignments, or of any other form of academic dishonesty, will be assigned an F grade for the course and will be reported to the [academic judiciary](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/).

Students who suspect others of cheating are encouraged to report them. Reports will be kept confidential. Dishonest students make things that much harder for the majority of students, who are honest.

**Americans with Disabilities Act/ Student Accessibility Support Center Statement:**

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Student Accessibility Support Center, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, If any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to [this website](http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities) (<http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities>).

**Student Support Services:**  
Updated for the Semester of COVID-19

* To access mental health services, call Counseling and Psychological Services at 631-632-6720; Counselors are available to speak with 24/7.
* For updated information on the Academic Success and Tutoring Center please check [www.stonybrook.edu/tutoring](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_success/) for the most up-to-date information.
* For IT Support: Students can visit the Keep Learning website at <https://sites.google.com/stonybrook.edu/keeplearning> for information on the tools you need for alternative and online learning. Need help? Report technical issues at <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm> or call 631-632-2358.
* For information on Library services and resources please visit the [Continuity of Library Operations guide](https://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/continuity).

**Course Materials and Copyright Statement:**  
Course material accessed from Blackboard, SB Connect, SB Capture or a Stony Brook Course website is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity.

*ast update: 17 August 2021*

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Office Hours: MWF 9-10, or by appointment

**Meetings**: Mondays, 2:40-3:35 PM **Room**: Humanities 3014

**Lecture Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** |
| **1** | **Aug 23** | **Introduction** |
| **2** | **Aug 30** | **How to Give a Science Talk** |
| **3** | **Sep 13** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **4** | **Sep 20** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **5** | **Sep 27** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **6** | **Oct 4** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **7** | **Oct 18** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **8** | **Oct 25** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **9** | **Nov 1** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **10** | **Nov 8** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **11** | **Nov 15** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **12** | **Nov 22** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **13** | **Nov 29** | **Speaker 1: Speaker 2:** |
| **14** | **Dec 6** | **Wrapup** |

\*\*\* note: this plan is subject to change \*\*\*