

Assignments

Week 9, beginning Monday, 3/9/2009:

Monday:

- We'll review Chapters 3 & 4 and then you'll take your test. Remember to hand in your journal as well.
- Now that you understand the basics, we're going to be moving through our solar system, stars and galaxies at a much faster pace. We'll do this so that you'll be familiar with most areas of astronomy by the time you finish the course. Given that there are 10 weeks or 20 classes remaining, we'll need to cover about one chapter each class since there will be four to five more tests.

Homework due next Wednesday:

1. Read Chapter 5, using the [online study questions](#) as your guide.
2. Look for Saturn after sunset. (The following worked only for March 8, of course, since the Moon moves fast in the sky relative to a planet like Saturn. How much?) The moon will be almost full in the east-southeast. Below it to the east about three fingers (~5 degrees) you should be able to find the bright star Regulus. At around 9 in the evening you'll be more likely to find Saturn higher in the sky. Follow the Moon-Regulus line down to the next bright object, similar in brightness to Regulus. How many degrees is it from Regulus? If you have a telescope or binoculars, you'll be able to see the rings. How do they look? In your journals comment on your observation.

Wednesday:

- I'll hand back your exams and journals and we'll discuss the answers.
- We'll discuss the Chapter 5 questions.

Homework due next Monday & Wednesday:

1. Read Chapters 6 & 7, using the online study questions as your guide.

Explanation: Very good telescopic [views of Saturn](#) can be expected in the coming days as the ringed planet [nears opposition](#) on March 8th, its closest approach to Earth in 2009. Of course, opposition means opposite the Sun in planet [Earth's sky](#) - an arrangement that occurs almost yearly for Saturn. But while Saturn itself grows larger in telescopic images, Saturn's rings seem to be vanishing as [their tilt](#) to our line-of-sight decreases. In fact, the rings will be nearly invisible, edge-on from our perspective, by September 4. Recorded on February 28, this sharp image was made with the 1 meter telescope at [Pic Du Midi](#), a [mountain top](#) observatory in the French Pyrenees. The rings are seen to be tilted nearly edge-on, but remarkable details are visible in the gas giant's cloud bands. The icy moon [Tethys](#) appears just beyond the rings at the lower left.



Astronomy Picture of the Day, March 4, 2009