

Astronomy 2142

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To: Pinsonneault, Marc <pinsonneault.1@osu.edu>

Cc: Steele, Rachel <steele.682@osu.edu>; Hilty, Michael <hilty.70@osu.edu>; Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>; Neff, Jennifer <neff.363@osu.edu>; Daly, Meg <daly.66@osu.edu>

Dear Marc,

I am happy to report that Astronomy 2142 was approved with one content contingency and three administrative contingencies (necessary items of every syllabus such as the religious accommodation statement.). The committee also has a friendly recommendation about listing Goals and ELOs of the GE. I list the contingencies and the recommendation below. The administrative contingencies require exact wording and you will find it below for copying and pasting into the syllabus. The course was reviewed by five faculty members representing several departments in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The reviewing faculty thank the department for their hard work on the course and observe that there have been many improvements made to the proposal. They are excited about the course's content, and hope that the following feedback will not only provide guidance on logistical requirements, but, more importantly, help the department to better communicate how this dynamic subject matter applies to the General Education, thus motivating students from a wide variety of colleges, majors, and backgrounds to enroll in the course.

1. **Contingency (Content):** The reviewing faculty ask that the department clarify for students how the course assessments and activities will meet ELO 2.2, especially in regard to reflection and self-assessment. While the reviewing faculty acknowledge the information provided in GEN submission form ("...at several points throughout the course students are asked "what surprised you the most?" about a particular topic, and why. The answers to this question are sometimes startlingly insightful."), they would like to see this incorporated into the syllabus so that students are aware of how self-reflection will be a part of their learning and the evaluation(s)/assessment(s) of that learning throughout the course. To that end, the reviewing faculty offer the following suggestions for how this might easily be incorporated into the existing course structure:
 - a. The reviewing faculty note that the 4 "take-home assignments" are already spread throughout the semester and provide an excellent opportunity to include questions about how the course material has changed the way that students think about their own learning or their approach(es) to problems in other disciplines. Additionally, this could provide an opportunity for scaffolding the self-reflection so that students have some of their own thoughts to draw upon for the final essay. (Additional comment by Ila: Addressing this contingency entails adding a statement and an exercise that speaks directly to how students will become self-reflective learners)
 - b. Likewise, the reviewing faculty observe that the format of the in-class questions (considering questions individually and then in small groups over the course of the semester) could allow for similar scaffolding, as well as providing an opportunity for instructors and students to discuss their ideas about how they are learning, what might be surprising, where students are encountering challenges or "road blocks" and at what level students are grasping the material.

2. **Contingency (administrative):**

Student Life Disability Services Statement syllabus pg. 8. Please copy and paste the statement as presented below.

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are isolating while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, please let me know immediately. Those testing positive for COVID-19 should refer to the [Safe and Healthy Buckeyes site](#) for resources. Beyond five days of the required COVID-19 isolation period, I may rely on Student Life Disability Services to establish further reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

3. Contingency (administrative)

Religious Accommodations Statement syllabus pg. 9. Please copy and paste the statement as presented below.

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Office of Institutional Equity](#).

Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

4. Recommendation: While you are welcome and encouraged to have course-specific goals and learning outcomes (syllabus pg. 6 “The specific learning objectives for Astronomy 2142 (Black Holes)...”), the reviewing faculty request that these be listed separately from the GEN goals and ELOs and placed under their own heading, as these goals apply to all students, not just those using the course to satisfy a GEN requirement.

I will be happy to work on these with you in person or over zoom. This should be fairly quick but if you need me for anything, do let me know.

Thanks,

Ila

Ila Nagar

Associate Professor

Department of Near Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures