

Maxwell A. Fine

Amsterdam, NL | max.fine@student.uva.nl | afinemax.github.io/afinemax1/ | github.com/afinemax

Education

University of Amsterdam	Sept 2023 – June 2025
Master of Science in Astronomy & Astrophysics	
University of Toronto	Sept 2018 – May 2023
Honours Bachelor of Science (HBCS) in Physics & Astrophysics	

Research Interests

Fast Radio Bursts (FRBs), The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), astrophysical transients, radio astronomy, pulsars, multi-messenger astronomy, radio interferometry, observational cosmology, scintillation, cosmic magnetism, techniques, surveys, algorithms, machine learning & data science in astronomy.

Technical Skills

I am highly skilled in Python, Linux, and experienced using packages such as Fetch Pytorch, TensorFlow, Pandas, Scikit-Learn, Presto, RM-TOOLS, HEASoft, Xspec, Matplotlib, Numpy, Scipy, and Astropy. I am skilled in data analysis, Bayesian analysis, time-series analysis, algorithm development, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), GPU computing (CUDA), Fourier analysis, signal processing, machine learning, deep learning, big data (Tb Scale), Git, Bash, Docker, cloud computing (AWS, GCP), and scientific computing. Additionally, I have moderate experience in C++, Julia, SQL, Kubernetes, and High-Performance Computing (HPC) environments.

Publications

Maxwell A. Fine, Cameron L. Van Eck, & Luke Pratley. (2023). "Correcting Bandwidth Depolarization by Extreme Faraday Rotation." *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*. [ArXiv link](#).

Awards

John Pounder Prize in Astronomy (3rd Year) , University of Toronto	Fall 2021
• Awarded to a full-time student entering the third year of a physical sciences program for having the highest grades in second-year astronomy courses (\$200).	
Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) , Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics	Spring 2021
• Awarded to support my second undergraduate research fellowship (\$6,000).	
Student Excellence and Leadership Award , University of Toronto	July 2020
• Awarded by the Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences (DPES) for academic excellence and community leadership. Recognized as a 'role model student', awarded to no more than one physics student per year (\$250).	
John Pounder Prize in Astronomy (2nd Year) , University of Toronto	Fall 2019
• Awarded to a full-time student entering the second year of a physical sciences program for having the highest grades in first-year astronomy courses (\$300).	

Research Experience

Deciphering the Local Environments of Repeating Fast Radio Bursts Using Scintillation	Sept 2024 – Present University of Amsterdam
<i>Master's Thesis; Advisors: Prof. Ziggy Pleunis & Prof. Jason Hessels</i>	
• Using scintillation to study the local environments of repeating FRBs detected by CHIME, focusing on emission size regions of repeating FRBs.	
• Investigating potential time variations in scintillation, which could provide insights into local environments, such as orbital periods.	

Real-Time Detection Pipeline for Repeating Fast Radio Bursts Using the Dwingeloo Radio Telescope (DRT)

June 2024 – August 2024
Astron & JIVE

Summer Graduate Student Research Fellow; Advisors: Dr. Tammo Jan Dijkema & Prof. Jason Hessels

- Operated the 25m [Dwingeloo Radio Telescope \(DRT\)](#), and developed a real-time detection pipeline for repeating FRBs in Python based on Fetch and Presto.
- Achieved data processing rates of ~ 1 Gb/s. Detected a burst from [FRB20240619D](#), showcasing the telescope's scientific capabilities. See the [GitHub repository](#) for this project.

Multi-wavelength search for Fast Radio Bursts with Swift/BAT

May 2022 – April 2023
University of Toronto

AST425 Undergraduate Thesis; Supervisors: Dr. Ziggy Pleunis, Dr. Paul Scholz, & Prof. Bryan Gaensler

- Started as a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship project.
- Conducted a search for X-ray, and gamma-ray counterparts from CHIME/FRBs using Swift/BAT and GUANO,
- Developed data pipelines and gained experience with multi-messenger astronomy using HEASoft, and XSPEC for fluence modeling.

Gravitational Waves from Magnetar Giant Flares

Dec 2021 – April 2022
University of Toronto

PHYD01 Undergraduate Thesis; Advisors: Dr. Sarah Gossan & Prof. Bryan Gaensler

- Investigated the detectability of gravitational wave emission from magnetar giant flares using next-generation ground-based detectors.
- Modeled toy gravitational waves and analyzed theoretical telescope sensitivity curves.

Developing Robust Error Analysis for Radio Polarization Surveys

May 2021 – August 2021
University of Toronto

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow; Advisor: Dr. Cameron L. Van Eck

- Tested one of the error analysis pipelines for the Polarization Sky Survey of the Universe's Magnetism (POSSUM) using the RM-Tools package.
- Identified and implemented a correction for an underestimated error in the analysis pipeline.

Hunting for Radio Sources in Extreme Magnetized Environments

May 2020 – August 2020
University of Toronto

Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow; Advisor: Dr. Cameron L. Van Eck

- Developed an improvement to the Rotation Measure (RM) synthesis algorithm in RM-Tools for cases with extreme bandwidth depolarization.
- Implemented a bandwidth depolarization version into the open-source package RM-Tools, and a published paper. See the [RM-Tools GitHub repository](#).
- Work led to my first-author paper published in *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*. See the paper on [ArXiv](#).

Invited Talks

Invited speaker, St. Johns River State College, Florida — Guest Lecture	Nov 2024
Expert panelist, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), New York — Discussion on antisemitism, anti-racism, and community resilience	Oct 2022

Conferences and Workshops Attended

Scintillometry Workshop 2024 (University of Central Florida)	Oct 2024
Fast Radio Burst follow-up workshop (University of Toronto)	April 2023

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant (TA), University of Toronto

PHYA10: Introduction to Physics I for the Physical Sciences	Fall 2021, Fall 2020
PHYA22: Introduction to Physics II for the Life Sciences	Winter 2021
PHYA11: Introduction to Physics I for the Life Sciences	Fall 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Led weekly 2-hour practical sessions for ~ 10-15 students.• Marked assignments and exams.	

Facilitated Study Group (FSG) Leader, University of Toronto

UofT PHYA10: Introduction to Physics I for the Physical Sciences

Fall 2020, Fall 2019

UofT PHYA21: Introduction to Physics II for the Physical Sciences

Winter 2020

- Led & organized review sessions for midterms and finals.
- Ran weekly 3-hour review sessions for ~10-15 students.
- Created practice problem sets for the review sessions, and attended lectures.

Community Engagement

Executive & Co-founder, University of Toronto Amateur Astronomy Society (UTAAS)

2022–2023

As a co-founder and executive member of UTAAS, helped organize outreach activities, including a field trip to observe the Perseid meteor shower and regular "sidewalk" astronomy telescope viewings in downtown Toronto.

For more information, visit the [UTAAS Instagram](#).

UofT Scarborough Campus Student Union: Director for Physics

2021–2022

Attended monthly Student Union meetings and helped plan student-led initiatives, including the Fall 2020 Climate Strike. Served as a liaison between the student union and the department association and helped organize the university's "frosh" week.

UofT Environmental & Physical Sciences Student Association: Director for Physics & Astrophysics

2018–2020

Responsible for organizing and programming events, including the "Mix and Mingle" for physics, and astronomy students, and operating the Physics Study Center. Participated in various outreach events aimed at raising awareness of environmental and physical sciences.

Volunteering

Volunteer: 25m Dwingeloo Radio Telescope (DRT)

Summer 2024

Led public tours and demonstrations of the 25m radio telescope, engaging small groups of 3-5 people. Provided an overview of the history of radio astronomy and led observations of the 21cm H line and a pulsar. For more information, visit the [Dwingeloo Radio Telescope website](#).

Volunteer: Age of the Universe

Summer 2023

Assisted in creating a Jupyter-notebook to explain the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) for a high school astronomy workshop in Toronto. The workshop, organized by Dr. Simran Nerval, aimed to teach students about the age of the universe. See the [Age-of-The-Universe workshop](#).

Dunlap Institute: Astrotours Volunteer

2022–2023

Volunteered at the Dunlap Institute's monthly public outreach events, where I answered questions from the public and operated small optical telescopes for viewing.

Dunlap Institute: Earth Hour Volunteer

Winter 2019

Volunteered at the Dunlap Institute's Earth Hour event, where I stood by a giant inflatable moon and gave presentations on the formation of the Moon and the sites of moon landings.

UofT Physics Tutor

2019–2022

Volunteered as a tutor at the Physics Study Centre, offering free tutoring for first- and second-year physics and astronomy classes.