Joel Leja

Assistant Professor, Astronomy and Astrophysics The Pennsylvania State University 515 Davey Lab University Park, PA, 16802 1-530-410-3077 joel.leja@psu.edu https://jrleja.github.io/

RESEARCH INTERESTS

galaxy formation and evolution, stellar populations, statistics and machine learning

EDUCATION

Yale University Ph.D in Astronomy Thesis: Tracing Galaxies Through Cosmic Time	New Haven, CT 2016
Advisor: Prof. Pieter van Dokkum	
MS in Astronomy	2012
University of California, Berkeley	
BA in Physics and Astrophysics (honors)	2010
PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS	
Assistant Professor of Astronomy & Astrophysics	2020-present
The Pennsylvania State University	
Co-hire of the Institute for Computational & Data Sciences	
NSF Astronomy & Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellow	2017–20
CfA Harvard & Smithsonian	
Postdoctoral Fellow	2016-17
CfA Harvard & Smithsonian	
Mentor: Professor Charlie Conroy	
Graduate Student Researcher	2010-16
Yale University	
Advisor: Professor Pieter van Dokkum	
FUNDED GRANTS	
JWST GO Cycle 2 (\$102k) (CoI)	2022-2025
Medium Bands, Mega Science: Resolved Photometry of Abell 2744	
JWST GO Cycle 2 (\$279k) (CoI)	2022-2025
RUBIES: A complete census of the rare, extreme and red	
Penn State Institute for Computational & Data Sciences Seed Grant (\$29k) (PI)	2022-2023
A Computational Moonshot for Modern Galaxy Surveys	
JWST GO Cycle 1 (\$221k) (CoI)	2022-2025
UNCOVER: Ultra-deep NIRCam and NIRSpec Observations Before the Epoch of Reioniz	ation
JWST GO Cycle 1 (\$95k) (CoI)	2022-2025
The Stellar and Gas Content of Galaxies at Cosmic Noon	
JWST Archival (\$239k) (PI)	2022-2025
Preventing the Slit-Loss Catastrophe Using Flexible, Spatially Resolved Galaxy Models	
HST Archival (\$133k) (CoI)	2020-2023
Pirate: Walking the Plank to Spatially Resolved Stellar Populations in CANDELS	

NSF Astronomy & Astrophysics Fellowship (S300k) (PI) Bringing Galaxy Evolution into Focus by Pushing SED Models to the Limit HONORS AND AWARDS Brouwer Prize, Yale University awarded to a student for a contribution of unusual merit to astronomy during their PhD thesis. Physics & Astrophysics Commencement Speaker, UC Berkeley 2010 Departmental Citation in Astrophysics, UC Berkeley 2010 outstanding scholarship by a graduating senior in Astrophysics Regents and Chancellors Scholar, UC Berkeley amost prestigious UC Berkeley should be provided in the provided merit based scholarship awarded to undergraduates Robert C. Byrd Scholar federally funded merit-based scholarship for exceptional high-school seniors MENTORING & OUTREACH NASA / Webb Community Subject Matter Expert Presentations and Q&A sessions at STEM community events in central PA about JWST. Coordinator of the Flipped Science Fair Coordinator of the Flipped Science Fair Guest Scientist at URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Academy Guest Scientist at URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Academy Shared my research with middle-schoolers through presentations and bit-classroom, interactive Q&A sessions I have served as the research advisor for the following grads & post-grads: Emilie Burnham, Penn State graduate student Kanishk Pandey, Penn State graduate student Kanishk Pandey, Penn State graduate student Manapa, Penn State graduate student Manapa, Penn State graduate student Mill Bowman, Penn State undergraduate student Mill Penn State undergraduate student Mill Bowman, Penn State undergraduate student Mill Penn S	Harvard Supercomputing Grant (1.5M CPU Hours) (PI)	2017
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	Christopher Bradshaw, Yale undergraduate thesis	2014–2015

HIGH PERFORMANCE COMPUTING EXPERIENCE

Extensive experience in high-performance computing (> 20 million CPU hours) in a variety of cluster environ-

ments: The Roar Supercomputer (PSU), the Odyssey Cluster (CfA), and LSU/SuperMIC + TACC Stampede (XSEDE).

