INTRODUCTION TO THE MAJOR

The UC Berkeley Astrophysics Undergraduate program prepares students to understand the world beyond our own! The Department of Astronomy endeavors to meet that need by providing students access to a broad spectrum of courses taught by prize-winning faculty, state-of-the-art facilities, first-class scientists and researchers, and opportunities to conduct research projects. The Astrophysics major provides students physical reasoning, computational and analytical skills and prepares them for a career in academia, data science, tech and space industry, and many other fields.

“I like the closeness of the Astronomy department, how there are frequent chances to interact with other undergraduates, graduates, postdocs, and faculty alike.”

– Nicholas Rui, Class of ‘20

THE ASTROPHYSICS CURRICULUM

Berkeley Astronomy courses cover an array of topics. The lower division ASTRO 7A & 7B courses give a comprehensive overview of our Universe, from exoplanets to cosmology. The upper division courses offer an in-depth view on planetary astrophysics (162), stellar physics (160), and relativistic astrophysics and cosmology (161). Our program stands out by its unique and rigorous lab courses, including the optical-IR (120), the radio astronomy (121), and the data science (128) labs. Courses are taught by expert faculty, ensuring a more enlightened and thorough educational experience.
Explore your major

Meet with your Astro advisor and L&S advisor to discuss your academic plans.
Review major and college requirements. See the 4-year major plan video for example plans.
Complete MATH 1A + 1B and PHYSICS 5A/7A.
Learn more about the major with the Astrophysics FAQ, Piazza page, and Berkeley Astronomy Wiki.

Connect and build community

Sign up for the Astronomy mailing list and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
Join the Undergraduate Astronomy Society.
Participate in the Astro Buddy Program, Berkeley Connect, or L&S Mentors Program.
Take advantage of (STEM) community and resources from programs like Cal NERDS and EOP.

Discover your passions

Apply for the Astronomy Scholars Program or Berkeley SEEDS Scholars Program.
Attend the Undergraduate Research and Scholarships Fair in October.
Get involved in campus research with ULAB.
Enroll in Howard Isaacson’s “Introduction to research” course in the summer after your first year.

Engage locally and globally

Attend the Calapalooza student activities fair and get involved with a student organization.
Find service opportunities through the Public Service Center.
Explore study, internship, and research abroad options with Berkeley Study Abroad or Berkeley Global Internship.

Reflect and plan your future

Attend the Astrophysics “Success after Berkeley” seminar series on academic resources, graduate school, career development and more.
Visit the Career Center and Career Counseling Library. Sign up for Handshake and CareerMall.
Explore career fields through the Career Connections Networking Series or a winter externship.

FIRST YEAR

SECOND YEAR

THIRD YEAR

FOURTH YEAR

Complete MATH 51, PHYSICS 89/MATH 54, PHYSICS 89B + 1C7C and ASTRO 7A + 7B.
Take Astro Python coding DeCal course, PHYSICS 73B/88, or CS 61A.
Submit the required forms to declare the major to your major advisor.
Get access to Campbell Hall for use of lab space, KAIR room, and study lounge.

Focus on upper division requirements and electives.
Review your degree progress with your major and college advisor. See the Astro Degree Check Template and Advising Table.
Enroll in ASTRO 198: Introduction into Research (you must already be involved in research).

Do a Degree Check to ensure you are on track to graduate.
Complete any “bucket list” courses and remaining major, college, and campus requirements.
Register for the department and campus-wide commencement ceremonies.

Meet with a Career Center counselor. Astro Advisor or Undergraduate Faculty Advisor to discuss your career options and goals.
Learn about graduate and professional school. See Step-by-Step for planning help.
Consider an internship and attend internship fairs. Try some self-assessment activities to explore different directions within Astrophysics.

Apply to jobs, graduate school, and other opportunities.
Planning to go to graduate school? Apply to the NSF-GRFP and other fellowships.
Utilize job search tools from the Career Center.
Meet employers at Employer Info Sessions and On-Campus Recruiting.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH MY MAJOR?

The undergraduate program prepares students for astrophysics graduate work or other advanced degrees in related science and engineering fields. It also prepares students for careers in teaching or for working in data science and other technical fields. Our students graduate with research and lab experience, computational and analytical skills, and an education that will position them in their chosen fields and professional endeavours.

Jobs and Employers

Chemist, Argonne National Lab
Data Scientist, Lockheed Martin
Mission Integration Engineer, SpaceX Process Engineer, DiCon Fiberoptics
Quantitative Analyst, BoFA Research Asst., Cambridge University
Research Intern, NASA-Ames Ctr.
Scientist, Stanford University
Scientist, James Webb Space Telescope
Software Engineer, Amazon
Software Engineer, Samsung
Tutor, Cal Education

Graduate Programs

Applied Mathematics, PhD
Astronomy, PhD
Astrophysics, PhD
Chemical Engineering, PhD
Computer Science, PhD
Data Science, PhD
Earth and Planetary Science, PhD
Geophysics and Seismology, PhD
Neuroscience, PhD
Physics, PhD

Examples gathered from the First Destination Survey of recent Berkeley graduates.

Updated Last: 032921

Bachelor of Arts

ASTROPHYSICS

DESIGN YOUR JOURNEY

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Data Scientist, Lockheed Martin
Mission Integration Engineer, SpaceX Process Engineer, DiCon Fiberoptics
Quantitative Analyst, BoFA Research Asst., Cambridge University
Research Intern, NASA-Ames Ctr.
Scientist, Stanford University
Scientist, James Webb Space Telescope
Software Engineer, Amazon
Software Engineer, Samsung
Tutor, Cal Education

Graduate Programs

Applied Mathematics, PhD
Astronomy, PhD
Astrophysics, PhD
Chemical Engineering, PhD
Computer Science, PhD
Data Science, PhD
Earth and Planetary Science, PhD
Geophysics and Seismology, PhD
Neuroscience, PhD
Physics, PhD

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Scientist, Stanford University
Scientist, James Webb Space Telescope
Software Engineer, Amazon
Software Engineer, Samsung
Tutor, Cal Education

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Astronomy, PhD
Astrophysics, PhD
Chemical Engineering, PhD
Computer Science, PhD
Data Science, PhD
Earth and Planetary Science, PhD
Geophysics and Seismology, PhD
Neuroscience, PhD
Physics, PhD

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