Graduate Program in Astronomy
The Ohio State University

A Unique Program
The Ohio State Department of Astronomy offers a superb Ph.D. program for graduate students interested in optical/infrared observational astrophysics and/or theoretical astrophysics. We place a strong emphasis on research -- students begin to work on research projects as soon as they arrive, and we encourage them to work with several different research advisors during the course of their graduate education. Our graduating students have typically authored or co-authored 8-15 refereed journal articles by the time they complete the program, in addition to numerous conference papers and abstracts. Our 1st- and 2nd-year students are already active researchers, publishing papers, attending conferences, giving talks, going on observing runs, and working in the instrument lab. This early initiation into the astronomical research community pays off when students graduate.

Research Programs

- Extrasolar Planets
- Stellar Structure & Evolution
- Interstellar Chemistry
- Galactic Structure
- Gravitational Lensing
- Galaxy Formation & Evolution
- γ-Ray Bursts and Supernovae
- Active Galactic Nuclei
- Cosmology
- Astronomical Instrumentation
- Nuclear & Particle Astrophysics
- Atomic Astrophysics
- Solar System Astronomy
- Compact Objects

For more information, check out our webpage: http://www.astronomy.ohio-state.edu/Grad
Or contact graduate admissions chair Prof. Andrew Gould: gould@astronomy.ohio-state.edu
Observing Facilities and Surveys

LBT Observatory

OSU is a partner in the Large Binocular Telescope (LBT), a twin 8.4-meter mirror telescope on Mt. Graham in Southern Arizona. LBT saw first light in October 2005, and is currently in the commissioning phase. As of 2008, 50% of the time is being devoted to science operations, with new instruments being commissioned roughly every six months. Full binocular mode will commence in early 2011. We have a one-sixth share of the observing time available for faculty and student research projects. The LBT is the largest optical/IR telescope on a single mount yet constructed.

MDM Observatory

OSU has a one-quarter share of the MDM Observatory, which operates a 2.4-meter and a 1.3-meter telescope on the southwest ridge of Kitt Peak near Tucson Arizona. Equipped with modern optical and infrared imagers and spectrometers, MDM is the primary small-project and student-training telescope used by OSU astronomers.

SMARTS

OSU is a founding member of the SMARTS Consortium, which operates the small and medium aperture telescopes at the Cerro Tololo Interamerican Observatory.

SDSS-III and DES

OSU is a partner in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey-III as well as the Dark Energy Survey. In particular, we are heavily involved in all four components of SDSS-III, including the measurement of the cosmic distance scale with the BOSS survey, the search for giant planets through the MARVELS survey, and the study of stellar populations in the Milky Way through the SEGUE-2 and APOGEE surveys.

Astronomy Department and Graduate Program Facts

The Astronomy Department currently includes 22 faculty, including 3 joint appointments and 2 affiliated faculty with physics; this includes 5 new faculty members hired since 2005. There were 26 graduate students in the 2007/2008 academic year, and so a faculty-to-student ratio of only slightly larger than one-to-one.

There have been 34 astronomy Ph.D.'s awarded in the last 10 years. Our recent graduates have been awarded many of the most prestigious postdoctoral fellowships in Astronomy, including several Hubble, Carnegie and Princeton-Carnegie Fellowships, as well as the Menzel, Princeton-Catolica, Sagan, and Clay Fellowships.

"I chose OSU astronomy over other graduate programs because I was impressed by its intense and yet friendly research atmosphere, as well as the high exposure that students have to cutting edge research right from the start. I have never once regretted my decision. At OSU I interacted daily with almost all of the faculty members and postdocs through OSU's unique "morning coffee" as well as frequent hallway conversations. I was encouraged to do many research projects in different areas, both observational and theoretical. As a result, I received a very broad astronomy education that has given me the ability to do research in a variety of fields. Despite having visited many astronomy departments since I graduated, I haven't found a single one that does a better job of preparing students for a successful research career in astronomy."  
Andreas Berland, PhD 2001, currently an Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University

"Choosing the department of astronomy at Ohio State for graduate study is among the very best decisions I have ever made." Zheng Zheng, PhD 2004, currently a Long-Term Member at the Institute for Advanced Study

"I truly feel that Ohio State is the best place to get an education in research, which is the main focus of professional astronomers. The class requirements are just right for building a base of general astronomical knowledge, but the focus in graduate education in the OSU Astronomy Department is on carrying out successful research projects that will add substantially to current knowledge. The friendly atmosphere and open-door policy in the department add to the experience by ensuring that graduate students have access to all of the faculty." Misty Bentz, PhD 2007, currently a Hubble Fellow at UC Irvine