OBSERVING EXPERIENCE	
Palomar/TripleSpec (5m): 6 nights	2018
Keck/MOSFIRE (10m): 5 nights	2013
WIYN/HYDRA (4m): 2 nights	2011
Nickel/Photometry (1m): \sim 20 nights	2009–2010
SELECTED SCIENCE TALKS	
Astronomers Speak Statistics, Joint Statistical Meeting – Toronto (invited)	2023
Galaxy Transformation Across Time & Space – Australian National University (invited review)	2023
Astronomy Colloquium – UC Davis	2023
Astronomy Colloquium – University of Washington	2023
Astronomy & Astrophysics Colloquium – UC Berkeley	2023
Astronomy Colloquium – Yale University	2023
Astronomy Colloquium – Penn State University	2022
Review talk on Galaxy Star Formation Histories – JWST Pan-SED fitting forum (invited)	2022
The LEGA-C Spectroscopic Galaxy Survey Meeting – University of Ghent	2022
Astronomy Colloquium – University of Pittsburgh	2022
Astronomy Colloquium – Tufts University	2022
Astronomy Colloquium – UMass Amherst	2022
Galread – Princeton University	2021
Astrophysics Seminar — Purdue University	2019
ITC Luncheon — Harvard-Smithsonian CfA	2019
GOGREEN Spectral Survey Workshop — York University (invited)	2019
Uncovering galaxy evolution in the ALMA and JWST era – IAU Symposium 352 (contributed)	2019
Lunch Talk — Leiden University	2019
LEGA-C Spectral Survey Workshop — Ghent University (invited)	2019
Challenges in Panchromatic Galaxy Modeling – IAU Symposium 314 (contributed)	2018
The Art of Measuring Physical Parameters in Galaxies – CANDELS Collaboration (invited)	2018
NSF AAPF Symposium — 231st AAS Meeting	2018
Astronomy Seminar — University of Connecticut	2017
Plumbing Star Formation Rates in the Age of JWST — Texas A&M (invited)	2017
Advances in Galaxy Evolution — Ringberg Castle (invited)	2017
Astronomy Seminar — Tufts University	2017
Lunch Talk — Carnegie Observatories	2016
Astronomy Tea Talk — Caltech	2016
Astrophysics Brown Bag Lunch — MIT Kavli Institute	2016
Galaxies and Cosmology seminar — Harvard-Smithsonian CfA	2016
Linking Observations & Theory with New-Generation Spectral Models — IAP Paris (contributed	d) 2016
3D-HST Physics, Evolution, Census Conference — Yale (invited)	2015
A Fitting Conference — Harvard (invited)	2015
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	
Assistant Professor, Penn State University	2020-
ASTR 502: Radiative Processes in Astrophysics	

ASTR 504: Extragalactic Astronomy	
ASTR 589: Seminar in Current Astronomical Research	
Astroinformatics Summer School: Bayesian Hierarchical Modeling	
Teaching Fellow, Yale University	2010-2016
ASTR 110: Planets and Stars	
ASTR 160: Frontiers and Controversies in Astrophysics (3x)	
ASTR 210: Stars and Their Evolution	
Residential College Mathematics & Science Tutor, Yale University	2011
Drop-in physics tutoring for Yale undergraduates (\sim 5 hours / week)	
Graduate Student Instructor, UC Berkeley	2010
ASTRO W12: The Planets	
Physics Tutor and Student Lecturer (UC Berkeley)	2008-2010
Weekly lectures on topics in introductory physics, drop-in tutoring (∼6 hours/week)	
Course coordinator; trained other physics tutors	
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	
Referee for The Astrophysical Journal, The Astrophysical Journal Letters, Monthly Notices of the Royal	
Astronomical Society, Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society Letters, Astronomy & Astronomy & Computing	rophysics,
Committees: Graduate Program Committee (2x), Qualifying Exam Committee (3x), Admissions	
Committee (1x), Eberly Prize Postdoctoral Committee (2x), Institute for Computational & Da	
Sciences Coordinating Committee (1x), IGC fellowship selection committee (1x)	
JWST Cycle 3 Expert Reviewer	2023
Reviewer for NASA Astrophysical Data Analysis grants	2023
HST Large/Treasury TAC	2023
PSU Center for Astrostatistics Lunch Talk Organizer	2023
STFC Astronomy Grants Panel reviewer (UK)	2022
PFS Survey: Working Group Lead, Low-Redshift Continuum Galaxy Evolution Science	2022-
	2021–2023
Member of the Institute for Gravitation & the Cosmos at PSU	2020-
Reviewer for Polish National Science Centre	2020
FINESST (Future Investigators in NASA Earth and Space Science and Technology) reviewer	2019-2020
Referee for HST Mid-Cycle Proposals	2018–2019
· · ·	2018–2020
	2015–2016
Panel Member for Yale Telescope Time Allocation Committee	2014
PRESS	
	2022
Featured in NHK's 'Cosmic Front' July 2023 Documentary on <i>JWST</i>	2023
ICDS Feature Story, "Machine learning takes starring role in exploring the universe"	2023
NASA/Nature/PSU Release, "Massive early galaxies defy prior understanding of the universe" NPR, the Guardian, the Atlantic, CNN, BBC Radio, New Zealand Radio, multiple TV interviews	' 2023
NASA/STScI/PSU Release, "JWST uncovers new details in Pandora's Cluster"	2023
NASA/STScI/PSU Release, "Bright light from early universe 'opens new chapter in astronomy'	
Keck/Northwestern/PSU Press Release, "Tracing the origins of rare, cosmic explosions"	2022
STScI/ALMA/PSU Press Release, "Early, massive galaxies running on empty"	2021
Yale GSAS Profile, "Tracing the History of the Universe"	2014

