

Astronomía Avanzada I (Semester 1 2024)

## **Stellar Atmospheres (1)**

Introduction to Stellar Atmospheres

**Nina Hernitschek**

Centro de Astronomía CITEVA  
Universidad de Antofagasta

May 3, 2024

# Introduction

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

## course logistics:

- lecture: Tuesday and Friday 10 - 12
- first six lectures: stellar atmospheres, last two lectures: variable stars
- lecture dates: May 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, 24, 28, 31
- paper presentation (of your choice) on May 31

## contact and course material:

- e-mail: [nina.hernitschek@uantof.cl](mailto:nina.hernitschek@uantof.cl)
- github: [https://github.com/ninahernitschek/astronomia\\_advanzada\\_I\\_2024\\_1](https://github.com/ninahernitschek/astronomia_advanzada_I_2024_1)

# Introduction

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

## **paper presentation:**

- 20 minutes
- $\text{\LaTeX}$
- figures: properly cite and describe figures from the paper
- data of project shown in the paper: data description (incl. citation)
- discussion and summary: reflect the approach (strengths, weaknesses, limitations), lessons learned
- bibliography: bibtex/ref mechanism, ADS/Bibtex information

# Introduction

In the following lectures, you will learn about the physics of stellar spectra including spectral lines, and radiation transport occurring in stellar atmospheres.

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# What are Stellar Atmospheres?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

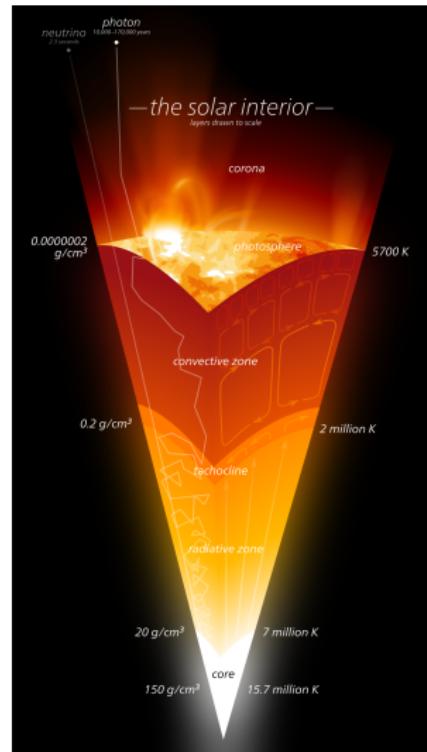
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The stellar atmosphere is what you can actually see of a star!



# What are Stellar Atmospheres?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

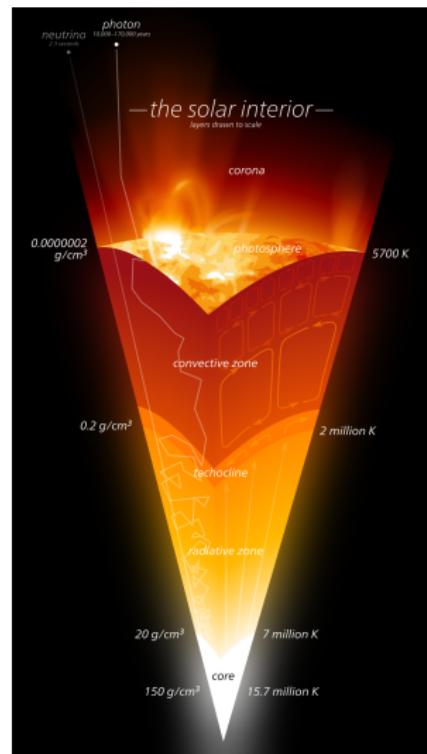
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The stellar atmosphere is what you can actually see of a star!

We divide stars into two major sectors:  
the **stellar interior** (inaccessible to  
photometric and spectroscopic  
observation\*) and the **atmosphere** (the  
visible portion of the star and the  
transition between interior and exterior).



# What are Stellar Atmospheres?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

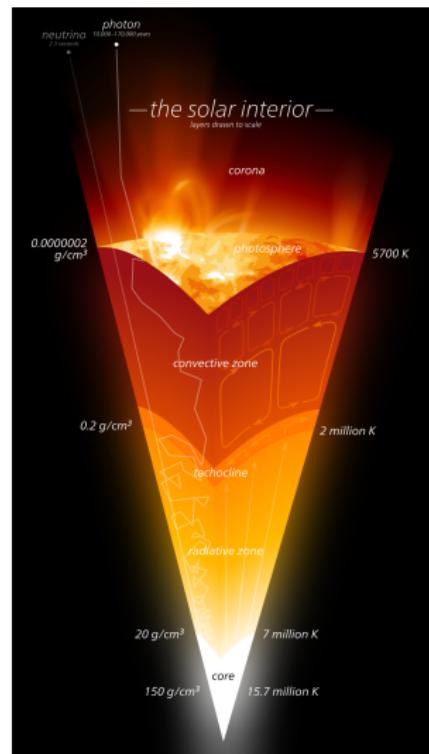
Summary

The stellar atmosphere is what you can actually see of a star!

We divide stars into two major sectors: the **stellar interior** (inaccessible to photometric and spectroscopic observation\*) and the **atmosphere** (the visible portion of the star and the transition between interior and exterior).

In contrast to the interior, where **convection** may dominate, the energy transport mechanism in the atmosphere is **radiation**.

\* The stellar interior can be probed with **Astereoseismology**, the study of the internal structures of stars by means of their intrinsic global oscillations.



# Features of Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

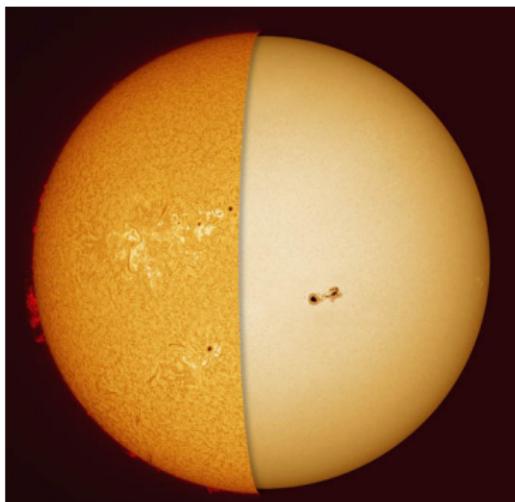
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The photosphere is the visible disk, while the atmosphere also includes coronae and winds.

