Astronomy 202: Our Home in the Solar System

Paper 1

Astronomy touches on some of the "Big Questions". How did the Universe form? How did the solar system form? How do planets work? Is life common, or are we alone? Each of us has our own personal thoughts, philosophies, theories, and speculations on questions like this, garnered from our unique backgrounds, experiences, and education. Presumably, you are taking this course because you are curious about these and other similar Big Questions, and want to engage a small band of like-minded fellow planetary travelers in some interesting discussions and perhaps even debates on such topics.

Write a short essay describing your personal interests, experiences, and thoughts relating to:

(1) Why are you taking this course? and
(2) What do you hope to learn?

Note that there are no "wrong answers" in this assignment; your grade will be based on whether or not you address both of the questions in boldface type above, on the clarity of your presentation, and on your ability to effectively organize complex arguments in a succinct way.

(Rules: 1-2 pages maximum in double spaced 12 point font, which is typically around 500 words.)

Due at beginning of class, Thursday Jan. 31, 2008.