Announcements

• Welcome to Astronomy 101: Principles of Astronomy! This handout is much like the ones that will guide you through each week of the course. On them, you will find current class Announcements and the weekly Reading Guide and Homework Assignment; they will be discussed at the start of each week (i.e., on Tuesdays, from now on). Due to photocopying restrictions (i.e., budget cuts!), paper versions of these handouts will not be given out in class, in general. Instead, pdf versions of the handouts will be posted to the course website (see below) by noon on Monday of each week, so you can download and print them out for Tuesday’s class. “Best guess” versions of these weekly handouts (i.e., what I thought we’d be covering each week) are included in the Course Reader (see below), but the most up-to-date versions will always be posted at the class website the day before Tuesday’s class.

• Buy the textbook. Please purchase a copy of the course text: Voyages To the Stars and Galaxies (Third Edition), by Andrew Fraknoi, David Morrison, & Sidney C. Wolff. It is available at the Campus Bookstore ($88.99 new; $68.70 used; $39.85 used rental). You may purchase either a new, used, or rental copy of the text.

Note: There is one copy of the text available at the Circulation / Course Reserves Desk in Love Library. With the large number of students taking this class, though, you may find it difficult to access this reserve text, and so I strongly recommend acquiring your own copy.

• Buy the Course Reader. Please purchase a copy of the Course Reader that is required for this class. (Note that prior semesters’ Readers are not ideal, as many changes have occurred!)

It is available only at the Campus Bookstore, for $40.99. It contains Powerpoint slides, handouts, and additional reading material that are required for the course. Note that there is one copy of the Reader available at the Circulation/Course Reserves Desk in Love Library.

• Check out the Course Web Site:

    http://sciences.sdsu.edu/~leonard/astro101

On it you will always find the latest information about the class, including all handouts as well as all Powerpoint lecture slides shown in class (usually available by the end of the day the lecture is given). Note that this course has a very limited presence on Blackboard: Generally, only announcements of immediate importance will be posted to it. For everything else, please visit the Course Web Site.

• Adding this class. If you wish to join the class (or be added to the “wait-list” if the section that you want is full), please see the handout: “Astronomy 101: How to Crash this Class” (available in class and at the course web-site), and carefully follow all of the instructions given there!

• Office hours. As stated in the Course Syllabus, my office hours for the semester will be on Tuesdays from 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM, in room 238 of the physics building (i.e., Rm. P238). Please feel free to drop by – no appointment is needed!

• Your professor on TV? Yes, it is true. If you happen to get the “Science Channel”, and tune in at 5 PM or 8 PM Friday evening (January 20), you will see a program called “Seeing Black Holes”, in which I am interviewed. We’ll watch more of this episode in class together when we actually cover black holes later in the semester, but since they’re rerunning it right now, I thought I’d tell you in case you want to catch it. The only thing I’ll say up front is that the convertible was not my idea.

Reading Guide and Homework Assignment

For this first week, only a reading assignment is given; future weekly handouts will also include homework to be completed at the on-line textbook website. Unless otherwise specified, all reading assignments are due on the Tuesday following their assignment (i.e., the next Tuesday that class meets – this first reading assignment is thus due to be completed by classtime on Tuesday, January 24).
I recommend that you complete these assignments in the order suggested on these handouts. Note: For all assignments, “Text” refers to the course text, *Voyages To the Stars and Galaxies*, “Course Reader” refers to the course Reader (purchased from the SDSU bookstore), and “On-line reading quiz” refers to the course content available at the on-line textbook web-site (http://www.ilrn.com), to be discussed next week. Note also that whenever a section of the text is assigned, it is assumed that any “Introduction” to that section is also being assigned.

1. **Course Reader** — Read the *Course Syllabus*. (See the Table of Contents in the Course Reader for the exact pages.)

   The *Course Syllabus* contains all of the material relevant to the content and grading of this course. This *Syllabus* was handed out in class on the first day (in abbreviated format), is available in its entirety at the course web-site, and is reprinted in full in the first pages of your Course Reader (see the Table of Contents in the Course Reader for the exact pages).


   These are good sections to read right after the first class lecture, since they cover much of what we went over. In this reading, you will again encounter the great “supernova” of 1054, along with discussions about the nature of science and the “laws” of nature and how scientists go about deriving them. Section 4 introduces you to *scientific notation*, the mathematical format in which very large, and very small, numbers will be written during this course (next week, you will be assigned to read the “Mathematical Toolkit” that is included in the Reader; it reviews all of the additional necessary mathematics for this class). Sections 5 and 6 introduce the concept of the *light year* (LY), and the profound fact that as one looks out into space, one also looks back in time. Be sure to get your head around this one!

   (Anasazi supernova pictograph, c. 1054 AD)