Service Project

During the course of the semester in Sci/Phys 331, you will be required to complete a project. The project is worth 100 points, the same as a unit test. Usually this project will consist of a 7-12 page research paper on an astronomical topic. (More information on this will be forthcoming.) For one or two students who are very interested and capable, however, I offer an alternative to writing a paper. These students may complete a service project. This project consists of giving a public observing show at the Osten Observatory. To do this project, you must: (a) learn how to use the telescope, (b) be able to find and talk intelligently about a few objects that will be visible and (c) be available to give the shows on the nights of October 5 and November 2 (and to attend a show on September 7, to see how it’s done). Students who do this project will write a shorter summary of the things they learned to do for the project, and what they learned by giving the shows. See the instructor if you are interested.
Reflection Paper on Service Learning Project

The paper for your service learning project is obviously not a research paper. However, I do want you to write up some things for me. These should be in the form of a normal paper; that is, it should be written in normal prose style with complete sentences, a logical organization, and possibly even some references, if appropriate. There’s no specific length requirement for the paper, although it’s very difficult to imagine that you could cover what you need to in fewer than three to four pages.

The paper should cover two overarching ideas: A description of what you did, and a reflection on the project.

In your description of what you did, one thing you should include is a description of the activities you participated in that were a part of the project. You should also describe what you did to prepare for the observatory shows, what sources you used to figure out what to observe and how you learned something about those objects so you could talk intelligently about them.

In your reflections, you should talk about what you thought about what you learned from the project. You should discuss what you thought about the astronomical learnings, and whether this was an effective way for you to learn things about astronomy. You should also discuss what you learned from the people you talked to at the shows, and to what extent talking to people helped you learn more astronomy, or made you feel like you knew a lot or didn’t know enough. Finally, you should talk about what you think the people who were at the show learned from the shows, and what they took away from the shows.