$H\alpha$  light is emitted by hydrogen atoms. Their electrons absorb energy and rise to a higher energy level. When cascading back to their original level, they release that energy as light with a wavelength of  $6562.8 \text{ \AA}$  (656 nm).



Composite image of the Sun in  $H\alpha$  (left) and white light (right). In  $H\alpha$ , we see the solar chromosphere, the layer directly above the photosphere. (For that reason, in  $H\alpha$  the Sun appears larger.) credit: Alan Friedman/[avertedimagination.com](http://avertedimagination.com)

# Features of Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

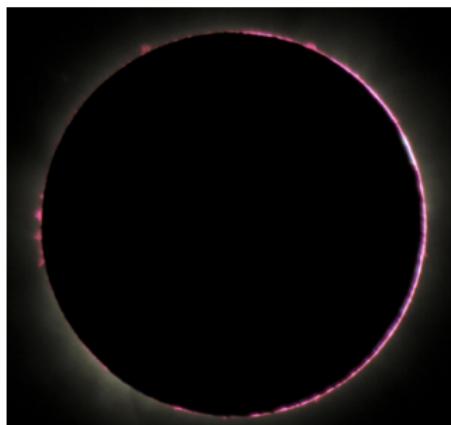
Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The 1,250-mile-thick layer of solar atmosphere located just above the photosphere is called the **chromosphere**.

Here, the temperature rises from about 6370 K to 20260 K, hot enough to excite H to emit its singular red light.

**Chromo** means color and refers to the red **prominences** seen around the limb of the Sun when its overly-brilliant photosphere is covered up by the Moon in a total solar eclipse or by using a Coronagraph and an H $\alpha$  filter.



The Sun's crimson-hued chromosphere and prominences were captured during the November 2013 total solar eclipse from Pokwero Village, Uganda.  
credit: Alson Wong

# Features of Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

A **plage** is a bright region in the Sun's chromosphere, typically found in and around active regions. Historically, they have been referred to as *bright flocculi*.

Classically as regions that are bright in H $\alpha$  and other chromospheric emission lines, nowadays most researchers identify plage based on the photospheric magnetic field concentration of the faculae below.

It is believed that plage is formed from decaying emerging flux regions, and often acts as a footprint for coronal loops.



A prominence photographed through a H $\alpha$  scope on September 17, 2015. Bright white patches are "plages".  
credit: Bob Antol / stargate4173.com

# Features of Stellar Atmospheres

## Stellar Atmospheres (1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

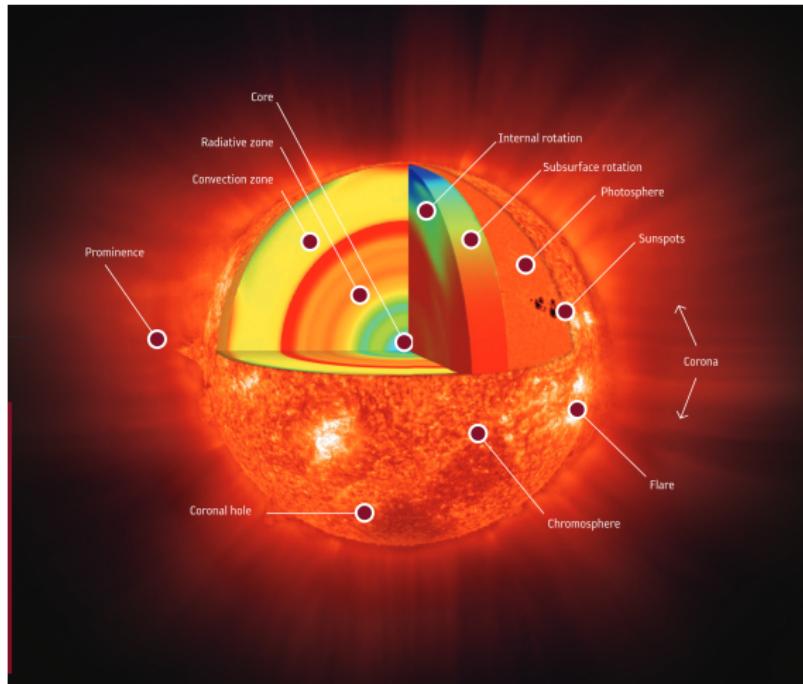
The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary



Cutaway of the Sun showing its core, where nuclear fusion occurs, radiative zone, convection zone and the three layers of its atmosphere: photosphere, chromosphere and corona. credit: NASA

# Why we care about Stellar Atmospheres?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

About 2/3 of the light is **absorbed** in the atmosphere.

Stellar interiors are effectively invisible to external observers (apart for e.g. astroseismology) so all the information we receive from stars originates from their atmospheres.

# Why we care about Stellar Atmospheres?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

About 2/3 of the light is **absorbed** in the atmosphere.

Stellar interiors are effectively invisible to external observers (apart for e.g. astroseismology) so all the information we receive from stars originates from their atmospheres.

Stellar atmospheres are primarily characterized by two parameters:  $T_{\text{eff}}$ ,  $\log g$ .

The transition between the stellar interior and the interstellar medium is seen in the change of the **physical parameter profile** (temperature, surface gravity  $g = g_{\odot} M/R^2$  or density).

# Why we care about Stellar Atmospheres?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

About 2/3 of the light is **absorbed** in the atmosphere.

Stellar interiors are effectively invisible to external observers (apart for e.g. astroseismology) so all the information we receive from stars originates from their atmospheres.

Stellar atmospheres are primarily characterized by two parameters:  $T_{\text{eff}}$ ,  $\log g$ .

The transition between the stellar interior and the interstellar medium is seen in the change of the **physical parameter profile** (temperature, surface gravity  $g = g_{\odot} M/R^2$  or density).

The **behavior** of stellar atmospheres depends mainly on the mass and age of the star and, secondarily, on the chemical composition, angular momentum and magnetic field.

# Understanding Stellar Atmospheres

To understand stellar atmospheres, we need to understand how **electromagnetic radiation** interacts with matter affecting the emergent line and continuous **spectrum**.

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Understanding Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

To understand stellar atmospheres, we need to understand how **electromagnetic radiation** interacts with matter affecting the emergent line and continuous **spectrum**.

