

**Astro 11**  
**Elementary Astronomy Lab – 1 credit**  
**PSU York - Fall 2023 - Trout**

*Generally speaking, the policies in this course are the same as those of Astronomy 001 when taught by Trout. If you are not currently taking Astro 001, the basic policies pick up on page 3.*

**Course Description:** Selected experiments and explorations to illustrate major astronomical principles and techniques. Possible telescopic observations of the moon, planets, stars and nebulae (weather dependent).

**Class Meetings:** Our class meetings will be live, face-to-face as much as possible. However, sometimes due to complications beyond our control, our class meetings will be ‘online’ using ZOOM. My goal in this case is to provide you with similar instruction, interaction, and assessments to those you would have received in the physical classroom

NOTE: You will access our Zoom classroom when/if needed using a link provided by the instructor at that time. If you are new to Zoom, please read “Participating in a Zoom Meeting Quick Start Guide.” An additional resource is the joining a test meeting ahead of your scheduled class to practice connecting to a Zoom room. Be sure you have all of the computer equipment you need for ZOOM.

**Class Meeting Times:** Mondays, 7:00 – 9:00 pm (Room: 6 Romano)

**Instructor:** Kip Trout, B.S., M.S., Physics

**Office Hours:** By appointment. Please text to make an appointment before coming. Good times for me:  
Mon. and Wed.: 1:30 – 3:30 pm (text to make an appointment)  
Tue. and Thu.: 3:30 – 4:15 pm (text to make an appointment)  
Or... other times that work, (text to make an appointment).

You'll need to have the following things for this class:

- **Lab Handout** -- The instructor will provide this each week when you come to class.
- **Star and Planet Finder** -- This can be purchased in the PSU Book Store.
- **Solar Motion Demonstrator** -- This can be purchased in the PSU Book Store.
- **Scientific Calculator** -- of the kind that can perform basic trigonometry, scientific notation and logarithms.
- **Writing stuff** -- pencils/pens, erasers and blank paper.
- **Red-light Flashlight** -- get a normal, regular, cheap flashlight, and cover the end with either red nail polish or red cellophane or make it red in some other way. The red light will help you see when you write while we're in the dark, but it will not ruin your night vision as much as other colors of light.
- **Warm clothes** -- again, for when we go observing. Sometimes it can get quite chilly/cold when we go out to observe, especially when the sky is clear. So, always bring warm clothes, even if you think you will not need them. It is much better to have a warm coat, hat and gloves and to simply unzip or take them off than be miserably cold during a lab experiment.

**Lab Partner:** You will work in groups of two (or three at most). You and your partner(s) must work together. The work during the lab should be split equally. If you must leave lab class early for *any* reason, then you should take your share of the data first. Do not leave your partner(s) hanging.

**Lab Reports:** Lab reports will require submitting the relevant information and answering any assigned questions by the end of the lab period. Lab reports will be put together with your lab partner(s) and then submitted in CANVAS via the quiz tool. It is important to work **NEATLY** during the labs. Many times you may write your data, calculations or answers directly onto your lab report handout. If you do that neatly enough, then you can often scan and submit photos of that work. But, again, please be sure it is very **NEAT**. If I cannot read it, it is assumed to be **WRONG**.

**Attendance:** You are required to attend the lab. Your grade will be negatively affected if you miss lab. Missing one lab will unlikely affect your final grade in the course, however two or more missed labs, or poor participation while at lab, will lower your grade in the course.

**Grades:** We will meet each week for lab, except Labor Day and over the week of Thanksgiving. Each lab session you will receive 50% of your lab grade for simply attending and participating in the lab. The other 50% of your lab grade is determined by your group's submitted lab report. Each week will be equally weighted in the grading. Final grades in the course will (generally) be based on a comparison with the **highest score** in the class. At the end of the semester, the grades will be scaled so that the student with the highest grade at the end of the semester is pinned to be somewhere between 92% and 100% (usually), and everyone else is objectively scaled accordingly. Then the grades are assigned as follows:

100% - 92%	A	79.9% - 78%	C+
91.9% - 90%	A-	77.9% - 70%	C
89.9% - 88%	B+	69.9% - 60%	D
87.9% - 82%	B	59.9% - 0%	F
81.9% - 80%	B-		

**Lab Schedule:** Every semester is a little different, so I will be preparing the lab sessions a week at a time this fall. Please give me good feedback on whether a lab was interesting, informative, practical, helpful, fun and so forth.

