Today - Introduction to the Course

• Course Overview; Goals and Objectives
• Syllabus and Mechanics of Course
• Student Introductions & Preliminary Survey

Monday - The Layout of the Sky

• The appearance of the sky (from Earth)
• Angular Size and Angular Distance
• Describing “Location” on the Sky

Announcements:
No Lab this week!  (First Labs: Tuesday, 30 Aug & Thursday, 1 Sep)
Read Chapters 1 & 2  (Chapter 2 PreQuiz on Wednesday, 31 Aug)

Goals & Objectives

1. HOW and WHY science is done
   - will need some rules (just like music or sports)
2. Develop critical thinking and learning skills
   - learn how to observe/understand world around you
   - must inter-relate facts; can’t do it by memorizing
3. Convince you that you CAN judge for yourself
   - science v. pseudo science; public support of science
4. Appreciate creative, human aspect of science
   - like art, but must be reproducible; start with a blank fabric (sometimes we have to invent the fabric)
   - it’s not about answers; it’s about asking questions & and the process of figuring out the answers

NOT my goals:  make you into junior astronomers; test your ability to regurgitate facts; fill your brains with factoids

Syllabus: Mechanics of the Course

• Meeting time: We will start and end promptly; will use entire 75 minutes every Monday and Wednesday; if you must arrive late or leave early, please do so quietly

• Office Hours and Contact Info: Office hours are convenient times when no other meetings are scheduled, and I can almost guarantee I’ll be in the office. However, I’m around most of the time (including evenings and weekends; but seldom before noon). You can always call ahead or schedule an appointment.

• Textbook: You are required to read the chapter before it is discussed in class (there will be “pre-quizzes”). Don’t expect it all to make sense the first time through; that’s what lecture class is for. I highly recommend you read the chapter again immediately after class. It should make sense the second time, and it will make studying for exams much, much less stressful.

• Website: http://neffj.people.cofc.edu/ASTR129/
  – announcements & useful links
  – lecture notes & homework
  – anonymous comments to instructor & much more!

• In-class Work: Lectures to provide context, explain difficult material, provide feedback to student questions, and introduce new material of interest. Pre-quizzes, small-group activities, maybe “clicker” questions will be part of your “participation” grade (25%). Attendance and participation are crucial!

• Out-of-class Work: Read text (before AND after class), recommended activities, web-based activities, possibly a short (graded) paper. Form small study groups; test each other’s understanding as we go along.

• Exams: Questions test your ability to apply concepts, not to memorize terms. Study guides will be provided, but they will be much easier if you don’t try to “cram”. Keep up with the material so you can understand it as we go along; don’t wait until the night before the exams.

Lab is a separate, but closely linked, course

CofC General Education science requirement
129L - The Lab Class

- Labs will supplement lecture, provide in-depth and hands-on experience, teach you the sky, and give you a feel for what “real” astronomy is all about these days.
- You will receive a separate 1-hour grade for lab. Expect labs to use the entire 3-hour period. Labs are generally impossible to make up!
- Required materials (bring every week!):
  - close-toed shoes (no flip-flops); appropriate clothing
  - lab manual (in 3-ring binder) and your textbook
  - rotating star chart (packaged with lab manual)
  - spare paper, pens, etc
  - scientific calculator
  - small flashlight

Your First Assignment:

1. Complete the preliminary “survey” today.

2. Assignment: Observe The Sky ASAP.
   - How would you describe its “SHAPE”?
   - Find something interesting in the sky.
     a) How would you describe its “SIZE” on the sky?
     b) How would you describe its “LOCATION” on the sky to someone who is not there with you? (for example, you want to ask your professor the next day what you saw, but you have to describe to him where you saw it).