

Astronomy 640 “Accretion Power” Course Improvement Questionnaire				
Spring 2009	The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect student feedback that can be used to improve the course.			
	The formal SDSU course evaluation form is far too vague to provide specific recommendations for improvement; I hope this questionnaire will be more useful. All comments and answers should be anonymous, and since I probably will recognize your handwriting, please do not write comments on the questionnaire. If you have additional suggestions, please type them and attach to this questionnaire. Please return this form to my mailbox or slide under my door by May 13. <i>Thanks for your input and help in improving this course!</i>			
	Instructions: Please circle the number that best describes your opinion or preference.			
	The numbers mean the following: 1= strongly disagree 3= neutral or fine as is 5= strongly agree			
	Homework			
1	2	3	4	5
	the amount and level of difficulty of the homework was appropriate for a graduate level course (1= too easy; 5= too hard)			
	the grading of the homework was fair			
	the homework made me think about the material covered in the lectures			
	I would prefer fewer, but more in-depth, homework questions			
	prefer more mathematically challenging homework			
	prefer more computationally challenging homework (as in numerical problems requiring programming)			
	prefer more conceptually challenging homework (more focused on ideas than numerical values, requiring essay-type answers)			
	prefer more elaborate written comments on the graded homework			
	prefer more time spent in class going over homework solutions, at the expense of time spent on other things			
	the homework helped me learn the material			
	Exams and Grading			
1	2	3	4	5
	I would prefer more exams – two midterms instead of one			
	prefer to have occasional short quizzes, perhaps once every 2 weeks			
	the questions on the exam were fair and represented the material well			
	the amount of time for the midterm exam was adequate			
	the grading of the exam has been fair			
	I would prefer going over the exams solutions in more detail in class, at the expense of time spent on other things			
	Office Hours and Out-of-Classroom Experience			
1	2	3	4	5
	the amount of office hours were adequate (1=need more hours, 5=more than enough time was available)			
	the help I received during office hour visits was adequate			
	replies to my e-mail questions were helpful			
	the class website functions well (e.g. as a way to get information about the course)			
	the class website is useful as a tool to help learn some of the material in the course			
	the class syllabus is adequate			
	the websites were helpful (e.g. Sloan DSS, LaTeX info, Sag A*, the Level 5 Knowledgebase)			
	Textbooks and Reading Assignments			
1	2	3	4	5
	Peterson's AGN book is helpful for understanding the material in this course			
	Frank, King and Raine's Accretion Power textbook is helpful for understanding the material in this course			
	I would prefer additional books for this course, at a simpler level			
	the research papers we read were helpful in understanding specific topics in the course			
	I wish we were assigned more research papers to read			
	the popular articles we read (from Mercury Magazine, Sky & Telescope, Physics Today, etc.) were helpful			
	I wish we were assigned readings about more current topics in the field, not the older research papers			
	Class Topics			
1	2	3	4	5
	I prefer more emphasis on observational aspects instead of theoretical aspects of the topics covered			
	I prefer that we cover fewer topics, but in much more depth on those topics			
	prefer more time on AGN at the expense of covering other topics			
	prefer more time on interacting compact-object binary stars (CVs and LMXBs) than other topics			
	prefer more time on nebula astrophysics at the expense of other topics			
	prefer more time on theoretical WD, NS, BH structure (e.g. derivation of EOS, mass-radius relationship, general relativity)			
	prefer more time on WD, NS, BH populations (progenitors, demographics, statistics) and observed characteristics			
	prefer more time on observations of accretion disks			
	prefer more time on the theory of accretion disks			
	prefer more time be spent on current research topics, instead of background material			
	General Course Dynamics & Organization			
1	2	3	4	5
	the level of the material we cover seems appropriate for a graduate course (1=too easy, 5=too hard)			
	I would prefer faster paced lectures – the pace is just too slow			
	I would greatly appreciate handouts of the lecture material as it would definitely help me learn the material			
	I like the use of the chalkboard for derivations and as a lecturing medium			
	I would prefer the use of PowerPoint (or its equivalent) for the the lecturing and presentation medium			
	the background material we are expected to know is fair (e.g. programing, statistics+error analysis, thermodynamics, basic astronomy)			
	it is easy to ask questions in class when I don't understand something			
	when I ask a question in class, I usually get an answer that is helpful			
	the ordering of the material presented in class is logical and easy to follow			
	I like that we get to pursue a topic of our choice in great detail in our term papers (far more than the intro we get in the lectures)			
	the length of the term paper is just right (1=too short, 5=too long)			
	I wish that we were required to give a talk on our term paper because we gain experience in this difficult, but vital, skill			
	PLEASE ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS			