

Final project. Planet, Stars, and Galaxies, AST1002.

For the final project, students will check out a physical book from FSU-Panama library related to Astronomy, Physics, or the History/Philosophy of Science and write an essay related to the book. Then, we will have a 45min one-on-one Oxford-style tutorial the day of the final exam where we will discuss the book. FSU-Panama has a decent collection so there are plenty to choose from, and I also donated some of my own¹.

Step 1: Browse the collection

The physical collection of FSU-Panama does not have a functioning online catalog (work in progress), so you must go in person to the library. The collection is the first bookshelf you see when you enter. You can ask Anthony (the librarian) to guide you. He is expecting this class to go to the library and check out a book.

Step 2: Check out the book you liked

Something caught your eye? Check it out. If you do not want to take the book to your home but would rather just always work in the library, then ask Anthony to place the book on reserve so that no-one else checks it out and you end up having to pick another one. I would recommend to just check the book out, however.

Step 3: Show me the book and tell me what you find interesting.

You do not have to write about the whole book in case the book is long (300+ pages), and you are only interested in some chapters. Bring it to office hours or to class so that I can confirm the book and the scope of your work. If you checked out something I am unfamiliar with I would have to read it too, so it is important you tell me what you checked out.

Step 4: Read the book/chapters

Step 5: Write an Essay

The essay must have an *original* thesis and 5000 words. Only 50% of the essay can be a rehash/summary of what you read, the other 50% must be your own ideas on the subject. The thesis of the essay must be regarding the importance of the topic in question (For instance: “Climate Change is the most important problem ever faced by humanity” or “Venus is the most important planet within the Solar System after Earth”). Alternatively, it can also be about something you disagree with the author: “Copernicus is not such a big deal for the history of science,” or “Climate change is not that important.” The essay will then expand on this thesis and argue for it.

Step 6: Submit the Essay via Canvas by 25th of April

Step 7: Come to my office the day of the final exam for a Tutorial

Oxford Tutorials are personalizing sessions where Tutors and students discuss the essay written by the student and submitted beforehand. The focus of the tutorial is the student work and their ideas. Here is a [video](#) explaining what an Oxford-style tutorial. This is not an oral exam, as much a discussion of your own work. Note, however, that you must be able to back up your thesis and discuss your own ideas. If you wrote the essay and thought about the book you read, it will be a friendly conversation about something you care about.

¹ Specifically, I donated “The Ringed Planet” by Joshua Colwell, “Astrophysics for People in a Hurry”, by Niel deGrasse Tyson, and “A Global Warming Primer” by Jeffrey Bennet.