ASTR430 Term Project

For your term project, worth 15% of your overall grade, you must complete and hand in a *term paper* by November 23 and give a *presentation* either December 7 or December 9 (presentation order will be determined randomly and will be announced Nov. 23).

Term Paper

This should be an essay of 8–10 pages—double spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides, in a font type no smaller than 10 point—on any topic relevant to planetary science featured in the news recently. The page limit includes all figures (at most 2), tables (at most 1), and references (as needed—you may use a smaller font if necessary). Topics may include new discoveries, theories, missions, etc.—if you are unsure, ask me. Possible sources for topics include general science magazines like *Scientific American*, popular astronomy magazines such as *Astronomy* or *Sky & Telescope*, internet astronomy news sites like `space.com`, or professional science journals such as *Science* or *Nature*.

The paper should be written at a reasonably high level, but minimize jargon and extensive derivations. Your paper must include a title, introduction (such as motivation for why the topic is interesting, and any necessary background), and bibliography, in addition to the main exposition. Style, spelling, and grammar will figure in the final grade. You must use your own words; extensive quoting of external sources is discouraged. No handwritten submissions will be accepted; hardcopy only (no electronic submissions). Double-sided printing is OK.

Presentation

Ten minutes will be allotted per presentation—you should aim for 7 minutes of talking with 3 minutes for questions. You may use the whiteboard, overhead projector, and/or a computer. Electronic presentations may use PowerPoint or a web browser on the classroom computer (preferred), or you may use your own laptop. Presentations on the classroom computer (which runs Windows XP) may be uploaded over the internet, by floppy disk, CD, or Zip disk, or by USB memory stick (mine is available for use if you e-mail your presentation to me *at least* 24 hours in advance; otherwise plan to arrive 10 minutes early to upload your presentation before class starts).

Presentations should be at a level understandable by other students. You should motivate the subject but get to the main point quickly (time yourself beforehand—7 minutes go by very fast!). Use appropriate visuals and minimize written text on slides. You will be graded on style and content, including how you handle the questions.

NOTE: all students are expected to attend the presentations. Participation marks will be awarded for asking questions of the presenters.