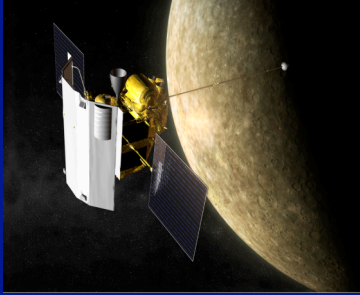


Exploration of the Solar System (29:52)



Spring 2010

Why is solar system astronomy interesting?



Case 1: the planet Mars as it appears
in the night sky

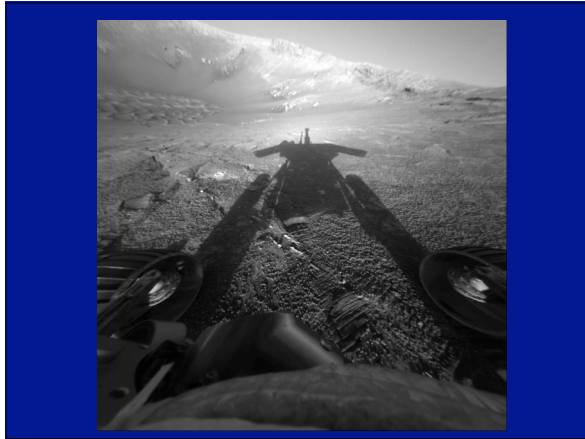
Let's take a look through a telescope



We have spacecraft on the surface of
Mars; our emissaries on another planet



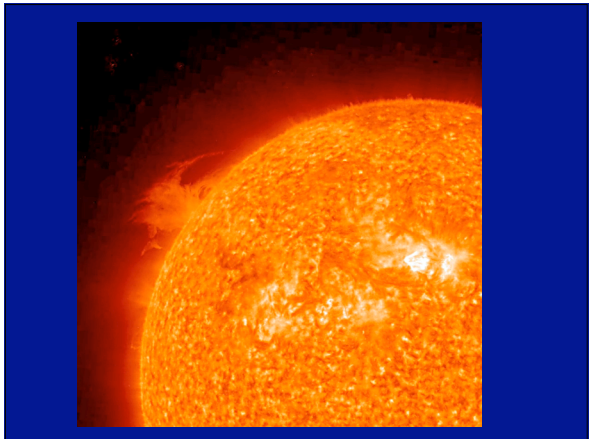
First in 1976, then 1996, then
three since 2004



Example 2: The Sun as an Astronomical Object

Reign of Akhenaten and Nefertiti (~1350 BCE)

If you look at the Sun in "white light", it might not look much different than the image of Akhenaten (e.g. recently). However, if we look at the Sun with light of different wavelengths, we see something quite different.



The Sun is a dynamic object (“ a seething cauldron”)



See internet movie

Phenomena on the Sun have consequences for conditions (and life) here on Earth

Some of the objects and phenomena we will see this semester

- Mars at opposition (closest for next 2 years)
- Asteroid Vesta at opposition
- Planet Saturn and its moon Titan
- Venus reemerging as the “Evening Star”
- The Moon and its path across the sky