

## THE NEW “TEACHING” SECTION ON THE SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE D’ASTRONOMIE ET D’ASTROPHYSIQUE (SF2A) WEBSITE

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**Abstract.** We present the recently (spring 2008) created “Teaching” section of the *Société Française d’Astronomie et d’Astrophysique* (SF2A) website. This section was created to foster interactions between the researchers who deliver astronomy and astrophysics courses of various kinds (academic courses, e-formations, practical work, conferences, etc) to students at all levels, from the general public to PhD students in France. In particular, thanks to contributions from numerous institutes, the site now contains a directory of astronomy classes for the general public, *Licence*, master and e-learning. It will soon list astronomy courses for primary, middle and high school teachers, as well as for PhD students (*Ecoles Doctorales* and post-master teaching). This teaching directory will be regularly updated and refined in order to provide an accurate picture of the Astronomy teaching landscape in France.

### 1 Purpose of the “Teaching” section on the SF2A website

Astronomy and Astrophysics classes are taught countrywide at several levels, from educating primary, middle and high school teachers to PhD students in Astronomy, through *licence* and master students in science and now the general public. This teaching is delivered under various forms: undergraduate and graduate general or optional academic courses, observational and practical work, workshops, e-formations (where the class content is electronic and available on the web, with the teacher interacting from a distance), etc.

This very diverse offer is supported by scientific researchers from numerous universities and research institutions in France. Astronomy is a very attractive subject to students and can be taught by itself or as an application from mathematics, physics, computer science courses or engineering techniques. Given the current indisposition of young people for scientific careers, this widely appreciated discipline ought to be used to attract more students toward a scientific academic education.

We decided to create the “Teaching” section on the SF2A website to fulfill two main objectives:

1. highlight the existing teaching effort in astronomy countrywide and foster interactions between the researchers (and their home institution or university) who are involved in astronomy teaching at all levels
2. offer an up-to-date, as exhaustive as possible, directory of the teaching in astronomy in France. This directory is mainly dedicated to (with no particular order):
  - students looking for Astronomy and Astrophysics academic education opportunities
  - primary, middle and high school teachers looking for an astronomy education adjusted to their level of scientific knowledge (to re-invest it in class or simply out of personal curiosity)
  - scientific researcher in search for teaching opportunities in a particular institution
  - public outreach presenter in search of an astronomy degree
  - any person who is interested in developing a knowledge in astronomy (several attractive offers are now available for the general public, see for instance Roques et al. proceedings SF2A 2008)

The SF2A website, whose mission is to help the development and diffusion of astronomy in France, is the ideal location to host such “Teaching” information pages.

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Fig. 1. A screen capture of the directory for the *Licence* level. Address : <http://www.sf2a.asso.fr>, tab “Enseignement”

## 2 Content

### 2.1 The Astronomy courses directory

The first version of the directory was created in June 2008. It was based on a SF2A mailing list survey. Numerous responses were collected and about 80 entries were published on-line. This draws the first lines of what should be a more complete picture of the Astronomy teaching landscape. The directory is divided into the following sections:

- Astronomy courses at the “Licence” level (*Enseignement au niveau Licence (L1, L2 et L3)*)
- Astronomy courses at the Master level (*Enseignement au niveau Master (M1, M2 recherche et M2 pro)*)
- *Diplômes d’Université* in Astronomy
- e-learning (homeschooling in Astronomy): *les formations à distance*

Every entry lists the following (see Fig. 1): the institute name, the course’s title, the pedagogic director name and email, the (academic) level, the university credits delivered (if any), the type (talk, practical work, etc) and length (in hours) of the course and the address of the related website (if any).

More sections are foreseen and should be completed by the end of 2008 :

- Graduate schools in Astronomy and Astrophysics (*Ecoles Doctorales*) and post-master teaching
- Astronomy teaching dedicated to primary, middle and high school teachers

### 2.2 Other material

In this “Teaching” section, several documents will be posted and made available to the community: call for contributions and program of the “Teaching” session at the *Journées de la SF2A*, reports on this session with presentations available as PDF files, any think-piece or document of interest for the teaching community.

### 3 How to contribute

This live information is reliable and accurate only if the web-pages and the directory are regularly updated. This is where all researchers involved in any Astronomy or Astrophysics teaching should play a role and send to the SF2A website “Teaching” section manager (see email contact information on the web-page) the current information on their courses and the astronomy degrees delivered.

A call for new, updated or to-be-removed contributions to the “Teaching in Astronomy” directory will be sent the beginning of every April (e.g. when students are looking for education opportunities for the next academic year) and beginning of every October (e.g. when classes and other activities have actually started). Volunteer email contributions are accepted year-round.

With this managing, we expect to have a quite complete picture of the Astronomy teaching in France by researchers in science by May 2009. It will then be kept as up-to-date as possible.

In the future, we expect that an on-line form available to all teachers at anytime will be created, in the same spirit as the SF2A professionals in Astronomy directory currently in service. This on-line form will guarantee an even more efficient update of the directory of the Astronomy teaching in France.

