

Science Seminar - Spring 2007 – DRAFT 3 June 2007 – Dr. E.J. Zita

We read The View from the Center of the Universe by Joel Primack and Nancy Abrams. Professor of cosmology Primack and writer Abrams team present a science-based cosmology aimed at allowing us to understand the universe as a whole and our place in it. "Most of us have grown up thinking that there is no basis for our feeling central or even important to the cosmos," they write. "But with the new evidence it turns out that this perspective is nothing but a prejudice. There is no geographic center to an expanding universe, but we are central in several unexpected ways that derive directly from physics and cosmology" (from Scientific American review). We also read articles on inflation by Andrei Linde, Alan Guth, and John Gribbin, professionals in the field.

Learning goals included critical thinking, improved written and oral communication, and teamwork. Students were expected to analyze readings, explore substantive questions, use outside sources to research some questions, make connections between readings, and synthesize their understanding in weekly essays. Students were required to prepare "Points, Insights, and Questions" in pre-seminar team meetings and post these "PIQs" online before class. Each team co-facilitated three seminars. Individually, students were required to write ___ essays, and to respond thoughtfully to peers' essays.

Equivalencies:

Science Seminar

4 – Readings in modern cosmology (astrophysics and mythology)