

Prepared by Department of Natural Sciences & Life Fitness

Date of Departmental Approval: 2/5/07

Date approved by Curriculum and Programs: May 2, 2007

Effective: Fall 2007

1. **Course Number:** AST201
Course Title: Current Topics in Astronomy
2. **Description:** This course provides an opportunity for students to explore various topics of current interest in astronomy, adding breadth and depth to their knowledge of the cosmos and building independent research and presentation skills. Most course materials will be drawn from highly credible sources on the internet (for example NASA.GOV) and current astronomical publications.
3. **Student Learning Outcomes (instructional objectives: intellectual skills):**
Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:
 - Discuss areas of current interest in astronomy.
 - Define a wide variety of astronomical terms in his or her own words.
 - Describe the various types of objects in the cosmos (from meteoroids to superclusters) and how they form a hierarchy of structure and size.
 - Identify types of cosmic objects from descriptions or from images.
 - Identify a variety of specific cosmic objects from images.
 - Describe the locations of cosmic objects using standard astronomical distance units, appropriate coordinate systems, and the system of constellations.
 - Effectively do independent research using paper and electronic sources.
 - Clearly and concisely present research findings in both spoken and written mode, using styles and techniques appropriate to science, and reinforcing said presentation with appropriate images.
4. **Credits:** Three credits
5. **Satisfies General Education Requirement:** No.
6. **Prerequisites:** AST101 or PHY101 or PHY211
7. **Semester(s) Offered:** Varies
8. **Suggested General Guidelines for Evaluation:** The final grade is based upon written papers, class presentations and examinations.
9. **General Topical Outline (Optional):** Specific topics covered depend on what is currently being discussed in the astronomical literature and on the interests of the instructor and the students.