PSC 101
Introduction to Astronomy

Video Enhanced Online Format – Spring 2007

Professor: Dr. Christopher Hunt
Office: Chesapeake Hall 310C
Phone: 301-322-0429
Email: The best way to contact me is by email, at jhunt@pgcc.edu. Please put PSC 101 in the subject line of each email you send me. Also, please put the code NM231 in each subject line as well (this makes it more likely your email will get through the College’s spam filter).

Web Page: http://academic.pgcc.edu/~jhunt
Fax: 301-386-7529
Office Hours: MW 9-noon, F 9-10 am; other times available by appointment
Mailing Address: Department of Physical Science - PGCC
301 Largo Road
Largo, MD 20774-2199

Required Texts:
- *Telecourse Student Guide* (comes bundled with the text)

Course Philosophy
This course is designed to give you a working knowledge of the vast and magnificent universe in which you live. It will be illustrative of not only the myriad wonders that exist in the cosmos, but also of the scientific principles which govern nature. This course is a basically non-mathematical survey course; only on a very few occasions will mathematics of any sort be used.

Course Format
The video enhanced online format is described in the Spring 2007 PGCC Schedule of Credit Classes. Essentially, it combines features of telecourses and online courses. The online portion is conducted through Blackboard, a web portal service to which PGCC subscribes. Instructions for logging into Blackboard may be found below.

The video portion of the course is available through several different means:

1. PGCC Cable: PGCC airs the lessons in blocks of two, beginning February 5. Each is broadcast three times weekly; see the PSC 101 Broadcast Schedule for details.
2. Maryland Public Television (WMPT, Channel 22) also airs the lessons, though they are slightly “out of synch” with PGCC’s schedule. So if you opt to watch on MPT, make sure you note the title of each episode and where it fits into our schedule. You may find the broadcast timings of these at http://www.mpt.org/schedule/series.cfm?series_id=15735.
3. You may purchase DVDs of the lessons outright for $35 from Coast Learning Systems at www.coastlearning.org. An order form for this may be found at the end of this syllabus; you must send along a receipt of your registration with the form if you wish to buy the DVDs.

4. RMI Media Productions (www.rmimedia.com) is also renting Astronomy: Observation & Theory in DVD or VHS format for $35 a semester.

If you are having difficulties with any of the above options, please contact the Distance Learning Office (301-322-0463 or DistanceLearn@pgcc.edu).

**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Material Covered</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Unit 1 (Lessons 1-6)</td>
<td>2/26 – 3/3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Unit 2 (Lessons 7-11)</td>
<td>3/19 – 3/24</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>Unit 3 (Lessons 12-15)</td>
<td>4/16 – 4/21</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Unit 4 (Lessons 16-20) and half-cumulative</td>
<td>4/23 – 5/5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Class Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>Due 5/7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exam Information**

We will use the Student Assessment Services Center (Testing Center), Bladen Hall, Room100 (301-322-0090) for our exams. Check their web site for hours and policies: www.pgcc.edu/pgweb/pgdocs/student_services/student_assessment_services.htm. **There are no makeup exams.** In the event that you miss an exam, and can document your excuse, your score on the final exam will be substituted for the exam you missed. A good rule of thumb is: if you're sick enough to miss an exam, you're sick enough to go to the doctor and get a note to document your illness. Practice exams may be found in Blackboard, under Course Documents. These may be useful study tools, if desired. This does not guarantee that all the questions (or any of the questions, for that matter) on the old exams will appear on the new one! The old exams are there simply to give you a gauge of approximately what to expect on the exam in terms of content, format, and difficulty. After the exams are graded, I will mail you back your graded exam answer sheet, exam questions, and a key against which you can check your answers that were marked incorrect. **It is important that you contact me if you do not understand why you missed a particular question.** Remember, the final exam is half-cumulative, so we need to make sure you understand why you missed any questions before you take the final!

