

**General Education Committee, Sub-Group 1 (Mark Meisel, Brenda Smith, and Mike Weigold)**  
**Report on the Review of AST 1002 for Spring 2012**  
**Final version of 26 April 2012, compiled by Meisel**

**1. Information provided about course to review:**

**BIOLOGICAL/PHYSICAL SCIENCES**

Course	Section	Period	Period	Instructor	Enrollment*
AST 1002 - P	0423	T 8-9	R 9	Jonathan Tan	73
	0425	T 2-3	R 3	Elizabeth Lada	25
	0426	T 5-6	R 6	Stephen Eikenberry	105
	0427	M W F 4		Haywood Smith	108
	0428	M W F 6		Charles Telesco	119
	6013	T 4	R 4-5	Soung-Chul Yang	79
	6032	M W F 7		Reba Bandyopadhyay	54

\* Information gathered by Meisel after review process started.

**2. Review of syllabuses (data compiled and links accessed on 12 April 2012)**

The Department has a webpage about General Education Courses and a summary of the links to the following information, see:

[http://www.astro.ufl.edu/education/undergraduate/undergraduate\\_courses.html](http://www.astro.ufl.edu/education/undergraduate/undergraduate_courses.html)

**Sect. Course Webpage**

0423 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~jt/teaching/ast1002/index.html>

0425 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~lada/ast1002.html> [1]

0426 NA from Department summary, NA from faculty webpage, version of 2011 links to Sakai.

0427 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~hsmith/AST1002.html>

0428 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~telesco/Current-AST1002.html>

6013 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~sczoo/Astronomy/ast1002.htm>

6032 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~reba/ast1002.html>

**Sect. Syllabus**

0423 [http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~jt/teaching/ast1002/syllabus\\_ast1002\\_tan\\_spr12.pdf](http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~jt/teaching/ast1002/syllabus_ast1002_tan_spr12.pdf)

0425 A hardcopy is distributed in class and is posted on the password protected class website.

0426 NA as 2012 webpage not available, version from 2011 is Sakai protected.

0427 The course webpage is the syllabus page for this section.

0428 [http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~telesco/Current-AST1002\\_files/AST1002-Syllabus-Spring2012.pdf](http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~telesco/Current-AST1002_files/AST1002-Syllabus-Spring2012.pdf) (Note: complete "syllabus" is a combination of webpage and bullets on it.)

6013 Only webpage given, and it does not contain information required in syllabus [2,3].

6032 <http://www.astro.ufl.edu/~reba/syllabus1002.pdf>

### **3. Contact with Instructor**

Once the “procedure” of the review was finally clarified to a qualitative level during the General Education Committee meeting of 16 March 2012, Meisel initiated contact with Professor Elizabeth Lada after a preliminary review of the course data available on the web. Professor Lada was also chosen by Meisel because he had worked with her on a CLAS committee, so it seemed like a good place to start. The initial email message, dated 21 March 2012, is provided in Appendix 1. It was copied to all instructors of the course, the Chair of Astronomy, and to Professor Mair. Since Meisel had been told about, but not copied on, the communication between the Chair of Astronomy and Professor Mair, he wanted to keep everyone informed of the start of the review activities.

### **4. Meeting with Instructor**

After some email exchanges, Meisel was able to meet with Professor Lada for about 45 minutes on 11 April 2012. A hardcopy of the syllabus was provided and discussed in detail.

### **5. Visit to Lecture**

Meisel visited the lecture on 12 April 2012, and other Sub-Group members were misinformed by Meisel about the location [1].

### **6. Steps for Generating a Report**

Meisel generated a DRAFT report and shared it with the Sub-Group members and Professor Lada. Comments and corrections were forward to Meisel. The original DRAFT report was revised to be significantly shorter, and this version of 19 April was circulated with all of the instructors and the Chair of the Department of Astronomy. After the correction of a few typos, the Final version was generated on 26 April.

### **7. Summary of Selected Facts**

A. The access to syllabuses is restrictive in some instances. In addition, there is no uniformity of webpage/syllabus layout, information, grading policies, and the use of different teaching tools that unambiguously connect to the “P” designation. A consistent policy about the use of clickers is not known. Attendance at the Final Exam is a variable that is instructor-specific.

B. One of two different textbooks is required, and the specific choice depends on the instructor. Both textbooks are considered to be similar in the material and the depth of presentation.

## 8. Recommendation

Sub-Group 1 is not able to establish if AST 1002 meets the General Education criteria for the “P” designation, as not all sections conform to the UF and General Education requirements for a syllabus [2,3]. Therefore, we recommend that the “P” designation be revoked. Presumably the Department will submit a new application that can be vetted by the entire General Education Committee, thereby providing the most efficient means to enlighten the Department about UF’s general education policies and the General Education Committee about AST 1002.

