

Astronomy 301: On-Line Weekly Reading Quizzes and Thought Questions

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→ Note that the website at which the reading quizzes and thought questions will be taken will not be available for registration until Tuesday, August 30.

An important component of this class will be the reading quizzes and thought questions that you will complete on-line. This document describes how to register for the on-line access, and then how to work with the on-line content. Note that the Reading Quiz 1 and Thought Question 1 are both due on Sunday, September 4, at 11:55 PM).

Registering for On-Line Access

To register for on-line access, please follow the following steps *exactly*:

1. Point your WEB browser to: <http://www.ilm.com>
2. Click on “Create an Account” (under the “New Users” category). You will then be presented with several registration screens.
3. Select California from the drop-down menu.
4. Enter San Diego State University in the “school name” area, and then click on “Search”.
5. Click the button next to “San Diego State University (San Diego, CA)” on the “Select your school” screen, then click “continue”.
6. On the “Course Key/Access Code” screen, select the 1st choice (on the left): “My instructor gave me a code to register for a class”. Once you do that, a place to enter your Course Key will appear on the screen.
7. In the “Course Key” area, enter the following Course Key: **E-3B9FXHKUKTMUK**
→ Click “Continue”.
8. Fill out the next form that comes up with your information:
 - (a) Enter your email address (twice).
 - (b) Enter your chosen password (twice).
→ **Be sure to write down your email address and chosen password, since these are the two items that will be required in order to log back into the system in the future.**
 - (c) Choose and answer the security question.
 - (d) Enter first and last name exactly as you are registered in the course.
 - (e) **For “Student ID”, enter just the first 8 digits of your 9-digit RedID number.** (The system will not accept 9 digits.)
 - (f) Click on the “I agree” button below the “End User License Agreement”.
 - (g) Click “continue”. You should then be welcomed with a “Welcome to CengageNOW!” screen, saying that you have successfully registered. If this is NOT the case, redo steps 1 through 8, being careful to type in *exactly* what is required. (In rare cases, you may get returned to the

same screen with the warning: “You are already registered”. If this happens to you, see the information in the footnote¹ at the bottom of this page.)

9. Click on the “Enter CengageNOW” button.

→ The system will then run a “System Check” to see that your current WEB browser is supported.² If all is OK, go onto the next step!

In some cases, it may request that you install a different/upgraded browser and/or software (e.g., java virtual machine) or allow popup windows.³ If possible, you should take the actions that it requests. However, I have found that “unsupported browsers” (e.g., Firefox on Macs) may still work just fine, so you can give them a shot. If things don’t work properly, then you will need to install one of the “supported” browsers.⁴

→ If all else fails, note that the Web browsers available on computers in Love Library all work properly at the web site, so:

If your home browser does not work, just go to the library!

10. At this point, you are fully registered, and should be greeted with a “Home” page that should show you all of the assignments that are available for you to take. Do not click on any of the assignments shown: It is important that you now exit the site by clicking on “Sign out” in the upper right-hand corner of the screen, and then proceed to follow all of the instructions in the “Using the Textbook Web Site” section of this handout, below.

Using the Textbook Web Site⁵

Nearly every week in the course, you will have an on-line assignment that will consist of two sections: (1) *Reading Quiz*; and (2) *Thought Question*. These will be presented to you as, e.g., “Reading Quiz 1” and “Thought Question 1”. In this *handout*, we’ll use the material presented in your “Week 1 Handout” as the example, since it’s the first one you’ll be doing. So, here’s how to access this online content:

1. Point your WEB browser to: <http://www.ilrn.com> .

2. Click on “Sign In”, under “Returning Users”.

→ Note: Sometimes, at this point a screen will come up asking you to enter your state and school. Should this happen, just follow the on-screen instructions and then continue with step 3 below when you are requested to enter your email address.

3. Enter your email address and password on the “Sign in as returning user” screen that comes up.

4. After a “system check”, you are presented with a screen that should display current “assignments”; note that I say *should*, since this “Home” page is flaky, and does not always show the correct assignments. To properly see all of your assignments, go onto the next step.