Important for these are:

- plasma physics (e.g. line broadening)
- atomic physics (microscopic interaction between light and matter)
- radiative transfer (macroscopic interaction between light and matter)
- thermodynamics
- stellar properties
- chemical composition

# Observing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

As we've seen: observing stars is (automatically) observing stellar atmospheres!

But we can tailor our observation towards getting more relevant data for understanding stellar atmospheres.

# Spectra as Continuous Energy Distributions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

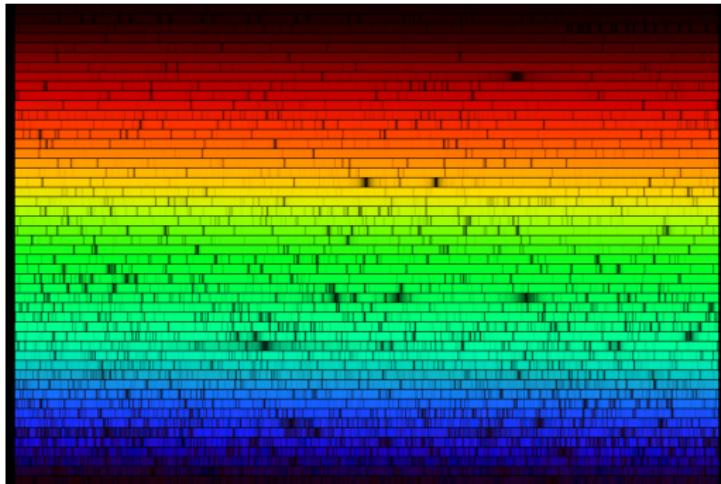
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Spectra show us how energy emission is distributed over a range of wavelengths.



A 2D Echelle image of the optical Solar spectrum. Credit: N. A. Sharp.

However, in order to study a spectrum in detail (to see subtle differences in brightness of different colors) it needs to be plotted as a graph.

# Spectra as Continuous Energy Distributions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

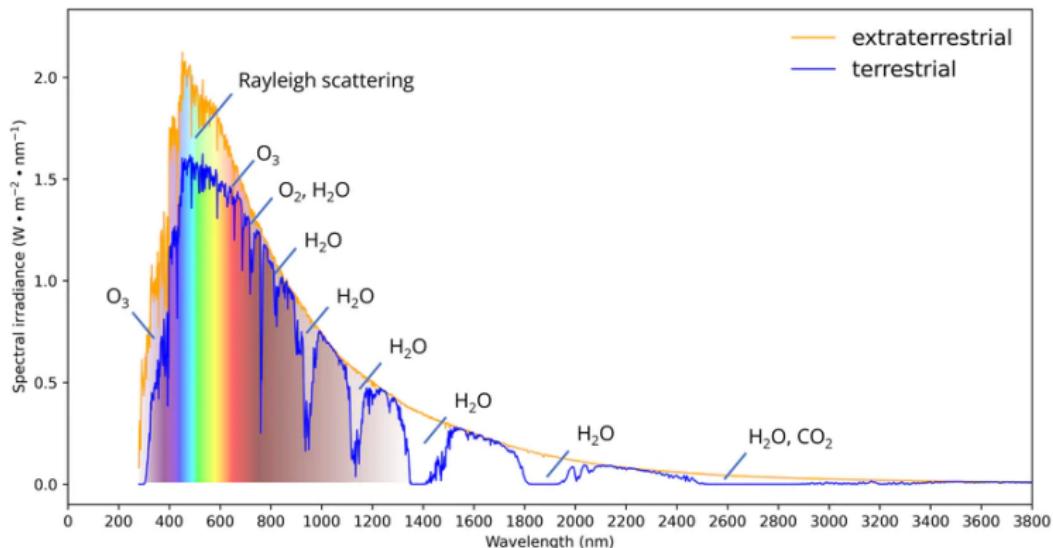
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

**Absorption and scattering** change the spectral distribution of sunlight as it passes through the atmosphere.



# Spectra as Continuous Energy Distributions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

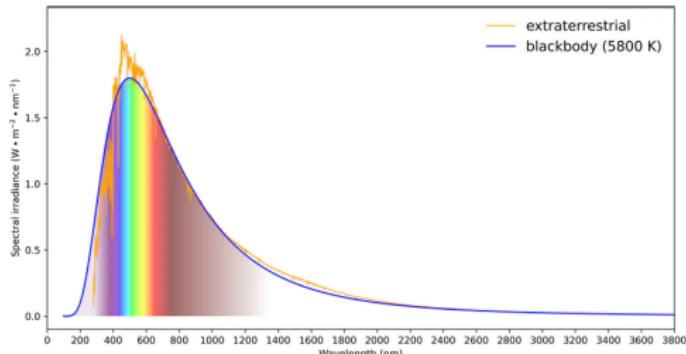
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Observationally we differentiate two important components: **Continuum and spectral lines.**



The continuum can be described as a **black body**. Emission/absorption lines respond to interactions between particles (photons-atoms/molecules).

# Spectra as Continuous Energy Distributions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

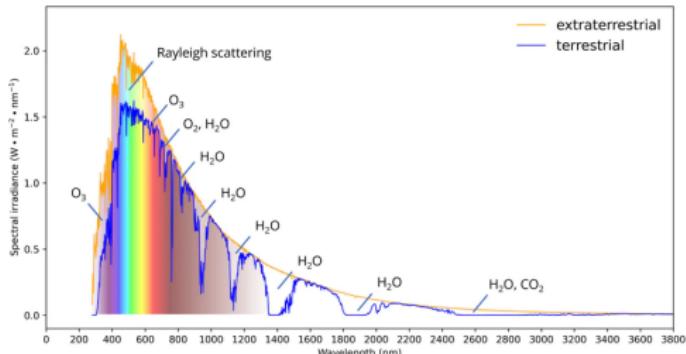
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

**Absorption** is the process where a photon transfers all its energy to an atom/molecule.



At UV wavelengths below 400 nm, O<sub>3</sub> (ozone) is the primary absorber.

Molecules in the atmosphere **scatter** incoming solar radiation into random directions. This is known as Rayleigh scattering and is responsible for the reduction in irradiance throughout the visible part of the spectrum.

Local effects, such as weather and pollution, can further change the terrestrial spectrum.

# Spectra as Continuous Energy Distributions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

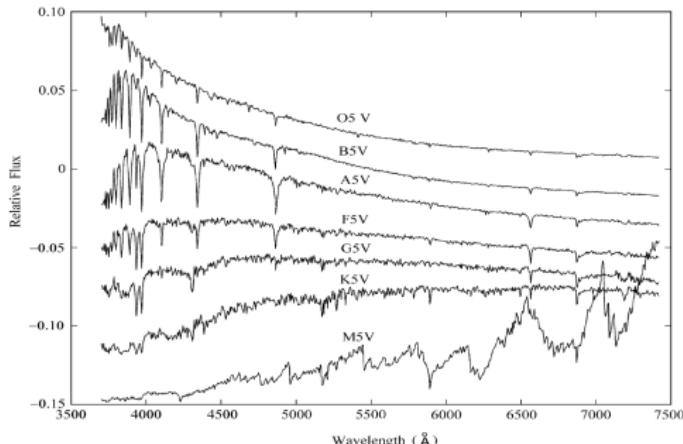
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Stellar spectra can differ a lot:



Seven main types of stellar spectra. Credit: D.-M. Qin et al. (2003)

We will later see that stellar spectra are an important tool to **classify stars**.

# Spectroscopy

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

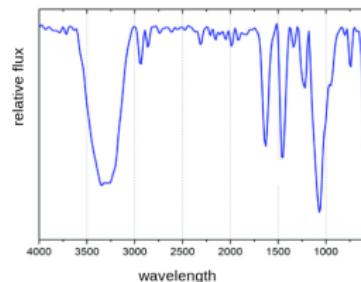
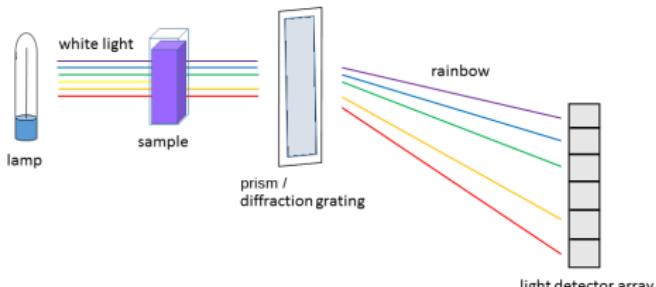
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Isaac Newton demonstrated that white light can be separated into its component colors.

A **spectroscope** consists of a prism or grating to split up light into its colors (wavelengths) and then projects them onto a screen or detector for analysis, producing a continuous spectrum.



# Spectroscopy

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

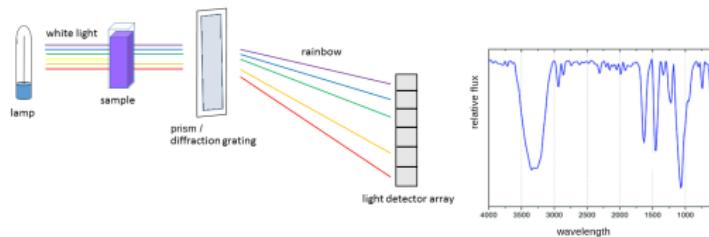
The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

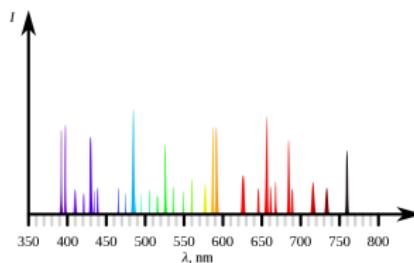
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary



When examining light from thin, **hot gas**, we see a series of discrete bright lines, the **emission lines**. They are produced when electrons drop from an excited state to a lower state. The wavelengths emitted are unique for each element (Bohr model). Thus, by examining the emission lines, we can determine the elements in the gas.



# Spectroscopy

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

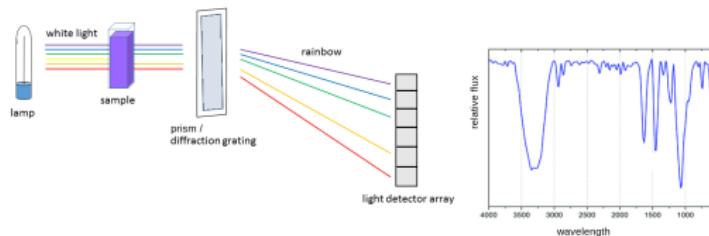
The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

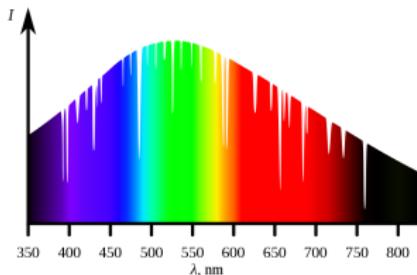
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary



When examining light passing through a **cool gas**, we see a continuum with blank lines in which specific wavelengths have disappeared - the **absorption lines**. They are the result of electrons absorbing light. The specific wavelengths in the absorption lines of an element are the same as the wavelengths in the emission lines of the same element. Thus, we can identify elements by either their emission or absorption spectra.



# Kirchhoff Radiation Laws

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The radiation laws of Gustav Kirchhoff (~1840) describe the phenomenon:

1. A hot solid, liquid, or dense gas produces a continuous spectrum.
2. A hot diffuse gas under low pressure produces an emission line spectrum.
3. A cold diffuse gas under pressure in front of a continuous spectrum source produces dark spectral lines (absorption lines) in the continuous spectrum.

Although these laws were developed in **laboratories**, they describe the emission phenomena associated with the gas and are fundamental for describing atmospheres.

# Astronomy with Spectra

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Despite initially developed for the H atom, the mechanism works as well for multielectron atoms and even molecules, who have more complex spectra.

All these spectra behave in predictable fashion, so each acts a definitive "fingerprint" that can be used to identify the element or molecule.

Kirchhoff's Laws have proven to be useful in identifying **composition and temperature** of e.g. planetary atmospheres, stars, and interstellar nebula.

# Astronomy with Spectra

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

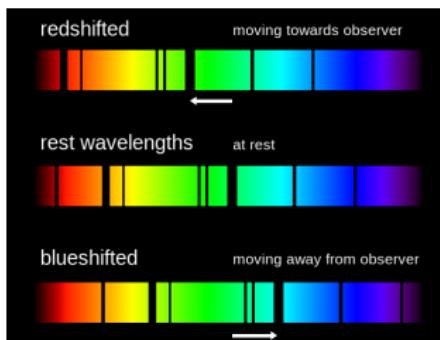
Summary

Despite initially developed for the H atom, the mechanism works as well for multielectron atoms and even molecules, who have more complex spectra.

All these spectra behave in predictable fashion, so each acts a definitive "fingerprint" that can be used to identify the element or molecule.

Kirchhoff's Laws have proven to be useful in identifying **composition and temperature** of e.g. planetary atmospheres, stars, and interstellar nebula.

Indirectly, from spectra also the motion of those objects can be inferred, using the **Doppler effect**.



# Black-Body Radiation

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

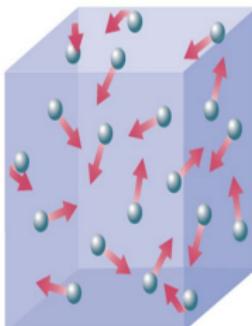
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

All baryonic matter (above a temperature of absolute zero) emits electromagnetic radiation.

The radiation represents a conversion of a body's internal energy into electromagnetic energy, and is therefore called **thermal radiation**.



# Black-Body Radiation

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

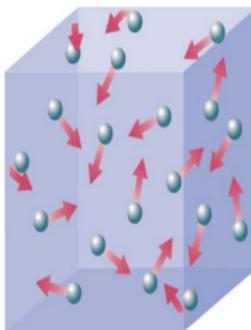
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

All baryonic matter (above a temperature of absolute zero) emits electromagnetic radiation.

The radiation represents a conversion of a body's internal energy into electromagnetic energy, and is therefore called **thermal radiation**.



**Black-body radiation** is the thermal electromagnetic radiation within, or surrounding, a body in thermodynamic equilibrium with its environment, emitted by an idealized black body (opaque, non-reflective).

Black-body radiation was first observed by Th. Wedgwood (1792).

# Black-Body Radiation

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Subsequent investigations conclude that:

1. Every body with temperature emits light at all wavelengths with varying efficiency.
2. An ideal emitter absorbs all the light incident on it and re-radiates it.
3. The wavelength of maximum radiation is given by **Wien's displacement law**:

The spectral radiance of black-body radiation per unit wavelength, peaks at the wavelength  $\lambda_{\max}$  given by:

$$\lambda_{\max} = \frac{b}{T}$$

where  $T$  is the absolute temperature and  $b$  is a constant of proportionality called Wien's displacement constant,  $b = 2.897771955 \times 10^3 \text{ m K}$ .

# Black-Body Radiation

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

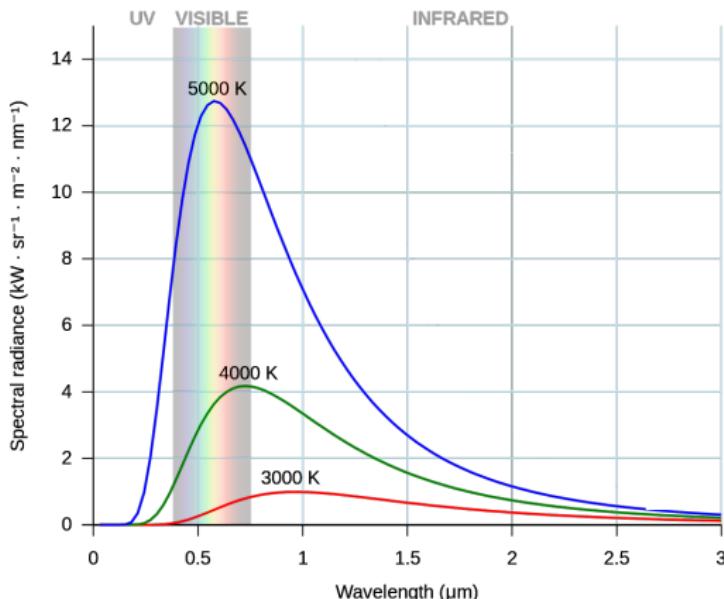
The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary



Black-body radiation as a function of wavelength for various temperatures. Each temperature curve peaks at a different wavelength, as described by Wien's law. With increasing temperature, the peak of the blackbody radiation curve moves to higher intensities and shorter wavelengths.

# Black Body Radiation

Not only the wavelength at which the spectral radiance peaks shifts with temperature:

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Black Body Radiation

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Not only the wavelength at which the spectral radiance peaks shifts with temperature:

For a black body, the **Stefan-Boltzmann law** states that the total energy radiated per unit area per unit time (also known as the flux) is directly proportional to the fourth power of the black body's temperature:

$$F = \sigma_{\text{SB}} T^4.$$

The constant of proportionality,  $\sigma_{\text{SB}}$ , is called the Stefan-Boltzmann constant. It has a value  $\sigma_{\text{SB}} = 5.670374419 \times 10^{-8} \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-4}$ .

# Black Body Radiation

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Not only the wavelength at which the spectral radiance peaks shifts with temperature:

For a black body, the **Stefan-Boltzmann law** states that the total energy radiated per unit area per unit time (also known as the flux) is directly proportional to the fourth power of the black body's temperature:

$$F = \sigma_{\text{SB}} T^4.$$

The constant of proportionality,  $\sigma_{\text{SB}}$ , is called the Stefan-Boltzmann constant. It has a value  $\sigma_{\text{SB}} = 5.670374419 \times 10^{-8} \text{ W m}^{-2} \text{ K}^{-4}$ .

We can use the Stefan-Boltzmann law to calculate the **star's temperature**: When approximating a star as black body, the total luminosity of a star is  $L = 4\pi R^2 \sigma_{\text{SB}} T^4$ .

**example:** For the Sun,  $T \sim 6000 \text{ K}$ ,  $R_{\odot} = 6.96 \times 10^8 \text{ m}$ , so  $L_{\odot} \sim 4 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$ .

# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We've seen that:

- emission lines are produced when electrons drop from an excited state to a lower state
- absorption lines are the result of electrons absorbing light, jumping up to a higher state

# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Observations of hydrogen spectra lead to the following distribution of hydrogen lines (Johann Balmer (1885) and Johannes Rydberg (1888)):

$$\frac{1}{\lambda} = R_H \left( \frac{1}{2^2} - \frac{1}{n^2} \right) \quad \text{for } n = 3, 4, 5, \dots$$

where  $\lambda$  is the wavelength of the absorbed/emitted light and  $R_H$  is the Rydberg constant for hydrogen,  $R_H = 1.09677 \times 7 \text{ m}^{-1}$ .



The "visible" hydrogen emission spectrum lines in the Balmer series. H $\alpha$  is the red line at the right. Four lines (counting from the right) are formally in the visible range. Lines five and six can be seen with the naked eye, but are considered to be UV as they have  $\lambda < 400 \text{ nm}$ .

# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

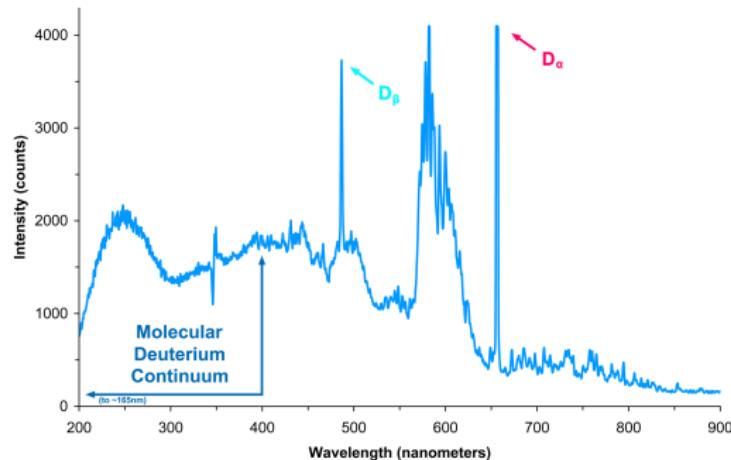
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Two of the Balmer lines ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ) are clearly visible in this emission spectrum of a deuterium lamp.



Deuterium (hydrogen-2, symbol  $^2H$  or  $D$ , also known as *heavy hydrogen*) is one of two stable isotopes of hydrogen (the other is protium, or hydrogen-1). In addition to one proton, it contains one neutron in its nucleus.

# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

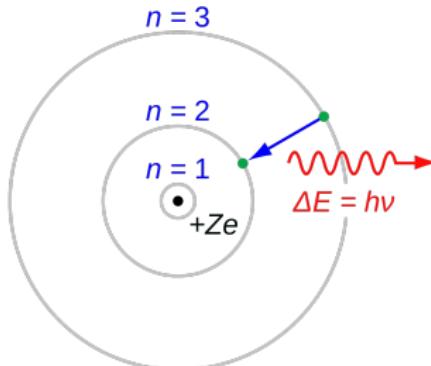
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

In the simplified Rutherford-Bohr model of the H atom, the Balmer lines result from an electron jump between the second energy level closest to the nucleus, and those levels more distant.

Shown here is a photon emission. The  $3 \rightarrow 2$  transition depicted here produces  $H\alpha$ , the first line of the Balmer series. For H, this transition results in a photon of wavelength 656 nm (red).



# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

After Balmer's discovery, five other hydrogen spectral series were discovered, corresponding to electrons transitioning to values of  $n$  other than two.

We find a **generalized** equation for the wavelengths of emitted or absorbed photons:

$$\frac{1}{\lambda} = Z^2 R_\infty \left( \frac{1}{n_1^2} - \frac{1}{n_2^2} \right)$$

where

$Z$  is the atomic number

$n_1$  is the principal quantum number of the lower energy level

$n_2$  is the principal quantum number of the upper energy level

$R_\infty$  is the Rydberg constant ( $1.09677 \times 10^7 \text{ m}^{-1}$  for hydrogen and  $1.09737 \times 10^7 \text{ m}^{-1}$  for heavy metals).

# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

After Balmer's discovery, five other hydrogen spectral series were discovered, corresponding to electrons transitioning to values of  $n$  other than two.

We find a **generalized** equation for the wavelengths of emitted or absorbed photons:

$$\frac{1}{\lambda} = Z^2 R_\infty \left( \frac{1}{n_1^2} - \frac{1}{n_2^2} \right)$$

where

$Z$  is the atomic number

$n_1$  is the principal quantum number of the lower energy level

$n_2$  is the principal quantum number of the upper energy level

$R_\infty$  is the Rydberg constant ( $1.09677 \times 10^7 \text{ m}^{-1}$  for hydrogen and  $1.09737 \times 10^7 \text{ m}^{-1}$  for heavy metals).

This equation is valid for all atoms having only a single electron, and the particular case of hydrogen spectral lines is given by  $Z=1$ .

# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

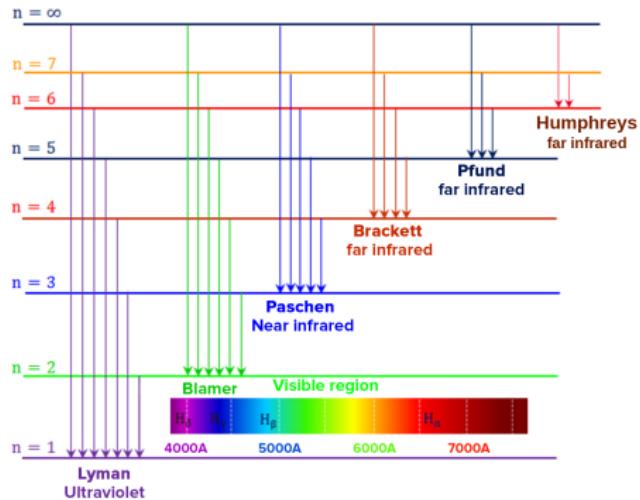
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The transitions are named the following:

- $n_1 = 1$ : Lyman
- $n_1 = 2$ : Balmer
- $n_1 = 3$ : Paschen
- $n_1 = 4$ : Brackett
- $n_1 = 5$ : Pfund
- $n_1 = 6$ : Humphreys



# Electron Transitions

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

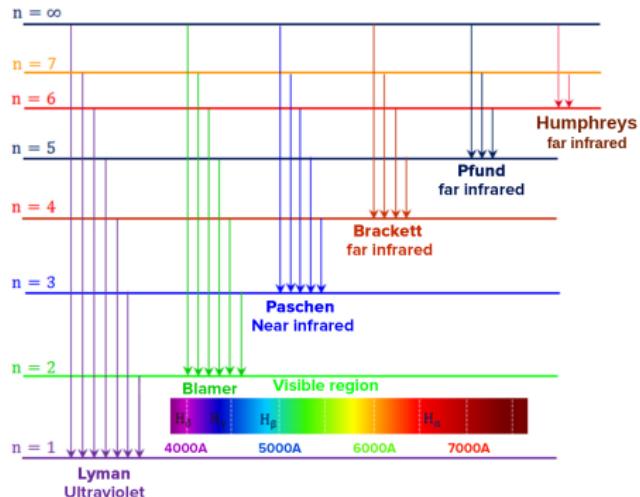
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The transitions are named the following:

- $n_1 = 1$ : Lyman
- $n_1 = 2$ : Balmer
- $n_1 = 3$ : Paschen
- $n_1 = 4$ : Brackett
- $n_1 = 5$ : Pfund
- $n_1 = 6$ : Humphreys



Further series ( $n_1 > 6$ ) are unnamed, but follow the same pattern and equation as dictated by the Rydberg equation. Series are increasingly spread out and occur at increasing wavelengths. The lines are also increasingly faint, corresponding to increasingly rare atomic events.

# Balmer Lines in Astronomy

Because the Balmer lines are commonly seen in the spectra of various objects, they are often used to **determine radial velocities due to Doppler shifting** of the Balmer lines.

Common **use cases** are such as:

- measuring stellar pulsations
- detecting binary stars
- detecting exoplanets
- detecting compact objects such as neutron stars and black holes (by the motion of Hydrogen in accretion disks around them)
- identifying groups of objects with similar motions and presumably origins (moving groups, star clusters, galaxy clusters)
- determining distances (actually redshifts) of galaxies or quasars.

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Balmer Lines in Astronomy

Because the Balmer lines are commonly seen in the spectra of various objects, they are often used to **determine radial velocities due to Doppler shifting** of the Balmer lines.

Common **use cases** are such as:

- measuring stellar pulsations
- detecting binary stars
- detecting exoplanets
- detecting compact objects such as neutron stars and black holes (by the motion of Hydrogen in accretion disks around them)
- identifying groups of objects with similar motions and presumably origins (moving groups, star clusters, galaxy clusters)
- determining distances (actually redshifts) of galaxies or quasars.

In stars, the Balmer lines are usually seen in **absorption**, and they are "strongest" in stars with a surface temperature of about 10,000 K (spectral type A). In the spectra of most spiral and irregular galaxies, AGN, H II regions and planetary nebulae, the Balmer lines are **emission lines**.

# Atom Models and Spectral Lines

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

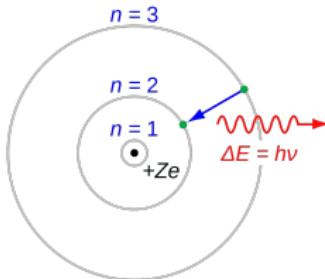
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Spectral lines can be conveniently explained with the Bohr-Rutherford model in which spectral lines result from electron jumps between levels.



However, this model fails to explain certain effects, such as:

- The relative intensities of spectral lines; although in some simple cases, Bohr's formula or modifications of it, was able to provide reasonable estimates.
- Doublets and triplets appear in the spectra of some atoms as very close pairs of lines. Bohr's model cannot say why some energy levels should be very close together.

# Atom Models and Spectral Lines

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

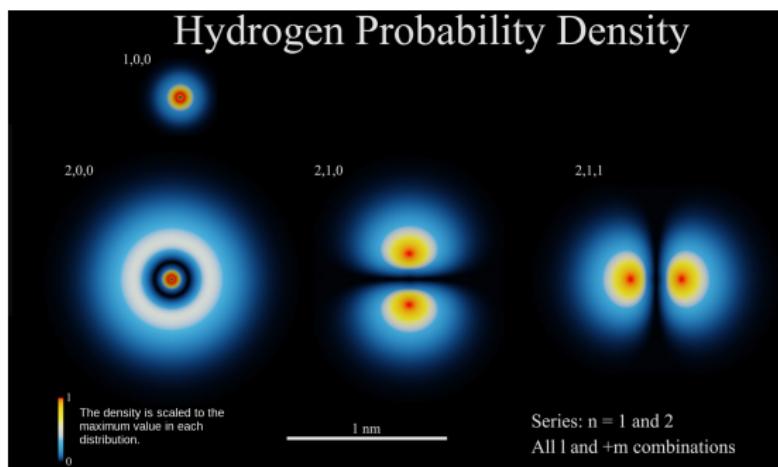
Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

In modern **quantum mechanics**, the electron in Hydrogen is a spherical cloud of probability that grows denser near the nucleus.

The electron and nucleus are viewed as probability functions, defining orbits in which the electron is most likely to be found:

The state of the particle becomes defined by a series of discrete **quantum numbers** ( $n$ ,  $l$ ,  $m_l$  and  $m_s$ ), quantizing energy, angular momentum and spin.



# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Besides the spectra, the parameters  $T_{\text{eff}}$  (effective temperature) and  $\log g$  (logarithmic surface gravity) are what we use to describe stellar atmospheres.

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Besides the spectra, the parameters  $T_{\text{eff}}$  (effective temperature) and  $\log g$  (logarithmic surface gravity) are what we use to describe stellar atmospheres.

The **effective temperature** (in K) is defined by  $L = 4\pi R^2 \sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4$ , which is related to **ionization**.

The **surface gravity** (in  $\text{cm/s}^2$ ),  $g = GM/R^2$ , is related to **pressure**.

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Besides the spectra, the parameters  $T_{\text{eff}}$  (effective temperature) and  $\log g$  (logarithmic surface gravity) are what we use to describe stellar atmospheres.

The **effective temperature** (in K) is defined by  $L = 4\pi R^2 \sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4$ , which is related to **ionization**.

The **surface gravity** (in  $\text{cm}/\text{s}^2$ ),  $g = GM/R^2$ , is related to **pressure**.

## example:

The Sun has  $T_{\text{eff}} = 5777 \text{ K}$ ,  $\log g = 4.44$ . Its atmosphere is only a few hundred km deep,  $<0.1\%$  of the stellar radius.

The Solar atmosphere is most easily studied during total eclipse.

