

ASTR 1050 Survey of Astronomy

Incidental Projects

Purpose

Enrich your astronomy knowledge outside of the scheduled classroom meetings and communicate your knowledge in ways that are meaningful to you.

What Incidental Projects are

These are astronomy-related activities of your choice, each of which earns you points based on how much work I estimate the activity requires. You may accumulate up to 150 points from any combination of the projects, which constitute 15% of the course grade.

Some Project Ideas

These are some projects that I can think of, with maximum point values. You are encouraged to propose others; we can negotiate their point values.

Physical model of an astronomical object (150 points)

Make a cutaway model of a planet, moon, or similar object. If you can think of a way to model a galaxy (I can't), go for it.

Two of our labs constitute making a 3-D model of a constellation (or part of one that fits), so a model for this assignment should be something else.

Report on a current astronomer (100 points)

Interview an active astronomer. (There are several in the Department of Physics and Astronomy here at the University of Wyoming.) Report in writing or verbally on what they investigate, what tools they use to study it, and what they have learned.

Report on a historical astronomer or Astrophysicist (80 points)

Report briefly (five minutes or less) to the class about the contributions of a historical worker in the field.

Report on an astronomy book (100 points)

Read a popular book on astronomy. Some examples include *The Big Bang* by Simon Singh, *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking, *Bad Astronomy* by Phil Plait, anything astronomical by Neil DeGrasse Tyson, *Bang!!* By Brian May et al., etc. Report on the book orally to the class in five minutes or less.

Attend a planetarium show (40 points)

The University of Wyoming has its very own Harry C. Vaughn planetarium, underground between the Classroom, Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences buildings. It presents shows purely for entertainment as well as educational astronomy shows. (Tickets to astronomy shows cost something like \$5.) Attend an educational astronomy show and show me your ticket.

Report on a planetarium show (40 points)

This is in addition to just going to the show. Recount what the show covered. Identify at least one thing that you learned.

Attend an evening stargazing session (40 points)

Come out one evening that I schedule to look at sky stuff.

Report on an evening stargazing session (40 points)

Recount what you saw at the stargazing session. Identify at least one thing that you hadn't seen before.

Ask a question about class (20 points)

A valid question, about the topic at hand. Ask the question during the lesson or within 24 hours. Limit one per person per lecture.