ASTR 288I: Introduction to the Astronomy Major
Course Syllabus
Fall 2017

Section 0101: Mondays 4:00 - 4:50pm, ATL 1114
Section 0201: Tuesdays 4:00 - 4:50pm, ATL 1106

Co-Instructors
Dr. Melissa N. Hayes-Gehrke: mhayesge@umd.edu, PSC 1208C, office hours Wed 3 - 4pm, Thu 10 - 11am
Prof. Andrew Harris: harris@astro.umd.edu, PSC 1208D, office hours by appointment

Course Pre-requisites: none except permission of the Astronomy Department.

Required Textbook: none. Readings and other materials will be distributed on the course ELMS website and/or in class.

Course Website: students are expected to access the course website on ELMS (https://myelms.umd.edu/) for course materials and assignments.

Course Communication: students are expected to check their messages on ELMS and the email address that they have linked to UMD frequently. You can check to see which email address you have linked to UMD, and set a forwarding email address, by visiting http://www.testudo.umd.edu/apps/saddr/ . The instructors are not responsible for students missing crucial information by neglecting to check these communication methods.

All communication regarding absences and missed classes/assignments should be directed to Dr. Hayes-Gehrke (mhayesge@umd.edu) - see Absences section below.

Course Description
ASTR 288I: Introduction to the Astronomy Major is a 1-credit seminar course that is intended to introduce new Astronomy majors to the possible career paths that they might choose upon completion of an undergraduate Astronomy degree, soft skills that would be useful in these possible careers, and useful skills and knowledge to better prepare them for research as an undergraduate. Many students enter the Astronomy major with a great deal of enthusiasm for astronomical topics, but are unsure about how to channel that enthusiasm into useful skills for their courses, research, and eventually a career - whether that career is in academia, at a government research facility, or in private industry.

As a student in this course, what you get from this course will very much depend on what you put into this course - we, the instructors, will provide you with a wide variety of information, options, and topics for discussion, but you must choose to engage with the course material, your peers, and us in order to get the most out of the course. We expect that you will be an active participant in class, both in discussing material in class and in completing the additional online assignments. This course will include a significant amount of small-group and whole-class discussion, which will be instrumental in your learning in the course.

Course Learning Goals

At the end of this course, students will be able to…

- ...describe several potential career options for students graduating with an Astronomy degree.
- ...articulate steps they need to take during their academic career at UMD in order to be best prepared for a specific career upon graduation.
- ...describe how engaging in research as an undergraduate is useful for their future careers and list skills they need to develop/improve in order to be prepared to begin research.
- ...articulate why clear communication is very important for a scientist in any career.
- ...outline and describe the contents of the major sections of a scientific report.

Course Grading

This course is based primarily on student participation, both in class and with the online assignments. There are no exams.

- **Class Participation:** Your active participation during the class session is needed in order for you to get the most out of the course. Each class meeting is worth 2 points of participation: your attendance and active participation receives full credit. If you're very late to class or you attend but don't pay attention or participate, you will receive half credit. There are 14 class meetings for each section, and your lowest (or missing) class participation score will be dropped from the course grade.
- **Online assignments:** Each week, there is a reading, writing, or reflection assignment on ELMS to be completed. There are 14 assignments, and 9 of these assignments will require you to submit a short piece of writing via ELMS. Your lowest (or missing) assignment will be dropped from the course grade. Each assignment is worth 5 points. A sincere, thoughtful, and complete response will generally receive full credit. A response that was obviously submitted without much care or is monosyllabic will generally receive 1 - 3 points at the instructor's discretion.

Letter Grade	Percentage of Points
A	90 - 100%
B	80 < 90%
C	70 < 80%
D	60 < 70%
F	< 60%

Absences and Accommodations
The University Attendance and Assessment Policy will be strictly followed in this class. This policy can be found online at "Course Related Policies" (http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html). According to these policies, the instructor is obligated to allow makeup work or provide alternate arrangements **only** for **excused** absences - see the policy for the definition of an "excused absence". As "Course Related Policies" describes, if you know ahead of time that you're going to be absent for an excused reason, you need to notify *Dr. Hayes-Gehrke (mhayesge@umd.edu)* and make arrangements to make up work ahead of time. If you're unexpectedly absent for an excused reason, you need to notify Dr. Hayes-Gehrke as soon afterward as possible. According to University policy, you may only submit one self-signed excuse due to illness per semester - for additional or extended medical absences, you must provide documentation from a doctor or the University Health Center. If you are absent for reasons other than illness, then you must provide documentation upon request.

