Final Project Observing Proposal Instructions

In lieu of a final exam, each student will write an observing proposal for telescope time. The proposal can request time on Arecibo, the Very Large Array or any telescope currently available via NOAO (http://ast.noao.edu/facilities). The proposal will use the same format and requirements as a professional proposal submitted to Yale (which is the same form used by NOAO). We will meet during reading week to simulate a Telescope Allocation Committee (TAC). Students will read and evaluate other proposals and decide who will get telescope time.

Schedule for Final Proposal:
1. November 14: One paragraph proposal idea due
2. December 1: Optional proposal draft due (first round comments provided)
3. December 8: Final proposal due, TAC assignments sent out
4. December 11: 1.5 hour TAC meeting

General Guidelines: Telescope time on all major astronomical telescopes is allocated via a proposal process. Many telescopes are oversubscribed (e.g., the Hubble Space Telescope is a factor of 10 oversubscribed, Yale telescopes are typically a factor of 2). Awarded time is decided by committee. Due to oversubscription, proposals must be well written and compelling to convince a committee that your science is worth supporting.

A proposal template is posted on the class website. The proposal must include an Abstract, one page (max) Science Justification, half to one page Experimental Design and half page Technical Justification. In addition, you must include a reference section and at least one Figure.

Proposal template + LaTeX: The majority of astronomical observatories require proposal preparation using the word processing software LaTeX. The proposal template and style file are available on the class website. We will discuss how to use this software further in class.

Pre-Proposal: A one paragraph proposal idea is due November 14th.

Optional Comments: As an option, if you turn in a draft proposal by December 1, I will read and provide comments by December 5. This round of comments will have no impact on your grade and is completely optional. There will be no extension for this option.

Final Proposals: Final proposals in PDF form should be emailed to Prof. Geha by noon on December 1.

TAC Preparation: In preparation for the TAC meeting, students are required to read all 6 proposals and submit proposal rankings via a web form provided (you will not rank your own proposal). In addition, each student will be assigned one primary proposal. As primary reviewer, you will be asked to give a 1 minute summary of the proposal during the TAC meeting and lead the discussion.
**TAC meeting:** The Telescope Allocation Committee will meet on December 11 for 1.5 hours (exact time TBA). This meeting will be run the same as a professional committee. We will begin by discussing the preliminary rankings and then discuss each proposal in turn (you will leave the room for the discussion of your own proposal). I will keep a written record of the discussion and send each of you a summary of the TAC comments. After all proposals are discussed, we will again rank the proposals.