Polarimetry: theory and application in astronomy

A. Słowikowska

*Kepler Institute of Astronomy, University of Zielona Góra, Lubuska 2,
PL 65-265 Zielona Góra, Poland*

Abstract. In this talk I will review the basic properties of polarized light and introduce the Stokes vector. I will give some examples of astrophysical sources that show high polarization degree of their radiation especially in the optical range of the electromagnetic spectrum. I will also briefly describe mechanisms of polarization origins as well as methods to derive its properties. I will show some examples of working polarimeters at 1-2 meter class telescopes. Additionally, I will present some scientific results obtained from photopolarimetric, as well as spectropolarimetric observations.