¹If you get returned to the same screen with the warning: “You are already registered”, this indicates that you are actually *already* registered with the CengageNOW website. This will happen, e.g., if you already made an account with CengageNOW in another course, either this semester or even in an earlier semester. If this is the case, then do the following: First, get back to the original login screen at <http://www.ilrn.com>. Click “Sign-in” under “Returning Users”. Enter your email address and password (if you have forgotten it, you can have it emailed to you), and click “sign in”. Click on the “Courses” tab. Click on “Register for another course”. Enter the course key: E-3B9FXHKUKTMUK , and click “Use This Course Key”. You are now registered! To access the course material now after logging in, click on the “Courses” tab, and then click on “Cosmology and Gravitational Collapse, Fall 2011”. Then, click on the “Assignments” tab. Once you’ve done this, you should be able to follow the instructions under the “Taking the Reading Quiz” section of this handout.

²Currently, supported browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox for Windows operating systems (both of which are available on the Love Library computers); Safari for Macs; and Mozilla Firefox for Linux systems.

³Note that to *print* the reading quizzes (optional, but helpful), Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05b or higher must be installed. You can get the Adobe Acrobat Reader for free from <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> .

⁴You can get help with your browser by going to: <http://www.ilrn.com>, and then clicking on “Browser Setup Help” under “User’s Resources” for “Students”.

⁵A complete user’s guide can be found at: <http://www.ilrn.com> . The *guide* presented in this *handout* just gives directions essential for completion of the assignments in this class.

5. **Click on the “Assignments/Tests” tab at the top of the page.** (The “Assignments/Tests” tab is one of 6 tabs located at the top of the page, called: “Home”, “Courses”, “Grades”, “Assignments/Tests”, “Study Tools”, and “Communication”.) It is important that you always click on the Assignments/Tests tab before doing anything else on the website! Go onto the next step.
6. The “Assignments” page comes up, where you will see that you have a “Reading Quiz: 1” as well as a “Thought Question: 1” to complete.
7. (Optional) Click on the “Print blank assignment” under the “Actions” column, for “Reading Quiz: 1”. Up will come a printable version of the complete Reading Quiz for this week. Print this out, if you wish. This is your first reading quiz *that you will complete online* after hopefully having read the chapter. Note that printing a hard copy of the quiz is just for your own use; you will not be turning anything in in class.

Taking the Weekly Reading Quiz

Like all Reading Quizzes, the first one (covering the first chapter of the textbook, due 11:55 PM on Sunday, September 4) is open book, open note, and you may even work with friends (although you must complete your own, separate, quiz on-line). And **you are allowed to take the quiz twice**, so that you can (hopefully) correct any answers that you got wrong the first time through. You can return at any time prior to the assignment’s due date to finish/retake the quiz. **Note that no late quizzes are ever accepted for any reason!**

The Reading Quiz will generally consist of 3 sections, for which the total possible score will always be 100%. The three sections are:

- Crossword Puzzle (section worth a different number of points each week, to make the total quiz worth 100 points). At the end of each chapter of the textbook (e.g., p. 22 for Chapter 1) you will find a crossword puzzle, where the answers are vocabulary terms covered by the reading. The first part of each Reading Quiz is simply to put in the answers to the crossword puzzle. One thing to bear in mind: Do not include any spaces, punctuation, or capitalization in your answers.
- Multiple Choice/Fill-in-the-blank/True-false (5 points for each question). These are a set of questions designed to test the concepts of the chapter. There will be varying numbers of these questions each week. Be careful with any “fill-in-the-blank” type questions, as you must enter in the exact word(s) it is looking for (for math questions, a range of numerical answers will be considered acceptable). These questions are worth 5 points each.
- Your Question (5 points). The final “question” of each Reading Quiz will simply be a space for you to write *the single question* that you would most like to know the answer to after having read the chapter. This could be, e.g., a concept that confused you in the reading, or something beyond the reading that you’d like to know more about. This question is worth 5 points, and you will automatically get it correct so long as you write *anything*. Note that I will look at these questions for potential topics of discussion in the following week’s classes.

So, when you are ready to take the week’s Reading Quiz:

1. Click on the “Take” button under the “Actions” column, for “Reading Quiz: 1”.
 - (a) Click on the “Start assignment now” button.
 - (b) You will then be given the week’s reading quiz, one question at a time. The first question has spaces for you to write in all of the chapter’s Crossword Puzzle answers. For instance, the first one is:

5 Across

On page 22 of the text, you see that “5 Across” corresponds to: “Observation designed to test some aspect of a scientific theory”. Back on page 7, you see that the correct answer is “experiment”. So, fill in “experiment” (no quotation marks, of course) into the “5 Across” blank. Then, move onto the “7 across” question.