### Notes and References:

[1] Note that the location for Professor Lada’s classroom was listed as FLG 210 on her webpage but it is listed as FLG 280 on the Sakai protected syllabus. This lead to confusion on Meisel’s part, and he gave the wrong information to the other members of the Sub-Group. Consequently, they missed the lecture that Meisel attended on 12 April 2012. The webpage has been corrected.

[2] Present UF policy about the syllabus is given at: [http://www.aa.ufl.edu/Data/Sites/18/media/policies/syllabi\\_policy.pdf](http://www.aa.ufl.edu/Data/Sites/18/media/policies/syllabi_policy.pdf). This page is “hard to find” and not widely known, based on the data collected by talking to other faculty members. Nevertheless, the document contains a statement about publically accessible webpages being used. So, a syllabus protected by Sakai is not appropriate. NOTE: If one uses the Registrar’s page, <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/staff/policies.html>, and then clicks the hotlink about syllabi, <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/staff/policies.html#syllabi>, there is a hotlink about the UF policy, [http://www.ir.ufl.edu/fac\\_handbook/syllabi.htm](http://www.ir.ufl.edu/fac_handbook/syllabi.htm), which is a dead link.

[3] <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/syllabus.aspx>

## Appendix 1: Initial email from Meisel to Professor Lada

Date: Wed, 21 Mar 2012 11:55:06 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Mark Meisel <meisel@phys.ufl.edu>  
To: lada@astro.ufl.edu  
Cc: gesang@ufl.edu, mweigold@jou.ufl.edu, jt@astro.ufl.edu, eikenberry@astro.ufl.edu, hsmith@astro.ufl.edu, telesco@astro.ufl.edu, sczoo@astro.ufl.edu, reba@astro.ufl.edu, guzman@astro.ufl.edu, bamair@ufl.edu  
Subject: AST 1002 and General Education review

Professor Elizabeth Lada  
Department of Astronomy  
University of Florida  
Email: lada@astro.ufl.edu  
Phone: 352-392-2052 ext 214

CC: Sub-Group 1 Members of the General Education Committee [1]  
Other Instructors of AST 1002 in Spring 2012 [2]  
Chair of Astronomy, Professor Guzman  
Chair of the General Education Committee, Associate Provost Mair

RE: UF General Education Committee [3] review of "P" general education designation [4] of AST 1002

Dear Elizabeth,

As a member of the UF General Education Committee [3], I am contacting you about AST 1002 [2]. Specifically, I have placed on a subcommittee [1] that has been provided information about AST 1002 [2], and this subcommittee has been asked to review the "P" general education designation [4].

The Chair of the General Education Committee has informed me and other members of the subcommittee that he has informed the Chair of your Department about this process. I have not directly been involved in these communications, so I am copying this message to them so everyone is informed. In addition, this message is being copied to other instructors of AST 1002, based on the information that I was supplied [2]. Finally, to keep other members of the subcommittee informed about my work on this task, this message is copied to them.

I use the word "process" loosely, as I cannot provide you with a reference that provides a description of the items to be reviewed. I can state that the subcommittee is not involved in evaluating the teaching used in the presentation of course. In my mind, and I do not speak for the General Education Committee, I believe that I am being asked if the course:  
"...provide(s) instruction in the basic concepts, theories and terms of the scientific method,... focus(es) on major scientific developments and their impacts on society, science and the

environment,... (and if the students) formulate empirically-testable hypotheses derived from the study of physical process and living things and apply logical reasoning skills through scientific criticism and argument." [I made some small edits to Ref. 4, "Physical (P) and Biological Sciences (B)" description.]

At this time, I would like to arrange a time when I can come to your office and chat with you about this process. At that meeting, I would like to set a time to attend one of your lectures. Finally, I would like to discuss the extent to which your section is similar and dissimilar from the other sections being taught, i.e. the degree to which the material is coordinated in a given semester.

Thanks in advance,

Mark

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[1] Sub-Committees for Gen Ed Review of Courses, Group 1, Mark Meisel,  
Brenda Smith, Mike Weigold,  
<http://fora.aa.ufl.edu/University/JointCommittees/General-Education-Committee>

[2] Biological/Physical Sciences assignment for Spring 2012, Sub-Group  
1

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AST 1002 - P	0423	T 8-9 R 9	Jonathan Tan
	0425	T 2-3 R 3	Elizabeth Lada
	0426	T 5-6 R 6	Stephen Eikenberry
	0427	M W F 4	Haywood Smith
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	6013	T 4 R 4-5	Soung-Chul Yang
	6032	M W F 7	Reba Bandyopadhyay

[3] <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/purpose.aspx>

[4] <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/univ-req.aspx#area>

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Mark W. Meisel  
Department of Physics, University of Florida  
P.O. Box 118440, Gainesville, FL 32611-8440  
Voice: (352) 392-9147 (NPB B133)  
Fax: (352) 392-3591  
Email: [meisel@phys.ufl.edu](mailto:meisel@phys.ufl.edu)  
<http://www.phys.ufl.edu/~meisel>