Music 302 Observation Guidelines

Use these suggestions for recording studio observations:

With regard to Engineering:

-Recording method- Analog or digital? Are there any special reasons why that certain recording method is being used? Looking back at the end of what you observed (if you have enough prior knowledge to address this), would you have used a different method, and why?

-Monitor mix- Is reverb used when the recorded music is played back? Are the musicians asking for more of a particular sound in their headphones? Can you tell why?

-Microphones- What types are being used? How many are being used? Where are they placed to record the musicians? Are the players/vocalists separated? Why?

-Outboard Equipment- In today's digital world, many pieces of old analog outboard equipment have been replaced by images of old analogue outboard equipment seen on the computer screen. Why is that? How much equalization is being done? Who in the studio suggested these altering methods be used, and why? Find out. In analogue studios, these pieces of equipment will remain rack-mounted (and probably not to be seen on any computer screen near you), but will still be used to modify the musical output. Is vocal or instrumental pitch being altered demonstrably?

-Miscellaneous- Are there any major problems that the engineer has to deal with? How is the problem fixed? Are there any problems left unfixed? What are they and can you determine a reason they remained unfixed? Is the engineer "watching the clock?"

With regard to Production:

What are their names of the people involved in the recording session? Is anyone playing an instrument? What is the instrument or instruments? Is there a vocalist? Do the pieces being recorded have names? What are they? Have the pieces been composed by someone? Who? Any way you can help the reader feel that you were really there, chances are the better your observation will be.

-The recording session- What is it and who is it for? On what format is the session being recorded? Is there an observable client relationship in the room? What is it like?
-Instruments/Vocals- How many tracks are being used? For what (please be complete)?

-The music/product- How would you describe it? Genre?

-The Producer- Is the producer using his/her time efficiently? If not, what do you think that could be done to remedy that? Is the producer facing any unexpected problems? What is being done to correct it or them?

-The Production team- Among all those in production endeavoring to complete the project, who is "watching the clock?" If "studio creation" (on-the-spot production improvisation) is being observed, which person in the room is most responsible for this? Are all those on the project working together?