

In the existing undergraduate curriculum for astronomy majors, there are no astronomy classes prior to Astron 291, which is usually taken at the beginning of the second year of study. There is significant attrition in the major during the first year and we suspect that one factor is the lack of engagement of the majors with the astronomy program during this first critical year. The goal of this class is to better engage the prospective astronomy majors with the Department at an early stage. We have piloted this course in Au08-Wi08 as a group studies course and believe that it has been very successful in better engaging our majors.