Complete all crossword puzzle fields and then:

- (c) Click on the “Enter Answer” button. You are then automatically moved onto the second part of the Reading Quiz, which consists of multiple choice/Fill-in-the-blank/True-false questions. Answer all of these questions as directed, clicking on the “Enter Answer” button after each one.
- (d) The final quiz “question” is “Your Question”, for which you are to write *any* question in the space provided that you would most like to have answered about the chapter’s material. Any question that you write will be considered “correct”! Click on the “Enter Answer” button when you are done, and then submit the quiz by clicking “Submit for grading” on the popup window that comes up.
 - Note that at any point while taking the quiz, you can *save* your work without actually submitting it to be graded by clicking on the *Save & exit* button (note that, as far as I can tell, the “Save My Progress” link does not actually work, so don’t click on that). If you do chose to save your work, you can “resume” taking the quiz at any point up until the due date (but do make sure you *submit* it by the due date!).
- (e) After submitting your final “question”, you then will see a screen titled “Assignment Finished”, with your score (percentage correct) below it. You then have several options presented to you under the heading: “What would you like to do next?”
- (f) Click on “View Assignment Results”. This will take you to a page where you can see which questions you answered correctly, or incorrectly. Clicking on the number of the question itself will allow you to view the questions again. (Note that for the Crossword Puzzle – question 1 – it will simply indicate if you got the whole thing “Correct” or if some of the answers were incorrect – “Partially Correct” – you won’t be able to see which ones you got wrong until you “retake” the quiz.) If you got a 100% on the quiz, then you are done! If not, *you can retake the quiz one more time*, either now, or at a later date (before the due date). Only the final score counts towards your grade!
- (g) When you are through looking over your quiz results, click on the “Assignment/Tests” tab at the top of the page. You can then choose to “Retake” the quiz, or sign out and return later to take it again.

2. **Retaking the reading quiz.** You are permitted to take each Reading Quiz twice (if you get 100% on the first try, there is no need to take it a second time), and only your best score counts. So, to “Retake” the reading quiz:

- (a) Sign in to the website as before, and click on the “Assignments/Tests” tab.
- (b) Click on “Retake” under the “Actions” column, in the “Reading Quiz: 1” row.
- (c) Click on the “Start assignment” button.
- (d) You will then be re-given the reading quiz. On this second time through, you need only re-answer questions that you answered incorrectly the first time. For the Crossword Puzzle answers, an incorrect answer will be indicated by a blank space in the box next to the question number (e.g., if you got 9 Across wrong, then “9 Across” will be blank); for the other questions, incorrect answers are indicated by open circles next to the question numbers that are located along the left-hand column under the “Question” heading (a filled circle means you got it right the first time). Click on each question number that you answered incorrectly, and re-answer the question.
- (e) When you are through re-answering and entering all incorrectly answered questions, click on the “Submit assignment for grading” button, just like you did on the first take.
- (f) After confirming that you wish to submit your quiz, you’ll be brought to a screen similar to the one you were presented with after your first take, where you can review your (now fully completed) quiz.

3. *Solutions* to each week’s reading quiz are posted to the textbook website 10 minutes after the quiz is due (i.e., at 12:05 AM).

At the textbook web-site, you can access the solutions by clicking on the “Assignment/Tests” tab, and then clicking on either the “Print blank assignment” link or the “Take” button next to e.g.,

“Reading Quiz 1: Solutions”. Clicking on the “Print blank assignment” link produces a pdf file of the solutions that can be printed out. Clicking on the “Take” button allows you to “take” the quiz again, but this time with the solutions included. Note that if you “take” the quiz again, it is completely *ungraded*; it’s just for your practice.

Note that a pdf of the solutions will also be posted to the *course* website (<http://sciences.sdsu.edu/~leonard/astro301>) by the end of the week that a quiz is due. The quiz solutions are accessed by clicking on the “On-Line Reading Quiz Solutions” link on the course home-page.

Getting the Most out of the Weekly Reading Quiz

Please remember that these quizzes are designed *to prepare you for exams*. While the quiz is open book and open notes, and you may even consult with friends, I believe the absolute best way to use these quizzes to your advantage is to follow these steps:

1. *Come* to lecture and do all of the assigned reading.
2. *Study* all of the material that was covered as best you can.
3. *Print* out a copy of the Reading Quiz, from the web-site.
4. *Take* the Reading Quiz first on paper, and circle any questions whose answer you are unsure of. (Note: You will not be turning this paper in; all graded work for the Reading Quiz is done online.)
5. *Determine* the correct answer to any difficult questions by reviewing your class notes or rereading the textbook sections that were assigned. You may also seek assistance from me during my office hours, or from the TAs during the astronomy help-room hours.
6. *Make* a note of how many questions you answered correctly without any assistance; this gives you a rough indication of how well you had studied the material for the week on your own. Are you satisfied with this grade (consult the grading chart on page 5 of the syllabus, if necessary)?
7. *Take* the Reading Quiz online at the website.
8. *Retake* the Reading Quiz a second time, if necessary.
9. *Review* the solutions to the Reading Quiz, which become available at the quiz website 10 minutes after the quiz is due, and are posted to the course web-site within a few days. Even if you got a 100% on the quiz, the solutions are still very useful to review, as they may contain extra information of importance.
10. *Get help* if there are any questions that you have with the Reading Quiz, or any of the material presented during the past week by visiting either my office hours or the TA help room hours.

Responding to the Weekly Thought Question

I will pose a question (usually!) related to each week’s reading assignment, to which you will respond in the form of a short, formal writing assignment. We will generally use these questions as a starting point for discussion in class, but note that this discussion occurs *after* you’ve given your response to the question. What I am looking for here is a thoughtful, well-written response to the question posed.

The “grade” assigned to your response to the Thought Question will be very simple: It will be graded as “check-plus” (100%), “check” (85%), or “check-minus” (70%), based mainly on the evidence of the effort you put into it. A “check” (85%) will be given for the majority of responses, and represents average work; “check-plus” (100%) will be reserved for exceptional effort and/or thoughtfulness/creativity; “check-minus” (70%) will be given for just minimal effort shown. Note that a 0% will be given for no response, so definitely write something! (Note that when you submit your response, it will still appear as though you have gotten a 0% on the question: It will remain this way until I actually read your response, which I will generally do the day after the Thought Question comes due.)

To give your response to the Weekly Thought Question:

1. Click on the “Take” button under the “Actions” column, for “Thought Question: 1”.
2. Click on the “Start assignment now” button. You will then be given space to answer the week’s Thought Question; note that the Thought Question itself is generally contained in the Week’s Weekly Handout, which is accessible via the course website. Write as long a response as you like in the space provided – you can write as much as you want!
3. Click on the “Enter Answer” button, when you are finished with your response, and then submit your response by clicking “Submit for grading” on the popup window that comes up.
→ Note that, unlike the case for the Reading Quiz, you cannot “Save & exit” your work, so be sure that you are fully happy with your response before submitting it! Since there is no “right” or “wrong” response to this question, you are given only one chance to respond, and you can not retake the quiz once it is submitted.

Avoiding Problems with the Web Site

This web-site is generally quite stable and problem-free, so long as you *always* obey the following **golden rule**:

If you need to leave your computer for any reason while you are in the middle of taking a reading quiz, always click the *Save & exit* button, and then logout of the web-site.

Please, please, please do not ever leave your computer while taking a Reading Quiz without first logging completely out, since the textbook web-site has one MAJOR flaw: If you are in the middle of taking a Reading Quiz, and then either (1) leave your computer idle for more than 2 hours, or (2) log into the textbook web-site using a different computer or web browser, *it will automatically “submit” your unfinished Reading Quiz*. This is very bad, as it will use up one of your two “takes” of the quiz, and usually result in a low score since you were not done taking it.

Troubleshooting

So long as you follow the “golden rule” given above, odds are you will have no problems with the web-site. However, if you do encounter problems (e.g., the web-site will not let you log in, take the quiz, submit a quiz, etc.), please follow the following procedure:

1. Completely log out of the web site, totally close your web browser, and, if possible, reboot your machine.
2. Log back in to the web-site. 9 times out of 10, everything will now work just fine. Just remember the *mantra*:

When in doubt, log out.

3. If all else has failed (i.e., you’ve followed the *golden rule*, and have logged out and back in), and things *still* are not functioning properly, then you may email me with your concerns, and I’ll see if I can help. Please note, though, that in order to get assistance **you must email me before 7 PM on the night the Reading Quiz is due** (Reading Quizzes and Thought Questions are generally due at 11:55 PM on Sunday nights).

Emails received before 7 PM on the night an assignment is due are guaranteed a response from me by 10 PM that same night (usually much quicker; it’s up to you to remember to check your email for my response!). If you email me after 7 PM on the night an assignment is due, I can’t promise that I will be able to assist you in time for you to complete your work. And, please remember that no late assignments will be accepted. So, to prevent problems, please complete your assignments before the final minutes!