SAS Honors Seminar 256:
Extraterrestrial Life

12/8/2011
Why internet-only references are suspect...

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

courtesy of The New Yorker
Term papers: bibliography

Main purpose of a bibliography and citations of references: make it possible for a reader to track down the original sources of ideas and words.

Bibliography:
+ Include every reference that you cite (and only those references that you cite!).
+ Provide enough information for any reader to be able to locate the reference (author(s), year, title of book or journal; volume/page number for a journal article). List URL only if this is the only way to track.
Term papers: citations

+ Provide enough information for someone to be able to find the idea or words without too much trouble if (s)he has the reference handy.

+ It is easy (not required) to use the “author-date” format...

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

...which eliminates ambiguities by including author surname(s), year of publication, and page number(s).

+ To deal with different numbers of authors and/or multiple references with the same author(s) and year, you can use, e.g., (Baker 2004a, 127; Baker 2004b, 18; Baker & Tacconi 2010, 452; Baker et al. 2011, 73).
Term papers: citing ideas/results

Original sentence:

“In view of the encouraging intelligence available before we began our campaign, the failure to detect WMD11 is rather surprising.”

Bad:

Previous efforts to detect this galaxy were unexpectedly unsuccessful.

Good:

Previous efforts to detect this galaxy were unexpectedly unsuccessful (Baker et al. 2004).
Original sentence:
“In view of the encouraging intelligence available before we began our campaign, the failure to detect WMD11 is rather surprising.”

Bad:
Given the promising information available before they began their campaign, the authors' failure to detect the galaxy was rather surprising (Baker et al. 2004).

Good:
The authors note their disappointment, remarking “the failure to detect WMD11 is rather surprising” (Baker et al. 2004).
**Discussion next Tuesday (12/13)**

Organize yourselves into four three-person groups
(JR/YG/SP + LB/BF/AT + JP/MC/BS + NS/LB/MA?).

Each group should discuss (in person or by email) the various terms in the original form of the Drake Equation, and agree on consensus most likely values and appropriate uncertainties. Do this before class.

Different groups should not compare answers in advance!