

Stars and Disks (and Planets?) - Oh, My!

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Abstract: Many stars have disks of gas and/or dust around them, and some of these disks might even be potential birthplaces for planetary systems. These disks are found around stars of all ages - young stars, middle-aged stars, and old stars. However, these disks are small, faint, and far away in most cases, so they can be difficult to study in detail. Ever wonder how astronomers can figure out what these disks are like, when in many cases we can't even see them directly? And what about extrasolar planets, which are even more difficult to observe? In this talk, I will give an overview of some techniques we are using to study these types of objects, and what we are learning about them.