**Stellar Terminology**

**Celestial Equator**

* A circle around the earth following the same plane as the equator
* As the Earth is tilted, the celestial plane is 23.4⁰



**Zenith**

* The direction pointing directly ABOVE a certain position on the Earth
* The opposite direction is called the NADIR

**Ecliptic**

* The plane of the Earth’s orbit around the Sun
* Named also after eclipses in which the moon (usually full) moves into that orbit

**Azimuth**

* A measurement of a position of a star in the sky, in degrees
* Uses the horizon as a reference plane, and is usually referenced from the north

**Right Ascension (RA)**

* The term referring to one of two coordinates of a point on a celestial sphere
* Similar to Earth’s longitude coordinate system



**Declination**

* One of two coordinates used along with RA
* Celestial equator is 0⁰
* Celestial north pole is + 90⁰
* Celestial south pole is -90⁰