Faculty Information

Title                Assoc. Prof. Physics
Instructor           Dr. Ann Schmiedekamp
Office Phone         215-881-7572
Office Fax           215-881-7623
Office Address       217 Woodland
Office Hours         MWF 11am-12pm
                      WF 12-1pm
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Course Information

Credits                     1
Course 001
Section 017
Location 121W
Times Friday 3:00-3:50 pm
Start Date Aug. 31, 2007

Required Text


Course Objectives

Introduction to skills needed for university students through critical investigation of the question of extraterrestrial life

Tentative Schedule

Aug 31 Introductions, syllabus, email assignment
Sept 7 Introduction and Chapter 1, "Why life may be widespread in the universe"
Sept. 14 Introduction to the library; library database assignment
Sept. 21 Chapter 2, "Habitable Zones"
Sept. 28 Chapter 3 "Building a Habitable Earth"
Oct. 5 Extremophiles; usage of the web for research
Oct. 12 Chapter 4 "Life's first appearance on Earth"
Oct. 19 elion training
Oct. 26 Chapter 6, "Snowball Earth"
Nov. 2 Chapter 7 "Mass Extinctions and the Rare Earth Hypothesis"
Nov. 9 Extrasolar Planets, interpretation of graphs, Chapter 11, "Testing the Rare Earth Hypothesis"
Nov. 16 SETI; website evaluation, Group project assignments
Nov. 23 No class. (Happy Thanksgiving)
Nov. 30 "Drake Equation", calculating with spreadsheets, Chapter 12, "Assessing the Odds"
Dec. 7 Group project presentations
December 14 Group Project presentations

Course Requirements

Internet Access
Penn State access account

Course Prerequisites

None

Grading Policy

Weekly assignments, classwork and quizzes 75%
One or more weekly assignments will be given. If a student is absent, he/she is responsible for contacting the instructor to obtain missed assignments and work is due the next class day, regardless of the absence. Quizzes may not be made up but one quiz or classwork grade will be subtracted from the total points to accommodate an unavoidable, legitimate absence.
Group panel (powerpoint) presentation 25%
(Every student must deliver an oral powerpoint presentation in order to receive this part of the grade.)

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be recorded (only one unexcused absence allowed without penalty). The student is responsible for obtaining assignments when absent and assignments are expected on time.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students at Penn State University. Any reasonable proof of academic dishonesty in the completion of a quiz or homework, may result in sanctions against the student, which may include a grade of zero on an exam, quiz or assignment. Please consult the Abington College Academic Integrity Policy for explanation of what is considered a violation.
http://www.abington.psu.edu/psasite/cs/shared/Registrar/academicintegritypolicy.html

Examination Policy

See grading policy.

Disability Access Statement

Penn State encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have a question about disability services, please contact Anne Prior, Room 315 Sutherland, 215-881-7537.

Additional Information

Respect for a proper academic climate during class is expected of all students. Please turn off cell phones before entering the classroom to avoid disruption.