Astronomical Ideas is not motivated by memorizing vocabulary, facts, or methods (e.g. plug-and-chug). Instead, our overarching goal is to develop scientific critical thinking while learning cool stuff about the universe. My grading policy is thus constructed to reward clear and thoughtful critical thinking as applied to astronomical problems and to not fully reward plugging and chugging, even if the technically correct answer is calculated.

Remember: I should be able to understand what question you were answering and why by looking at your assignment (i.e. without having to open up the textbook).

**My general grading policy is:**

- An attempt is made that includes something that is correct and relevant to the problem = 20% credit (1 point)

- Some correct ideas that are relevant to the problem/question, but fundamentally flawed in approach or seriously lacking in completeness = 40% credit (2 points)

- A correct approach is taken, but substantial flaws are present. Or a correct answer is expressed, but lacked thoughtfulness/depth/explanation as requested by the question = 60% credit (3 points)

- A pretty good answer that shows you understood the problem, how to solve it, what the relevant issues were, but something is wrong in the calculation or a small piece is missing. Or a correct answer that is expressed with some critical thought, but falls short of the articulated expectations = 80% credit (4 points)

- Truly excellent answer that shows work and/or thought process clearly, and demonstrates careful, critical thinking = 100% credit (5 points)

Recognition that something is not right about the answer adds at least 10% credit onto a problem’s score. Incorrect answers that demonstrate a solid line of reasoning or critical thought are also awarded a level of credit at my discretion.

There are often multiple ways that problems can be solved in this class, so complete homework solutions cannot and will not be provided. Please visit me during office hours if you need more guidance after looking at the solutions that are provided.