

Presentations

Your main work for this course is to create - and showcase - 2 science communication presentations on astronomy topics of your choosing. These will be lots of fun, and are expected to take several hours of work to research, prepare, and produce. We will have benchmark assignments along the way, and lots of time to work on presentations and practice in class.

Regardless of presentation format, students will present to the class during designated presentation days. Part of your grade is attending these and providing feedback to each presenter! Come prepared to make these fun celebrations of your effort.

Topics

If you're unsure what topics to choose for your presentation content, here are a list of suggestions... definitely pick something in astronomy that excites YOU!

- Solar System Space Missions (e.g. Juno, Cassini)
- Mars Rovers
- Killer Asteroids
- Sunspots
- Solar Flares, and the "Carrington Flare"
- Exploding Objects
- Hunting for Exoplanets
- How Black Holes Work
- Why Pluto is No Longer a Planet
- Big Bang Theory
- The Early Universe
- Nebulae and Supernovae
- Galaxy Collisions
- Scale of the Universe
- Scale of the Solar System
- Weird Stars
- Awesome Extrasolar Planetary Systems (e.g. Tatooine)
- Considerations for Life on Other Planets
- SETI and the search for aliens
- Weather on Other Planets
- The James Webb Space Telescope
- X-ray vision (i.e. Multiwavelength Astronomy)
- The Case for a Multiverse
- The Future of the Universe
- Hubble Space Telescope Greatest Hits

Format

The following formats for presentations are allowed and encouraged:

- Planetarium Show
- Public Talk
- Podcast
- Article or Blog Post
- Video Essay or Vlog
- Telescope Presentation

Students are welcome to pitch other media formats or presentation styles, provided they have a clear science communication focus. Instructors will give feedback as needed on the Pitches, and help students find appropriate formats for their presentations.

Students must choose different formats for Presentation 1 and 2. *Planetarium Shows are especially encouraged!*

Note: You are not required to start a blog, YouTube page, podcast, etc... It is expected to just “mock up” what your content would look like on such a service. (For example, you could propose to make an episode for an existing show!)

Pitches

[10 points]

Students must submit a Pitch outlining their presentation idea. (These are listed as their own assignment in Canvas).

Pitches must include the proposed topic, format, and at least 2 references the student plans to draw information from. If the presentation includes an interview or a team member, this must be clearly stated, and a plan for how they will be carried out should be given.

Presentations

[100 points]

Presentation Length

Since students will be producing a wide range of presentation formats, there is no single rule for article or content length. **Presentations in class are expected to last around 5 minutes each.** All students must present, even if their content is a written article.

Cite Your Sources

Since you will need to do reading and research on your science topics, you must either include a list of sources used. For example, this could be done as a “fact checking” paragraph at the end of an article, spoken in the outro of your podcast, or put in the credits of your video. If you cannot include them naturally in your presentation, send this via an email to your instructor.

Topic Accuracy

This is an astronomy public outreach course, but you are not all astronomy majors. As such, being 100% accurate about astronomy facts is *not* a requirement. However, students are expected to do real background reading on their topic (i.e. *not just* a single website or article). Small errors in the science are OK, provided you are doing a good job with the science communication!

Group Work

Students are free to work in groups of 2. However, each student must have their own presentation or content to share. Groups may not be paired for both presentations.

Story is Key

You are NOT being evaluated for stage presence or speaking style. Your presentations will be graded on preparation, clarity of message, and effectiveness in communicating science using your chosen medium. Using basic elements of story structure is a good way to succeed here!

Feedback

[1 point per presentation]

All students must provide feedback via Canvas for each presentation (except their own). These must include:

1. Start with what you thought the make takeaway message was.
2. Say at least one thing you liked about it or something that was very effective.
3. Offer at least one suggestion for something that might improve the content or clarity of the message.

Due Dates

Presentations are expected to be given during one of the designated presentation dates:

- April 30 (Presentation 1, Day 1)
- May 2 (Presentation 1, Day 2)
- May 28 (Presentation 2, Day 1)
- May 30 (Presentation 2, Day 2)

If your content cannot fit within one of these presentation dates, it is the students responsibility to secure an alternate date and time with the instructors.

Pitch 1: Upload a PDF or document to [This Dropbox Link](#), due April 9, 2024.

Pitch 2: Upload a PDF or document to [This Dropbox Link](#), due May 2, 2024.