**Makeups Unlikely:** **Generally speaking, there will be NO lab makeups.** *If you miss a lab session for any reason (including illness or business trip), you will most likely lose your participation points for that week.* If you feel there is a reason for an exception to this rule, please speak with the instructor. Above all, the instructor wants you to feel confident that all students in the class are being treated fairly, but he also wants to be sure you are being accountable to helping your lab partner.

**Phone:** (717)-676-1274 (Only texts reliably come through. Always text first if you can.)

**Email:** [kxt7@psu.edu](mailto:kxt7@psu.edu)

**Communicating with the Instructor:**

- Use your PSU email account to communicate with the instructor of this course.
- Please allow the professor at least 24 hours to respond to your email.
- If the message is urgent, then please text to the phone number above.

### **Class Recordings Possible:**

Some classes and assessments may be conducted using ZOOM, CANVAS, or other technology selected by your instructor which may use your computer's webcam or other technologies to communicate, monitor, and/or record classes, class activities, and assessments. **Be aware that video and audio recordings of class lectures will be part of the classroom activity. The video and audio recordings made by the instructor are for educational use/purposes and will only may be made available to all students presently enrolled in the class. For purposes where the recordings will be used in future class session/lectures, any type of student identifying information will be adequately removed.** Assessments (e.g., tests) may also be conducted using proctoring software, which may listen to you, monitor your computer screen, view you and your surroundings, and record (including visual and audio recordings) all activity during the proctoring process. Please contact your instructor if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Coronavirus and Flu Outbreaks:**

For any health-related questions you can email the Director of the University Health Services, at [uhsinfo@sa.psu.edu](mailto:uhsinfo@sa.psu.edu).

**Be sure to read the university's most up to date official syllabus statements at the following website. These statements should be considered a part of THIS syllabus. The link is provided because the language is similar for all Penn State University courses:**

<https://york.psu.edu/academics/support/academic-affairs/syllabus-statements>

**Additionally, your professor, Kip Trout, has the following policies and reminders for you in this course. It is important that you understand these policies. Please ask Kip Trout questions about these policies if you need clarification.**

## MAKE-UPS and ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

### Academic Integrity Statement and Policy for Kip Trout's Courses

**A quick summary of the basic policy is as follows: Do not cheat; do not plagiarize; do not lie; do not take part in falsehoods or deceptions of any sort. If you think you may be doing something wrong, you probably are.**

There will be many opportunities for help, and I am always striving to be fair to all students. Collaborations and discussions among students are strongly encouraged – at appropriate times – such as during In-Class Exercises and appropriate out of class experiences. However, I expect your best efforts to individually learn the material, and I expect honesty and academic integrity in all aspects of the course.

All Penn State University policies, Eberly College of Science policies, and University College policies regarding academic integrity/ academic dishonesty apply to this course and the students enrolled in this course. Each student in this course is expected to work entirely on her/his own while taking any exam, to complete assignments on her/his own effort without the assistance of others unless directed otherwise by the instructor, and to abide by University, Eberly College of Science, and University College policies about academic integrity and academic dishonesty.

As described in The Penn State Principles, academic integrity is the basic guiding principle for all academic activity at Penn State University, allowing the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. We expect that each student will practice integrity regarding all academic assignments and will not tolerate or engage in acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, **but is not limited to**, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information, or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. To protect the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and the worth of work completed by others, we will record and report to the office of Judicial Affairs all instances of academic dishonesty. (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20)

Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction. Academic dishonesty can result in an assignment of "F" by the course instructor or "XF" by Judicial Affairs as the final grade for the student.

## Make-Up Policy for Kip Trout's Courses

In general, I will not provide extensions on deadlines. I will not, in general, provide makeups (except possibly for exams).

Any missed work will receive a score of zero unless there are special circumstances that warrant an excuse (see below). These should be discussed with the professor on a case-by-case basis.

