Course Report AS5001

Respondents: 1
Answer Count: 1
Answer Frequency: 100.00 %

. Teacher

Teacher

Adrianus Bik

. Number of students who took the exam

Number of students who took the exam

10

. Number of students who passed the course

Number of students who passed the course

8

. Description of changes since the previous time the course was given.

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- For the course book the 2nd edition of Dan Maoz' book "Astrophysics in a Nutshell" was used. There are some additions compared to the 1st edition.
- The lectures have been structured and redone to very closely follow the book, which lead in less emphasis on radiative transfer compared to the lectures of last year.

. What are the course's strong points according to the students (summary based on the numerical results as well as their free text answers)

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This course was meant to give an introduction to astronomy, which was appreciated by the students. It is there first full astronomy class and they enjoyed finally following a class in astronomy. The lectures and the book are generally appreciated by the students. Many students enjoyed the class.

. What are the course's weak points according to the students (summary based on the numerical results as well as their free text answers)

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More examples of exercises would have been useful. It was not clear to all students on exactly what they had to learn. Students felt they were not encouraged to reflect on their own learning during the course. Also not everybody felt that the course was well organised.

Some students felt that the course could exploit more the level of math and physics of the students in going into more depth here and there.

. The teacher's analysis of the course

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This was the first time for me to teach this course and also the first time this course was given as mandatory for the students. I can understand and agree to most feedback the students gave. The lecture have mostly been lectures and not too much questions to the students from my side. Also we had only 3 exercise sessions, covering the 12 lectures, with almost each lecture a different field in astronomy. Many students did not do the exercises I suggested in advance, so they did not manage to cover all exersizes in these 2 hours per exercise session. I liked the book a lot. The only critics I would have is that the level of the exercises goes up a lot in the book, and the questions in the last few chapters are significantly more challenging then those in the beginning. Going in to more depth in this course is difficult as many concepts need to be covered which are mathematically not difficult, but require a bit of a different way of thinking (estimating what are the important parameters/relations). Looking at the final grades, I am also not sure that the level of physics/math should be increased.

. Conclusions as well as suggestions for improvements

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Two improvements I can think of immediately:

1) Introduce more exercise session, probably 1 per week would be a better idea. Then they have more time to work on them together. The 12 lectures are needed to cover the topics of the course, so there should be additional afternoon sessions added.

2) Improve the lectures by adding more questions to the students and making it more interactive.