

## **DESCRIPTIVE ASTRONOMY**

*Professor: Kevin Mackay, Ph.D.*

Hello everyone. I'm Kevin Mackay. I'm the instructor of Descriptive Astronomy. I've been teaching, I've been a teacher of astronomy for over 20 years, and I'm really, really passionate about the subject. Over the course of the next couple of months, we'll be covering a lot of different subjects about astronomy. You'll see in your syllabus the modules and the kind of stuff that we're going to be talking about. But essentially, we're going to be doing this. We're going to be starting off on the earth, and then we're going to be going out into space and learning lots of really, really cool things on the way.

Hopefully, by the end of the semester, by the end of this course, you will have a great passion and understanding of astronomy and you'll have a better understanding of the whole universe and your place within it.

One of things that we're going to be dealing in the class itself, we're going to be dealing with being able to identify things in the nighttime sky. So being able to understand the way the Earth spins on its axis, and how the sky moves with relationship to the Earth's spin. You'll hopefully be able to identify how you can find your way around the nighttime sky, like how you can identify the Pole Star, and work out your directions so that you can get your bearings for where you are. And how you can appreciate how the sky changes throughout the seasons.

So hopefully, by the end of the semester you'll be able to identify, just by looking out at the sky, what direction you're looking. You'll hopefully be able to understand what season it is-- whether you're looking at a summer sky, or the spring sky, or the fall, or something like that. Hopefully, you'll get a better appreciation of the way the heavens work from the perspective of the Earth.

Humans have been interested in astronomy going back as long before even there were records. People have been looking up into the sky and trying to understand exactly what it is they see. That's one of the things that we're going to talk about this semester, is we're going to try to be able to identify things in the sky so we can get a better appreciation and understanding of the way our universe works.

I'm passionate about the subject. If you show any kind of passion and interest and love for the subject material as well, then you're going to do really, really well in this class. I can pretty much guarantee that that's going to be the case. Hopefully, we'll have a great time.