ASTRONOMY 4

Solar System Astronomy
De Anza College
Spring 2026

Instructor: Eric Peterson, Ph.D.
Email: PetersonEric@fhda.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:00 to 4:50 p.m. on Zoom

Textbook: https://openstax.org/details/books/astronomy
(Select your preferred option under the header: Get This Book.)

Introduction to Astronomy 4

Astronomy 4 is an introductory-level course which concentrates on the planets of our solar system and what we have learned about them in the past 50 years of space exploration. The course has no prerequisites. However De Anza College does advise the following: English Writing 1A or English as a Second Language 5. The class is taught with the non-science major in mind.

Class Format

I am trying to keep things simple. Each week I would like you to do the following:

1. Read the assigned reading for that week
2. Watch assigned powerpoint lecture(s)
3. Watch assigned video(s)
4. Take a short quiz

The reading assignments are on the next page of the syllabus. In addition there will be a midterm exam during week six and a final exam the week of March 24th.

Exams and Grades

Your class grade will be based on weekly quizzes, a midterm exam, and a comprehensive final exam. All will be online through Canvas. The quizzes will constitute 50% of your grade; your two lowest quiz scores will be dropped. The midterm and the final will each be 25% of your grade. The questions will all be of the T/F or multiple choice variety.

Please note: The Final Exam must be passed in order to pass the class.

Reading Assignments

	Week of	**Chapter**
1.	April 6	1, 2.1-2.3
2.	April 13	2.4, 3, 4.1-4.2, 4.5-4.7
3.	April 20	5-6
4.	April 27	15-16
5.	May 4	7, 14.3-14.5, 21.3-21.6
6.	May 11	8
7.	May 18	9
8.	May 25	10
9.	June 1	11-12
10.	June 8	11-12
11.	June 15	13, 14.1-14.2
12.	June 22	Final Exam

Student Learning Outcome(s):

• Appraise the benefits to society of planetary research and exploration.
• Compare and contrast the development of planetary systems and of the major panet types, including those factors that have led to Earth's unique characteristics.
• Evaluate astronomical news items or theories concerning solar system astronomy based upon the scientific method.

Office Hours:

T	4:00 PM - 4:50 PM	Zoom
W	4:00 PM - 4:50 PM	Zoom