

# Observing Project Guidelines:

Observational Astronomy Winter '08-09

Now that you've chosen an observing project, here's the scoop on just what you have to do to receive credit for your project:

1. **Write a proposal.** (typewritten and spell checked, please) Specifically:
  - What question (s) are you trying to answer?
  - What are you going to be observing?
  - What equipment do you need and where are you going to get it and set it up?
  - Method that you are going to use to answer your question (s).
  - A page of research on your methods and object. This might include a history of observations like your own, techniques that others have used to observe your object, and any other relevant background information. Detailed bibliography should be attached.
  - Specific dates and times that you will be observing with weather fallback dates.
  - A description of the final product/results. What do you hope to have as tangible evidence to answer your question (s)?

A draft of the proposal should be submitted to me as a word or pdf document attachment to an email by 6 pm on Sunday Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>. (I will allot 45 minutes on Monday during class to work on these) We will discuss these individually in class on January 28. You will have time to work on revisions on Wednesday, Jan 30<sup>h</sup>, and then submit them via email before going to Quebec. I'll hand them back to you on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of February and during class that day, you can work on your presentations for peer review that will be given on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup>. Final proposals are due via email on the 7<sup>th</sup> by 6pm.

2. **Observe!** Spend at least 5 hours observing over the course of the project.
3. **Tell me about what you observed!** You will submit a draft paper (typewritten and spell checked) due on Monday the 3rd of March, via email (as a pdf file or word document) which will contain the following:
  - An introduction that serves to describe your project, reiterate what question you were asking, and generally get the reader up to speed on what you did.
  - A revised methods and equipment section in which you describe how you did the project. This should mirror what you did in the proposal, so it might just need to be updated with any changes.
  - Detailed observing log which states dates, times, observing location, meteorological conditions, and any other pertinent details about the observing session.
  - A page that summarizes your work and what you learned. Tell us a story about your struggles, your challenges, and your successes.
  - A page that answers your question (s) and presents your conclusions.
  - Drawings, graphs, photographs, etc. that are the actual evidence of your observations.
  - Five questions that came to you during the course of this project that pertain to what you did or what you saw.
  - A conclusion that sums up your project's findings.After my comments, you will revise your paper and hand in the final draft on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March.
4. This paper will serve as the genesis of a 10-minute presentation of your project that you will give a draft of in class on Monday the 3<sup>th</sup> of March. We will present to the wider community on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Tips towards a successful observing project:

- Do lots of preliminary research to see what others have done before you.
- Don't wait until the last minute to observe. Cloudy weather will not serve as an excuse!
- Ask me lots of questions!