

ASTR/PHYS 433:

Senior Thesis

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ASTR/PHYS 433 is the second semester of what is usually a two-semester sequence of senior thesis in Astronomy or Physics. This course is intended for astronomy and physics majors in their Senior year who wish to pursue original research under the mentorship of a faculty member in the UHH Physics & Astronomy department. Students must propose and complete a research project and submit a final written report. Permission of the department is required for registration.

Please note: ASTR/PHYS 433 are NOT designated as Writing Intensive (WI) courses for the Spring 2004 semester, and hence will NOT meet any WI requirements for students enrolled in the course. The information on the MyUH website that shows ASTR/PHYS 433 as WI is INCORRECT.

Course requirements

1. **Project Proposal** (due date: January 26th). Any student wishing to take Senior Thesis must first find a faculty member willing to supervise his or her thesis work, and must submit a formal application to the department. This project proposal (see attached application form) must give a title and brief summary of the proposed research project, as well as a backup project should the original one become impossible to complete for unanticipated reasons. The Project Proposal must be signed by both the student and the faculty supervisor. Failure to submit the Project Proposal by the deadline may result in the student being dropped from the course.
2. **Original Research**. Students are expected to engage in original research under the guidance of their faculty mentor. Unlike most courses, where student grades are based on objective measures such as tests, papers, homework, etc., your grade in senior thesis is more subjective because it is based largely on your research accomplishments as judged by your faculty supervisor. Hence it is in your best interest to impress your faculty mentor as much as possible with your hard work, creativity, and ingenuity. Your mentor will recommend a grade based on your research efforts and accomplishments for the semester, and this recommendation will constitute 2/3 of your final grade for the course.

3. **Weekly Progress Reports** (due each and every week during the semester, deadline for e-mail submission is 11:59 p.m. Sunday nights). Weekly Progress Reports are considered a part of your Original Research requirements, and failure to submit these weekly reports will result in a lower grade for the course. Weekly Progress Reports need only be a few sentences describing what you accomplished during that week, but should be specific enough to clearly indicate what you did (e.g., if you spent the week reading papers to familiarize yourself with the field then list some of the papers you read; if you spent the week learning to run some astronomy data reduction software then give the name of the software packages and what they do, etc.). If you were too busy with other things to make any progress on your thesis work that week then say so in your Progress Report. The purpose of these weekly reports is to foster good communication between students and advisors and to ensure that students make continuous progress throughout the semester. Just like in a traditional lecture course where students are expected to put in at least one or two hours of work outside the classroom for every hour spent in the classroom, **you should plan to be spending at least 4 to 6 hours per week devoted to your thesis project.** Weekly Progress Reports should be e-mailed to the instructor (westm@hawaii.edu) and also cc-ed to your thesis supervisor.
4. **Thesis Report** (deadline: April 30th). A 20 to 30 page (double-spaced) senior thesis report is due by April 30, 2004 (sooner if you'd like feedback and a chance to revise). The three members of the UHH Physics & Astronomy Thesis Committee will be read and grade your Thesis Report, and their recommended grade for your Thesis Report will constitute 1/3 of your final grade for the course. Your Thesis Report should include background on the topic of your research, description of the methodology used for your project, results, and a bibliography. Your thesis mentor can provide more advice on how to write your Thesis Report.

Enjoy the semester and your research!

<p>Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office at 933-0816, 933-3334 (TTY), Campus Center 311, as early in the semester as possible.</p>