Please keep in mind that your lowest (or missing) class participation and online assignment scores will not be included in your course grade calculation - this is intended to provide relief for you if you should accidentally miss a class or assignment for an unexcused reason.

If you have a documented disability, you must provide *Dr. Hayes-Gehrke* with a copy of the University documentation by Monday, Sep. 11, 2017. When you bring the documentation, we can discuss the accommodation you are permitted.

Academic Integrity
The process of scientific inquiry and education depends on the integrity of all participants. The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally-recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at UMD for all students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication,

facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html.

Copyright

These lecture and course materials, including presentations, outlines, assignments, and similar materials, are protected by copyright of the instructors. As a student in the course, you may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may not and may not allow others to reproduce or distribute course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without our express written consent.

A Safe Learning Environment

The campus is meant to be a safe place to learn, free from harassment and intimidation of any kind. If you have experienced any form of harassment as a member of the university community, you should contact the Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct (http://www.umd.edu/Sexual_Misconduct) on campus. Please be aware that faculty are required by law to report any instance of misconduct brought to their attention. For confidential assistance, contact CARE (http://www.health.umd.edu/care).

Course Schedule

Please note that we will not be having class on the weeks beginning with Sep. 4 and Dec. 11, 2017. Typically Prof. Harris and Dr. Hayes-Gehrke will be leading the class on alternating weeks, but that may vary.

If the university is officially closed on a class day, adjustments to the course schedule will be communicated via ELMS message and/or your UMD email.

Week	Dates	Topic
1	Aug. 28, 29	Course Introduction
2	Sep. 11, 12	How to maximize your learning as an Astronomy major
3	Sep. 18, 19	What do Astronomy majors do after graduation?
4	Sep. 25, 26	The Road to Grad School (presented by GRAD-MAP)
5	Oct. 2, 3	The Road to a Job
6	Oct. 9, 10	What skills will you need after graduation?
7	Oct. 16, 17	Panel discussion: current Astronomy undergrads doing research

8	Oct. 23, 24	Selecting other courses or a minor to help your career
9	Oct. 30, 31	What jobs are there outside of academia?
10	Nov. 6, 7	Useful skill: research experience as an Astronomy undergrad
11	Nov. 13, 14	Useful skill: writing clearly
12	Nov. 20, 21	Useful skill: reading scientific writing
13	Nov. 27, 28	Presentation by UMD's Career Center
14	Dec. 4, 5	Planning your career

Due Dates

All assignments are disseminated and due on the course's ELMS website. The assignments are described in more detail on ELMS. This summary schedule of due dates is provided for your planning purposes. Since all assignments are submitted online via ELMS, there will be no changes in the due dates because of inclement weather or the university being closed; any changes due to extraordinary circumstances will be communicated via ELMS message and/or your UMD email. Please note that the due dates are at 11:59pm on Sundays prior to our class meetings on Mondays/Tuesdays; if this is inconvenient for you, it is your responsibility to plan ahead and complete the assignments prior to Sunday.

Type of Assignment	Relates To	Due Date	Graded? If so, point value.
Writing: reflection	Week 1	Sep. 10, 11:59pm	5 pts
Reading	Week 3	Sep. 17, 11:59pm	no
Writing: reflection	Weeks 4 & 5	Sep. 24, 11:59pm	5 pts
Writing: reflection	Week 4	Oct. 1, 11:59pm	5 pts
Writing: reflection	Week 5	Oct. 8, 11:59pm	5 pts
Writing	Week 6	Oct. 15, 11:59pm	5 pts
Reading	Week 8	Oct. 22, 11:59pm	no
Reading	Week 9	Oct. 29, 11:59pm	no
Writing: reflection		Nov. 5, 11:59pm	5 pts

Writing	Weeks 6 & 11	Nov. 12, 11:59pm	5 pts
Reading	Week 12	Nov. 19, 11:59pm	no
Listening & writing: reflection	Week 2	Nov. 26, 11:59pm	5 pts
Reading	Week 14	Dec. 3, 11:59pm	no
Writing: reflection		Dec. 10, 11:59pm	5 pts