Announcements

• Welcome to Principles of Astronomy!
• If you were not able to sign up for this class during pre-enrollment but would like to add it, please make sure that you have filled out the “student information” sheet, complete with your email address. If space is available for you, on Friday (Jan. 20), I will email you an “Add code”, which you must use by Monday, January 23 at 5 PM or the add code will go to another student; please email me back after you have officially added the class.
• Check out the Course Web Site:
  http://sciences.sdsu.edu/~leonard/astro101
On it you will always find the latest information about the class, including all handouts.
• Please purchase a copy of the course text:

  Voyages Through the Universe (Third Edition), by Andrew Fraknoi, David Morrison, & Sidney C. Wolff.

  It is available at the bookstore for $107.45 (new) and $85.96 (used). Purchasing a new copy is strongly recommended, as it comes with access to very helpful on-line material that we will use throughout the course. Used editions may not allow this access.

Reading Assignment for Tuesday, January 24

All reading assignments refer to the text: Voyages Through the Universe.

• p. 1 – 7 (Prologue, sections 1 – 6).
  This reading covers some of what we went over in the first lecture, and really sets up the rest of the course. Pay particular attention to the section on numbers in astronomy, and the consequences of light travel time.

• p. 19 – 22 (chapter 1, sections 1.1.1 & 1.1.2).
  This goes over what we covered in class, but is worth spending some time on, as it may be quite difficult, at first, to visualize the nature of the celestial sphere. If this gives you troubles, feel free to come in for office hours for a one-on-one tutorial until you get it!

Writing Assignment for Tuesday, January 24

Note: This assignment must be turned in at the start of class on Tuesday:

Imagine that you were suddenly given eyes able to perceive things that are 200 million times fainter than your present eyes can; for example, from San Diego you would be able to see the headlights on a car driving in New York. Now imagine that you focus these powerful eyes on a “blank” patch of sky (blank to normal humans’ eyes) that subtends an area only as big as that covered by a grain of sand held at arm’s length (i.e., a very tiny patch of sky). Draw or describe what you think you would see. If making a drawing, please also include a brief written explanation of the work.

→ Please see the Syllabus handout for the grading policy on these homework assignments. The grade in this case will be based on a combination of how thoughtful and well written (or creative and well explained, if making a drawing) your response is. Note that written responses must be typed.