PUBLICATIONS

I am an author of 120 publications in total including 19 still undergoing review, of which 10 are first author works and another 27 are second/third author. As of Aug 2023, these works have 8,809 citations with an hindex of 43. A curated online list is available HERE. In the list below, my name is **bolded** and authors under my direct supervision are <u>underlined</u>.

First Author

- 1. A New Census of the 0.2 < z < 3.0 Universe, Part II: The Star-Forming Sequence **Leja, Joel** et al., 2022, ApJ, 936, 165L
- 2. A New Census of the 0.2 < z < 3.0 Universe, Part I: The Stellar Mass Function Leja, Joel et al., 2020, ApJ, 893, 111L
- 3. Beyond UVJ: More Efficient Selection of Quiescent Galaxies with Ultraviolet/Mid-infrared Fluxes Leja, Joel et al., 2019, ApJ, 880L, 9L
- 4. An Older, More Quiescent Universe from Panchromatic SED Fitting of the 3D-HST Survey Leja, Joel et al., 2019, ApJ, 877, 140L
- 5. How to measure galaxy star formation histories II: Nonparametric models **Leja, Joel** et al., 2019, ApJ, 876, 3L
- 6. Hot dust in Panchromatic SED Fitting: Identification of AGN and improved galaxy properties **Leja, Joel** et al., 2018, ApJ, 854, 62L
- 7. Deriving Physical Properties from Broadband Photometry with Prospector: Description of the Model and a Demonstration of its Accuracy Using 129 Galaxies in the Local Universe

 Leja, Joel et al., 2017, ApJ, 837, 170L
- 8. Reconciling the Observed Star-forming Sequence with the Observed Stellar Mass Function **Leja, Joel** et al., 2015, ApJL, 798, 115L
- 9. Exploring the Chemical Link between Local Ellipticals and Their High-redshift Progenitors **Leja, Joel** et al., 2013, ApJL, 778L, 24L
- 10. Tracing Galaxies Through Cosmic Time with Number Density Selection Leja, Joel et al., 2013, ApJ, 766, 33L

Second/Third Author

- 11. *SBI++: Flexible, Ultra-fast Likelihood-free Inference Customized for Astronomical Applications* Wang, Bingjie; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2023, ApJ, 952L, 10W
- 12. As Simple as Possible but No Simpler: Optimizing the Performance of Neural Net Emulators for Galaxy SED Fitting
 - Mathews, Elijah; **Leja**, **Joel** et al., 2023, ApJ accepted, in press
- 13. Inferring More from Less: Prospector as a Photometric Redshift Engine in the Era of JWST Wang, Bingjie; Leja, Joel et al., 2023, ApJ, 944L, 58W