To help account for 'everyday-type' emergencies, during the semester I will drop your SIX lowest scores from the Attendance and In-Class Exercises grade, and at the end of the semester when calculating final graded homework average, I will drop your THREE lowest Graded Homework scores in Mastering Astronomy.

**In the case of sudden or unexpected events (i.e., special circumstances) that will cause a student to miss an exam (or multiple graded assignments), students are required to notify the instructor prior to the exam/assignment due date or within 24-hours of the exam/assignment due date. The instructor MAY make an accommodation in this case if the reason provided qualifies as a special circumstance in the instructor's opinion. Otherwise, a grade of zero will default for the exam or assignments that were missed.**

**Students who are physically unable to take an exam at the regularly scheduled time (e.g., because of an illness or 'special circumstances') should NOT attempt to attend/take the regular exam, because once the examination is taken, its result is final. In this case the student should contact the instructor immediately to discuss a makeup.**

Makeup exams will be scheduled separately and should be taken no later than three business days after being able to return to classwork. Students who do not take the make-up exam within the very reasonable time limit of one week from returning to classwork will receive a zero for the exam. Barring unusual emergencies, only one makeup opportunity is granted for each special circumstance accepted by the instructor.

As discussed above, if an emergency of any sort (i.e., special circumstance) is causing you to miss an exam (or multiple graded assignments), please contact the instructor immediately to discuss this. Excuses will be granted only for valid reasons, and the instructor may make phone calls or require follow-up documentation to ascertain the excuse is legitimate. Special circumstances are things such as:

Family emergencies. This includes a death in the immediate family, death of a close friend, sudden hospitalization of a close family member, recent mentally traumatic experiences, and events of similar gravity.

The student experiences the onset or flare-up of an incapacitating illness and/or injury

A university-approved curricular or extra-curricular activity. In this case, a student needs to obtain a letter (or a class absence form) from the unit or department sponsoring the activity. The letter must indicate the anticipated absence date(s), and it must be submitted by email to the instructor.

### **Campus Closure and Delay Information:**

In the event of a campus closure, course requirements, classes, deadlines, and grading schemes are sometimes adjusted. Information about course changes will be communicated to you in some reasonable manner by the instructor as soon as possible.

For notification about campus closures, please refer to Penn State York's website at <http://www.york.psu.edu>, call the weather hotline at 717.771.4079, or sign up for live text messages at PSUAlert (<https://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/>).

If there is any change in the regular class schedule or the final exam schedule, an alert will be posted to on the campus website and sent via PSUAlert.

The campus weather policy is very simple:

In the event of a snow 'delay' or weather 'delay', you likely STILL have class at the same time.  
**ONLY CLASSES BEFORE 10:00 am are canceled by weather delays.**

In the event of a campus 'closing', then **NO classes will meet, not even via ZOOM.**

**WARNING:** PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE CAMPUS PHONE NUMBER TO ASK WHAT TIME YOUR CLASSES MEET WHEN WE HAVE A WEATHER DELAY! It bogs down the phone line and restricts communications that are necessary and important. Be sure you know PSU York's weather-related information BEFORE it happens. Store the information in your phone (or SOMEwhere) so that you have it handy!

**Some Dates of Interest:** Aug. 14 – Sep. 5, 2023: Apply for Graduation activation period  
Sat. Aug. 26: Regular Drop Deadline  
Sun. Aug. 27: Regular Add Deadline  
**Mon. Sep. 4: NO CLASSES – Labor Day**  
Fri. Nov. 10: Late Drop Deadline  
**Nov. 19 - 25: NO CLASSES – Thanksgiving Break**  
Fri. Dec. 8: Last Day of Classes  
Dec. 11 - 15: Final Exams

**Syllabus subject to change:** I anticipate that we will follow the schedule I have outlined here, but I may adjust it based upon what happens this semester. Be sure to check with a classmate after an absence to see if assignments have changed. I may also change basis for the course grade. If I do so, I will communicate this in a reasonable method.

**Remaining in the course after reading this syllabus (which is a requirement of the course) signals that you accept the possibility of changes in the course policies and responsibility for being aware of them.**