

Astronomy 103H: Project Description

All students in astronomy 103 are required to complete an independent project worth 10% of their final grade in the course. Students are expected to present their project at a public science fair and answer questions related to it. Your instructor, another instructor, and several students will score your project at the fair. Since the grading will be subjective, the averaging of several scores is appropriate.

The goal of the project is to allow students to apply what they have learned in the course in a creative manner. **This is not a report!** It is assumed that students will choose to do a project on something in which they are interested or have expertise. There is evidence from educational research showing that students can achieve great things when working with new subject matter within their “comfort zone”.

Some project ideas are listed below, but students are encouraged to broaden this list. Risk taking will be rewarded. **Projects should clearly state their purpose, intended audience, and the thought process behind all design decisions.** Projects that have been done previously include:

- Astronomy Games – past projects have included trivial pursuit-type games, candyland, and jeopardy.
- Computer-based resources – video tours of a subject, World Wide Telescope tours
- Educational Research – Survey the public on their astronomy knowledge
- Children’s Books – story books (illustrating concepts) or activity books
- Tracing the development of historical thought

Some new ideas include:

- Evaluating the scientific realism of fictional literature
- Creating an astronomy diagnostic test on a particular topic
- Develop a suite of peer instruction questions on a topic

Students are encouraged to look at the projects completed by former students. These projects for the most part received very high grades.

Poster boards of different sizes will be available. Students are expected to explain their project through powerpoint slides mounted on the poster board. Rather than having fixed requirements – students are asked to evaluate what is most appropriate for the presentation of their project.

To prevent misunderstandings, you are required to submit a project specification form to your instructor. Your instructor will provide feedback on this specification. It is preferable to have this done before fall break.

Astronomy 103H: Project Specification Form

Project Title: _____

General Description: _____

Description of Intellectual Content: _____

How will you ensure scientific accuracy? _____

Describe how this would be presented in a public forum: _____

What do you need from your instructor to help you? _____