- 14. REQUIEM-2D: A diversity of formation pathways in a sample of spatially-resolved massive quiescent galaxies at $z\sim2$
 - Akhshik, Mohammad; Whitaker, Katherine E.; Leja, Joel et al., 2023, ApJ, 943, 179A
- 15. Beyond UVJ: Color Selection of Galaxies in the JWST Era Antwi-Danso, Jacqueline; Papovich, Casey; Leja, Joel, 2023ApJ, 943, 166A
- 16. *A simple spectroscopic technique to identify rejuvenating galaxies* Zhang, Junyu; Li, Yijia; **Leja**, **Joel** et al., 2022, accepted to ApJ, in press
- 17. Monte Carlo Techniques for Addressing Large Errors and Missing Data in Simulation-based Inference Wang, Bingjie; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2022, NeurIPS, arXiv:2211.03747
- 18. Flexible Models for Galaxy Star Formation Histories Both Shift and Scramble the Optical Color-M/L Relationship Li, Yijia; Leja, Joel, 2022, ApJ, 940, 88L
- 19. A Bayesian Population Model for the Observed Dust Attenuation in Galaxies Nagaraj, Gautam; Forbes, John C.; Leja, Joel et al., 2022, ApJ, 932, 54N
- 20. How Well Can We Measure Galaxy Dust Attenuation Curves? The Impact of the Assumed Star-dust Geometry Model in Spectral Energy Distribution Fitting Lower, Sidney; Narayanan, Desika; Leja, Joel et al., 2022, ApJ, 931, 14L
- 21. Empirical Dust Attenuation Model Leads to More Realistic UVJ Diagram for TNG100 Galaxies Nagaraj, Gautam; Forbes, John C.; Leja, Joel et al., 2022, ApJ, 939, 29N
- 22. *Physical Properties of the Host Galaxies of Ca-rich Transients* Dong, Yuxin; Milisavljevic, Dan; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2022, ApJ, 927, 199D
- 23. Recovering the star formation histories of recently-quenched galaxies: the impact of model and prior choices Suess, Katherine A.; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2022, ApJ, 935, 146S
- 24. Reproducing the UVJ Color Distribution of Star-forming Galaxies at 0.5 < z < 2.5 with a Geometric Model of Dust Attenuation</p>
 Zuckerman, Leah; Belli, Sirio; Leja, Joel; Tacchella, Sandro, 2021, ApJ, 923, 18M
- 25. Stellar Population Inference with Prospector Johnson, Benjamin D.; **Leja**, **Joel** et al., 2021, ApJS, 254, 22J
- 26. Chronicling the Host Galaxy Properties of the Remarkable Repeating FRB 20201124A Fong, Wen-fai; Dong, Yuxin; Leja, Joel, et al., 2021, ApJ, 919L, 23F
- 27. Recent Star Formation in a Massive Slowly Quenched Lensed Quiescent Galaxy at z = 1.88 Akhshik, Mohammad; Whitaker, Katherine E.; **Leja**, **Joel** et al., 2021, ApJL, 907L, 8A
- 28. The GOGREEN survey: post-infall environmental quenching fails to predict the observed age difference between quiescent field and cluster galaxies at z > 1 Webb, Kristi; Balogh, Michael L.; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2020, MNRAS, 498, 5317W
- 29. How Well Can We Measure the Stellar Mass of a Galaxy: The Impact of the Assumed Star Formation History Model in SED Fitting
 Lower, Sidney; Narayanan, Desika; Leja, Joel et al., 2020, ApJ, 904, 33L
- 30. Brackett- γ as a Gold-standard Test of Star Formation Rates Derived from SED Fitting Pasha, Imad; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2020, ApJ, 898, 165P

- 31. SPECULATOR: Emulating Stellar Population Synthesis for Fast and Accurate Galaxy Spectra and Photometry Alsing, Justin; Peiris, Hiranya; Leja, Joel et al., 2020, ApJS, 249, 5A
- 32. Predicting fully self-consistent satellite richness, galaxy growth and star formation rates from the STastical sEmi-Empirical modeL STEEL
 - Grylls, Philip J.; Shankar, F.; Leja, J. et al., MNRAS, 491, 634G
- 33. How to measure galaxy star-formation histories I: Parametric models Carnall, A. C.; **Leja**, **J**. et al., 2019, ApJ, 873, 44C
- 34. Measuring the Delay Time Distribution of Binary Neutron Stars. III. Using the Individual Star Formation Histories of Gravitational-wave Event Host Galaxies in the Local Universe
 Safarzadeh, Mohammadtaher; Berger, Edo; Leja, Joel et al, 2019, ApJ, 878L, 14S
- 35. ZFOURGE: Extreme 5007 Emission May Be a Common Early-lifetime Phase for Star-forming Galaxies at z > 2.5 Cohn, Jonathan H.; **Leja, Joel** et al., 2018, ApJ, 869, 141C
- 36. Constraining the Low-mass Slope of the Star Formation Sequence at 0.5 < z < 2.5 Whitaker, Katherine E.; Franx, Marijn; **Leja**, **Joel**, et al., 2014, ApJ, 795, 104W
- 37. The Assembly of Milky Way-like Galaxies Since $z\sim2.5$ van Dokkum, Pieter G.; **Leja**, **Joel** et al., 2013, ApJ, 771L, 35V

