

The alternative, an immediate plunge into the basic physics needed to understand the course subject, often obscures the point for students, even though it touches all the bases eventually. While the rest of the book does not seem to follow any obvious roadmap through physics, the opening gambit shows the author's underlying master plan for the series.

Volume II takes up where Volume I leaves off, and delivers many of the applications for which the groundwork is laid in Volume I.

One has to admire the considerable erudition evident in both books, even while wondering what the hurry is to get through so many interesting topics. Where, then, do these books fit in the library of astrophysics texts, and how might they be used most profitably? By itself, Volume I could form the basis of a course on astrophysical processes, although considerable augmentation of the material would be needed in several areas. The presentation is unquestionably at the right level for first- or second-year graduate students, but professors should caution those students against substituting this book for more detailed texts. Volume II could be used as the basic text for a survey course in stellar astrophysics for beginning graduate students. The book falls short of being a first-rate text for any of the individual topics it presents, but the sheer range of material encompassed could make it useful for quick-and-dirty, one-or-two-lecture minicourses.

Two obvious criticisms can be leveled against both volumes. The less serious one is the relative sparsity of references provided by the author, who seems to subscribe to the same aversion to cult of personality that pervades the Landau-Lifshitz series. Given the sketchiness of some of the treatments presented in the text, more references would have been helpful. In Volume I, the most consistent references are to material in Landau and Lifshitz, which, although just right for some, are notoriously terse for most students. In Volume II, the references are more extensive, and are usually to competing, more narrowly focused—but also more complete—texts that treat the same material.

More serious is the complete lack of discussion of even the most rudimentary principles of numerical simulation as applied to astrophysics. Volume II gives references here and there to publicly available computer codes, but these are not enough. This lack is particularly evident in the various sections that deal with radiative

transport and spectral line formation, which leave the misleading impression that calculations in this highly technical, computationally intensive field require only a relatively trivial set of analytical tools.

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