

Instructor Notes for Introduction to the Sky

Equipment TA needs:

- At least a couple of binoculars.
- Red Cellophane for students who do not have RED flashlights
- Maybe additional flashlights.

Clear Weather Instructions

This is a pretty straightforward lab. Make sure you know what is up. If you have not done so before, look at a couple of the bright constellations. Suggest doing one of those for the observation part of the lab.

In class, you will want to give a quick demonstration on the use of the star wheel. Point out any projection problems that the star wheel has.

Greek letters in the Audubon Guide differ in some cases from those on the SC chart: the font used makes Epsilon and Theta in particular look very different. Many others are at an angle or slightly different. Remind them to use the chart in the lab as well.

You will want to give a star tour of the brightest constellations and planets. Check out www.heavens-above.com for any satellite transits that night. They have sky charts for the transits. You will not see any transits below about 3.5 in magnitude. (I will attempt to get a more accurate figure on this sometime.)

Remember when signing off their observations charts, they will need these for future labs so they must be accurate and clear. Remember to instruct them to photocopy their sky sketches for use in the other two naked eye labs. Remember to remind them to mark Altair on their sketches – they will need it for the 3rd naked eye lab.

Foul Weather Instructions

This lab becomes more difficult if it is cloudy. Dan will be around to operate the planetarium if it is cloudy. His presentation should focus on the constellations, zodiacal and circumpolar, and last no more than 20 minutes. The drawings of the constellations will still be done. The satellite stuff will obviously be eliminated. The sketches of the Northern and Southern sky *could* be done using the diagrams in the Audubon Guide on plates 21-68.