



*University of Utah*

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH JOURNAL

## **MAGNIFIED VISION: A REFLECTION ON INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH**

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I began my undergraduate career without clarity as to how to apply degrees in two distinct disciplines: history and physics. I did not intend to combine my backgrounds for the purposes of research. However, my coursework in addition to conversations with both peers and mentors brought me to a compelling, interdisciplinary topic of research. I have had a prolonged interest in the topic of how individuals evaluate truth, scientific and otherwise, and realized the benefits of approaching the subject with perspectives provided by both science and humanities. I engaged the topic in the form of a combined physics and history honors thesis and Undergraduate Research Opportunities Project (UROP).

The task of uniting two different disciplinary approaches proved challenging, yet exciting. I chose two points in the history of astronomy as foci for my investigation: one from early optical astronomy and a second from current physics. I applied both a historical and scientific lens to each case. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of my work, I have been able to bring new analysis, comparisons, and sources to relevant questions in the field of science, technology, and society.

I am grateful for an undergraduate academic background that allows for such investigations. Applying this background has allowed me to see new areas for study. My research has encouraged me to reflect on both disciplines, independently, and in relation to each other. It has opened further professional opportunities. I am excited to complete an internship at the American Institute of Physics, both in their Niels Bohr Library and Archive, as well as their History of Physics Center.

My undergraduate research has shown me some of the challenges and benefits of interdisciplinary research. It has enlivened my academic experience and has informed my professional plans beyond my undergraduate career.