Astronomy 202: Our Home in the Solar System

Paper 5

Most scientists begin their new research projects with a proposal. A proposal is a document that describes in detail the specific scientific objectives of the research and places the expected findings into a broader context within the field of study. Successful proposals provide a clear discussion of the history and motivation for the research (What's been done? Why is this interesting? Who cares?), a description of the specific tasks or activities to be performed (What will be done and how and why?), and a discussion of how future scientific research on this topic will advance our understanding (What new things can be learned? What studies are scientists planning?).

For Paper 5, we are asking you to write a short proposal describing the topic for your end-of-semester (May 1) poster and poster presentation (which is your "final exam" for Astro 202). Remember, your topic can be original research or a review of the existing information or theories on a topic of your choice, but related to the general types of topics that we have covered during Astro 202. If you have a topic in mind but are not sure if it is appropriate, ask Kassie or Profs. Campbell or Bell soon. Your proposal should be specific and follow the guidelines for successful proposals listed above.

Just like real proposals to NASA or other agencies, your proposal will be graded as either accepted or rejected. Most rejected proposals are rejected because they are vague rather than specific. Rejected proposals will need to be rewritten and resubmitted, until they are accepted (with a 2 point penalty assessed for each rejection). Resubmitted proposals will be due on the next class after the graded proposal is returned.

Good luck!

Rules: 2-3 pages maximum in double-spaced 12 point font, which is typically around 500 to 800 words.

Due: Beginning of class, Thursday April 3, 2008