**Out-of-Class Projects**

The final fifteen percent of your grade will consist of **five** mini-projects you will do independently, due on May 7, 2007. Please see the handout for suggestions on these. Send these to me by mail, drop them off to me or my secretary (located in CH 100) in
person. Please do not leave these in the care of the staff of the Testing Center—it is not their job to collect course materials such as these!

**Extra Credit**
I will accept up to five extra out-of-class projects, above and beyond what is mandatory for your grade. These will count as extra credit (1% each) on your averages. These greatly help your grade, so I encourage you to do them!
Final Grades
The standard scale of 90-100% = A, 80-90% = B, etc., will be used in determining letter grades. However, the instructor reserves the right to apply a small curve to the final grades at the end of the term before doing so.

Tips for success in this course
Your participation in PSC 101 each for each telecourse lesson will be comprised of three components:

1. You will do the activities laid out in the Telecourse Student Guide for each telecourse lesson. These are comprised of readings, viewing the actual telecourse lesson, and various self-tests and reviews. Some tips on this:
   - Tape/TiVo the telecredit episodes and tackle each one individually, even though they are broadcast in blocks. *Do not attempt to do more than one lesson in a sitting!*
   - Watch the episodes thoughtfully, taking notes while you do so.
   - Watch at a time when you can focus exclusively on the episodes; don’t try to multitask while watching!
   - Read thoroughly the Preface to the *Telecourse Student Guide* as well. It contains lots of useful information.
   - Pay special attention to the Learning Objectives in each *Telecourse Student Guide* section. Every exam question is linked to one of these objectives. If you understand each objective thoroughly, you’re well on your way to success!
   - You must take the Student Guide pre-and-post viewing assignments seriously in order to succeed—there is more to this course than simply watching 20 television programs!

2. You will participate in a mandatory online discussion on each lesson.
   - The discussion boards area is where you can ask me any questions about aspects of each week's material that you would like clarified. Or, you can simply make any comments you may have on the material, sharing your reactions with your classmates. Questions and comments in the Discussion Boards area count toward your class participation, which is 15% of your grade!
   - When the exam period ends for a given unit, all the discussion boards will close for that unit. So don't fall behind in your class participation!

3. You will take a look at any internet links and/or media I post regarding each lesson's material. Finally, a word of caution: the teleweb format is wonderful for being very flexible. It allows people who would not otherwise be able to take this course to do so; that is its strength. However, the flip side of that coin is that taking a course in this format requires students to be *self-motivated* and *disciplined.* **This is a college-level science course. It will be challenging, more so (in all likelihood) than other distance learning courses you may have taken.** Expect to work hard! Students taking PSC 101 in this format will be held to the same high standards that students who take the course in the traditional format are. *Please do not expect special treatment simply because you are taking the course in the distance learning format!*
The Federal Education Right to Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)
PGCC’s interpretation of FERPA forbids me from discussing your grade with you via email or phone; I am only permitted to discuss your grade with you in person. I don’t happen to agree with this Draconian interpretation, which is especially ill-suited for Distance Learning classes, but I am bound by it nonetheless. Fortunately, you will be able to access your grade electronically, and confidentially, through Blackboard.

**Blackboard:** To login to Blackboard, please follow these steps:

- Go to the Prince George's Community College Blackboard web site which is located at [http://pgcconline.blackboard.com](http://pgcconline.blackboard.com). NOTE: There is no “www” in the Blackboard address.
- ALL STUDENTS must use their myPGCC username and password to login to Blackboard. The Blackboard account login information has changed for students.
- You will not be able to login using your “old” Blackboard username and password.
- If you do not have a myPGCC account, you will need to create one: Go to [http://my.pgcc.edu](http://my.pgcc.edu) to create a myPGCC account. You will use your myPGCC username and password to login to Blackboard.
- If you already have a myPGCC account, reset your password, if necessary: The first time you access Blackboard using your myPGCC account, you must change your myPGCC password to access Blackboard. When you change your myPGCC password, the Blackboard system is updated with the myPGCC account information. Go to [http://my.pgcc.edu](http://my.pgcc.edu) to reset your myPGCC password. Blackboard will be updated 1-2 minutes after you reset your password.
- Once you have your myPGCC account information, type it in the Blackboard login box at the [http://pgcconline.blackboard.com](http://pgcconline.blackboard.com). (Write down your account information so you can refer to it if you forget.) If your login is successful, you will see the Blackboard “Welcome” screen. In the box labeled “My Courses”, you will see the course or a list of courses in which you are enrolled. Click on the course name to enter your Blackboard course.
- **Immediately change your Blackboard email address.** When information is downloaded into Blackboard from the college's database, your email address does not automatically download. The email address first posted in Blackboard is a generic address given to everyone. To ensure that your instructor can contact you by email, it is VERY important to change your email address as soon as you log in to Blackboard for the first time. Here are the steps for changing your Blackboard email address:

  1. From YOUR Blackboard Welcome page (you will see WELCOME, ___! in bold letters at the top of this page), click on Personal Information in the Tools Box on the left side.
  2. Click on Edit Personal Information.
  3. Change your email address to your preferred email address (the one you check the most often).
  4. Click the Submit button in the lower right corner to save the changes you have made.
DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES
Students requesting academic accommodations are required to contact the Disability Support Services Office (M-1042) or call (301) 322-0838 (voice) or (301) 322-0122 (TTY) to establish eligibility for services and accommodations. Students with documented disabilities should discuss the matter privately with their instructors at the beginning of the semester and provide a copy of their Student/Faculty Accommodation Form.

CODE OF CONDUCT
The Prince George's Community College Code of Conduct defines the rights and responsibilities of students and establishes a system of procedures for dealing with students charged with violations of the code and other rules and regulations of the college. A student enrolling in the college assumes an obligation to conduct himself/herself in a manner compatible with the college's function as an educational institution. Refer to the 2005-2006 Student Handbook, beginning on page 41, for a complete explanation of the code of conduct, including the Code of Academic Integrity and the procedure for dealing with disruptive student behavior.

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The college is an institution of higher learning that holds academic integrity as its highest principle. In the pursuit of knowledge, the college community expects that all students, faculty, and staff will share responsibility for adhering to the values of honesty and unquestionable integrity. To support a community committed to academic achievement and scholarship, the Code of Academic Integrity advances the principle of honest representation in the work that is produced by students seeking to engage fully in the learning process. The complete text of the Code of Academic Integrity is in the 2005-2006 Student Handbook (pages 42-45) and posted on the college's website.

IMPORTANT DATES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last day to apply for spring graduation</td>
<td>Thursday, February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidents’ Day – College closed – No classes</td>
<td>Monday, February 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to change from “credit” to “audit” status in a full semester course or vice versa.</td>
<td>Friday, February 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to withdraw from first-half semester classes</td>
<td>Monday, March 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Break – College closed – No classes</td>
<td>Saturday-Friday, April 7-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to withdraw from full semester classes</td>
<td>Friday, April 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam period/last week of spring 2007 classes</td>
<td>Thursday-Wednesday, May 10-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commencement</td>
<td>Thursday, May 24</td>
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</tbody>
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DELAYED COLLEGE OPENINGS
When the College announces a delayed opening, all classes with at least 45 minutes of class time remaining at the time of the opening will be held. For example, in the event of a 10 a.m. opening, a 9:30-10:45 a.m. class will be held. This procedure applies to all credit classes.

COLLEGE RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Campus Bookstore
Largo Student Center, Room 116
www.pgcc.edu/pgweb/pgdocs/bookstore.html
**Library**  
Accokeek Hall  
General information: **301-322-0105**  
Circulation services: **301-322-0475**  
Reference services: **301-322-0476**  

[www.pgcc.edu/library](http://www.pgcc.edu/library)

The Library provides a range of library and media services. Refer to the web site for hours and more information about the services.

**Student Development Services**  
301-322-0886  
[www.pgcc.edu/pgweb/pgdocs/student_services/index-sds.htm](http://www.pgcc.edu/pgweb/pgdocs/student_services/index-sds.htm)

Student Development Services has various programs that provide students with mentoring, advising, and individual counseling. Call or check the website for more information.