

Physics 174
Exercise 1—Observing the Skies

22 January, 2007
Due: 4 May, 2007

Your assignment is to attend an observing session at either the Clinton B. Ford Observatory on the Ithaca College campus, or Fuertes Observatory on the Cornell campus. When you attend, be sure to show your student ID to the astronomer in charge so that they may record your name and student ID number. Take notes while observing, and be sure to include the names of the objects you look at, what they look like, and any other interesting information you learn.

To complete this exercise, submit a one-page summary describing the objects you observed, using the notes you took at the time. Be sure to include the day, time, and location of your observations. You are welcome to supplement your descriptions with images and notes from the web.

The Clinton B. Ford Observatory

This observatory holds open houses on the Friday closest to first quarter moon each month. The next open house will probably be on 26 January, and they will follow at roughly four-week intervals after that.

The observatory website maintains notes on the next session and how the weather is looking:

<http://www.ithaca.edu/briotta/observatory/>

Do not drive or walk to the observatory yourself. Typically, a shuttle bus will run about every 20-30 minutes from a pick-up site on the Ithaca College campus. The current pick-up site is in front of Textor Hall, but with the construction, the site may relocate to Park Hall (or some other location).

Fuertes Observatory

Fuertes Observatory holds open houses every clear Friday on the Cornell campus. The official start time is 9 pm, but you can usually arrive earlier. For more information, see their website:

<http://www.astro.cornell.edu/CAS/fuertes.shtml>

Dress warmly!

Standing around in the cold looking through a telescope can be downright uncomfortable unless you dress properly. A safe rule of thumb is to dress as though the temperature is 15-20 degrees colder than it really will be. Wear multiple layers, a hat, and warm gloves. Students overheard complaining about the cold will be fed to the wild animals which live near the observatories.