



ASTR7913

Contemporary Research Techniques in Astrophysics

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2024

School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor and project advisor

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By email appointment.

Project Advisor

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By email appointment.

Project Advisor

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Project Advisor

Gayandhi De Silva

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By email appointment.

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit will introduce students to fundamental analysis techniques used in contemporary astrophysics. Students will undertake a series of projects in which they will reproduce key recent results from research papers. The projects will span a range of potential topics from radio astronomy, instrumentation, high resolution optical spectroscopy of stars, spatially resolved spectroscopy of galaxies, quantitative structure of galaxies, analysis of large survey data, and computational theory. After completion of this unit, students will possess the skills required to undertake a range of advanced research projects.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: demonstrate the skills required to undertake research across a broad range of topics in astrophysics.

ULO2: apply advanced knowledge of fundamental analysis techniques used in astronomy research.

ULO3: critically evaluate scientific outcomes in light of applied analysis techniques.

ULO4: effectively communicate the results of astronomical research in written and oral form.

ULO5: independently solve complex computational and technical problems related to astronomy research projects.

General Assessment Information

Unit Workload

For each of the four projects, students will be required to submit a written report that describes the research problem addressed, the techniques used, as well as the outcomes and conclusions. Each report should be submitted by the due date and time. Students will also be undergo an oral assessment for each project. Please note that the time listed against each assessment task is the estimated time required to complete the task *in addition to the time spent on the project itself*.

Requirements to Pass this Unit

To pass this unit you must achieve a total mark equal to or greater than 50%.

Late Assessment Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a **5% penalty** (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a grade of '0' will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at **11:55 pm**. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical concern.

For any late submission of time-sensitive tasks, such as scheduled tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, and/or scheduled practical assessments/labs, students need to submit an application for [Special Consideration](#).

Assessments where Late Submissions will be accepted

In this unit, late submissions will be accepted as follows:

- Project 1-4 – Yes, standard late penalties apply.

Special Consideration

The [Special Consideration Policy](#) aims to support students who have been impacted by short-term circumstances or events that are serious, unavoidable and significantly disruptive, and which may affect their performance in assessment. If you experience circumstances or events that affect your ability to complete the assessments in this unit on time, please inform the convenor and submit a Special Consideration request through ask.mq.edu.au.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Project 4	25%	No	Week 13
Project 2	25%	No	Mid-semester break
Project 3	25%	No	Week 11
Project 1	25%	No	Week 5

Project 4

Assessment Type ¹: Project

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12.5 hours

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **25%**

A report containing a written and oral component on the fourth of four projects undertaken during the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate the skills required to undertake research across a broad range of topics in astrophysics.
- apply advanced knowledge of fundamental analysis techniques used in astronomy research.
- critically evaluate scientific outcomes in light of applied analysis techniques.

- effectively communicate the results of astronomical research in written and oral form.
- independently solve complex computational and technical problems related to astronomy research projects.

Project 2

Assessment Type ¹: Project

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12.5 hours

Due: **Mid-semester break**

Weighting: **25%**

A report containing a written and oral component on the second of four projects undertaken during the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate the skills required to undertake research across a broad range of topics in astrophysics.
- apply advanced knowledge of fundamental analysis techniques used in astronomy research.
- critically evaluate scientific outcomes in light of applied analysis techniques.
- effectively communicate the results of astronomical research in written and oral form.
- independently solve complex computational and technical problems related to astronomy research projects.

Project 3

Assessment Type ¹: Project

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12.5 hours

Due: **Week 11**

Weighting: **25%**

A report containing a written and oral component of the third of four projects undertaken during the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate the skills required to undertake research across a broad range of topics in astrophysics.

- apply advanced knowledge of fundamental analysis techniques used in astronomy research.
- critically evaluate scientific outcomes in light of applied analysis techniques.
- effectively communicate the results of astronomical research in written and oral form.
- independently solve complex computational and technical problems related to astronomy research projects.

Project 1

Assessment Type ¹: Project

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12.5 hours

Due: **Week 5**

Weighting: **25%**

A report containing a written and oral component on the first of four projects undertaken during the unit.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- demonstrate the skills required to undertake research across a broad range of topics in astrophysics.
- apply advanced knowledge of fundamental analysis techniques used in astronomy research.
- critically evaluate scientific outcomes in light of applied analysis techniques.
- effectively communicate the results of astronomical research in written and oral form.
- independently solve complex computational and technical problems related to astronomy research projects.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Students will undertake four guided projects over the course of the semester, each coupled with

an academic advisor. Students will be expected to spend at least **one full day per week** on their projects, and will consult with the academic advisor in the weekly 2-hour workshops for help with problem solving. The first workshop in Week 1 will involve an introduction to the unit. The four projects will be computational in nature, so students will require access to either a laptop or desktop computer. There is no required text, and appropriate reading material will be made available by the academic advisors.

Methods of Communication

Communication will be via your **university email** or through **announcements on iLearn**. General queries regarding assessments and/or lecture/lab content should be placed on the iLearn discussion board. Queries of a more personal nature can be sent to the convenor (matt.owers@mq.edu.au) from your university email address.

COVID Information

For the latest information on the University's response to COVID-19, please refer to the Coronavirus infection page on the Macquarie website: <https://www.mq.edu.au/about/coronavirus-faqs>. Remember to check this page regularly in case the information and requirements change during semester. If there are any changes to this unit in relation to COVID, these will be communicated via iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Students will complete 4 mini-projects throughout the semester (N.B. the below ordering and titles of the projects may change -- see iLearn for the latest):

1. **Week 1:** Unit overview and introduction to the projects (2hr workshop)
2. **Weeks 2-4, Project 1:** Resolving the sources of gas ionisation in galaxies using optical spectroscopy. (Mentor: Matt)
3. **Weeks 5-7, Project 2:** Exploring Stellar and Circumstellar Chemistry and Dynamics with High-Resolution Spectroscopy. (Mentor: Devika)
4. **Weeks 8-10, Project 3:** Kinematics of HII regions using radio interferometry. (Mentor: Jo)
5. **Week 11-13, Project 4:** Discovering Galactic substructure with Large spectroscopic survey data (Mentor: Gayandhi)

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)

- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Changes from Previous Offering

We value student feedback to be able to continually improve the way we offer our units. As such we encourage students to provide constructive feedback via student surveys, to the teaching staff directly, or via the FSE Student Experience & Feedback link in the iLearn page.

Unit information based on version 2024.01R of the [Handbook](#)