Co-Author

- 38. JWST Observations of the Extraordinary GRB 221009A Reveal an Ordinary Supernova Without Signs of r-Process Enrichment in a Low-Metallicity Galaxy
 Blanchard, P. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to Nature Astronomy, arXiv:2308.14197
- 39. UNCOVER: JWST Spectroscopy of Three Cold Brown Dwarfs at Kiloparsec-scale Distances Burgasser, A.J. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2308.12107
- 40. UNCOVER: A NIRSpec Identification of a Broad Line AGN at z = 8.50 Kokorev, V. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2308.11610
- 41. UNCOVER: A NIRSpec Census of Lensed Galaxies at z=8.50-13.08 Probing a High AGN Fraction and Ionized Bubbles in the Shadow
 - Fujimoto, S. et al., including Leja, Joel, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2308.11609
- 42. First spectroscopic observations of the galaxies that reionized the Universe Atek, H. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to Nature, arXiv:2308.08540
- 43. *Massive and Multiphase Gas Outflow in a Quenching Galaxy at z*=2.445 Belli, S. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to Nature, arXiv:2308.05795
- 44. *A supermassive black hole in the early universe growing in the shadows* Furtak, L. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2308.05735
- 45. *UNCOVER: Illuminating the Early Universe JWST/NIRSpec Confirmation of z>12 Galaxies* Wang, B. et al., including **Leja, Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2308.03745
- 46. UNCOVER: The growth of the first massive black holes from JWST/NIRSpec spectroscopic confirmation of an X-ray luminous AGN at z=10.1
 - Goulding, A. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2308.02750

- 47. *An X-ray Census of Fast Radio Burst Host Galaxies: Constraints on AGN and X-ray Counterparts* Eftekhari, T. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2307.03766
- 48. Mapping Obscured Star Formation in the Host Galaxy of FRB 20201124A

 Dong, Y. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2307.06995
- 49. A census of star formation histories of massive galaxies at 0.6 < z < 1 from spectro-photometric modeling using Bagpipes and Prospector Kaushal, Yasha et al., including Leja, Joel, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2307.03725
- 50. Stellar Half-Mass Radii of 0.5 < z < 2.3 Galaxies: Comparison with JWST/NIRCam Half-Light Radii van der Wel, Arjen et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2307.03264
- 51. *UNCOVER:* Candidate Red Active Galactic Nuclei at 3 < z < 7 with JWST and ALMA Labbe, Ivo et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2306.07320
- 52. Sizes and mass profiles of candidate massive galaxies discovered by JWST at 7<z<9: evidence for very early formation of the central 100 pc of present-day ellipticals

 Baggen, Josephine F. W. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2305.17162
- 53. *JWST UNCOVER: Discovery of z* > 9 *Galaxy Candidates Behind the Lensing Cluster Abell 2744* Atek, Hakim et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, MNRAS, 524, 5486A
- 54. The Demographics, Stellar Populations, and Star Formation Histories of Fast Radio Burst Host Galaxies: Implications for the Progenitors

 Gordon, Alexa C.; Fong, Wen-fai; Kilpatrick, Charles D.; Eftekhari, Tarraneh; Leja, Joel et al., 2023, MN-RAS, 524, 5486A
- 55. The UNCOVER Survey: A first-look HST+JWST catalog of 50,000 galaxies near Abell 2744 and beyond Weaver, John R. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, submitted to ApJS, arXiv:2301.02671
- 56. *JWST UNCOVER:* A triply imaged extremely red and compact object at $z_{phot} \approx 7.7$ Furtak, Lukas J. et al., including **Leja**, **Joel**, 2023, ApJ, 952, 142F
- 57. UNCOVERing the extended strong lensing structures of Abell 2744 with the deepest JWST imaging Furtak, Lukas J. et al., including Leja, Joel, 2023, MNRAS, 523, 4568F
- 58. The JWST UNCOVER Treasury survey: Ultradeep NIRSpec and NIRCam ObserVations before the Epoch of Reionization

 Bezanson, Rachel; Labbe, Ivo; Whitaker, Katherine E.; Leja, Joel et al., 2022, submitted to ApJ, arXiv:2212.04026
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 Pacifici, Camilla et al., including Leja, Joel, 2023, ApJ, 944, 141P
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