A red giant has  $\log g \sim 1$  (extended atmosphere), while a white dwarf has  $\log g \sim 8$  (effectively zero atmosphere), and neutron stars have  $\log g \sim 14 - 15$ .

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres



How do we measure  $T_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\log g$ ?

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres



How do we measure  $T_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\log g$ ?

The atmospheric parameters are directly related to the stellar mass ( $M$ ), radius ( $R$ ) and luminosity ( $L$ ).

A **fundamental star** has at least one of its atmospheric parameters obtained without reference to model atmospheres. An ideal fundamental star will have both parameters measured. These stars are vital for the quality assurance of model predictions.

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres



How do we measure  $T_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\log g$ ?

Unfortunately, the direct determination of  $T_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\log g$  is not possible for most stars. Hence, we have to use **indirect methods**.

In most cases, **model atmospheres** are our analytical link between the physical properties of the star and the observed flux distribution and spectral line profiles. These observations can be used to obtain values for the atmospheric parameters  $T_{\text{eff}}$  and  $\log g$ , assuming of course that the models used are adequate and appropriate.

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **effective temperature** of a star is physically related to the total radiant power per unit area at stellar surface ( $F_*$ ):

$$\sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4 \equiv \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} d\nu = F_* = \frac{L}{4\pi R^2}$$

It is the temperature of an equivalent **black body** that gives the same total power per unit area, and is directly given by stellar luminosity and radius. Since there is no true **surface** of a star, the stellar radius can vary with the wavelengths of observation and the nature of the star.

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **effective temperature** of a star is physically related to the total radiant power per unit area at stellar surface ( $F_*$ ):

$$\sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4 \equiv \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} d\nu = F_* = \frac{L}{4\pi R^2}$$

It is the temperature of an equivalent **black body** that gives the same total power per unit area, and is directly given by stellar luminosity and radius. Since there is no true **surface** of a star, the stellar radius can vary with the wavelengths of observation and the nature of the star.

Providing there is no interstellar reddening, the total observed flux at the Earth,  $f_{\oplus}$  and the stellar angular diameter  $\theta$  can be used to determine the total flux of the star:

$$F_* = \frac{\theta^2}{4} f_{\oplus}$$

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **effective temperature** of a star is physically related to the total radiant power per unit area at stellar surface ( $F_*$ ):

$$\sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4 \equiv \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} d\nu = F_* = \frac{L}{4\pi R^2}$$

It is the temperature of an equivalent **black body** that gives the same total power per unit area, and is directly given by stellar luminosity and radius. Since there is no true **surface** of a star, the stellar radius can vary with the wavelengths of observation and the nature of the star.

Providing there is no interstellar reddening, the total observed flux at the Earth,  $f_{\oplus}$  and the stellar angular diameter  $\theta$  can be used to determine the total flux of the star:

$$F_* = \frac{\theta^2}{4} f_{\oplus}$$

The **stellar angular diameter**  $\theta$  can be obtained directly using techniques such as speckle photometry, interferometry, and lunar occultations, and indirectly from eclipsing binary systems with known distances.

# Parameters for Describing Stellar Atmospheres

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **surface gravity** of a star is directly given by the stellar mass and radius (in solar units):

$$g = g_{\odot} \frac{M}{R^2}$$

or, logarithmically,

$$\log g = \log M - 2 \log R + 4.437$$

Surface gravity is a measure of the photospheric pressure of the stellar atmosphere. Direct measurements are possible from eclipsing spectroscopic binaries, but again be aware of hidden model atmosphere dependences.

# Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Flux (or radiant flux),  $F$ , is the total amount of energy that crosses a unit area per unit time. Flux is usually given in watts per square meter ( $\text{W/m}^2$ ).

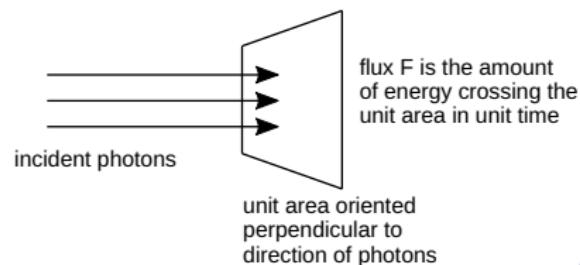
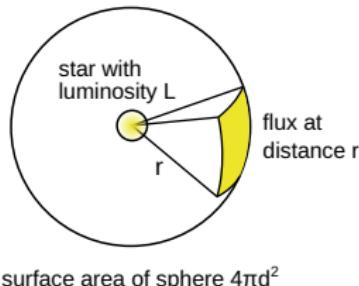
The flux of an astronomical source depends on the luminosity of the object and its distance from the Earth, according to the inverse square law:

$$F = \frac{L}{4\pi r^2}$$

where  $F$  = flux measured at distance  $r$ ,

$L$  = luminosity of the source,

$r$  = distance to the source.



# Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

**example:** The luminosity of the Sun is  $L_{\odot} = 3.839 \times 10^{26}$  W.

At a distance of  $1 \text{ AU} = 1.496 \times 10^{11}$  m, Earth receives a radiant flux above its absorbing atmosphere of

$$F = \frac{L}{4\pi r^2} = 1365 \text{ W m}^{-2}.$$

# Magnitudes and Broad-Band Filters

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

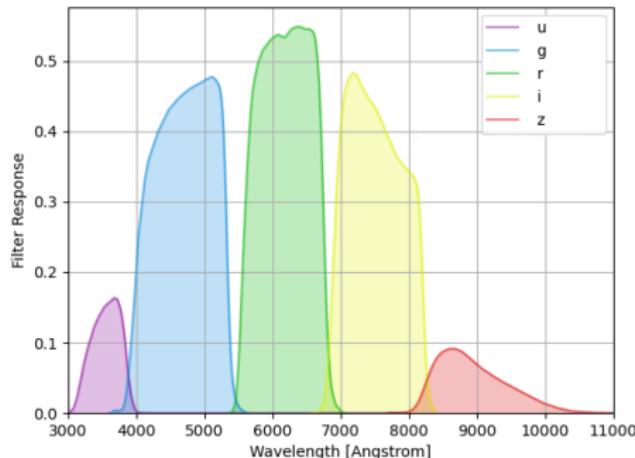
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We often measure the flux  $F$  from astronomical objects via a logarithmic magnitude scale.

Magnitudes almost universally involve a set of **broad-band filters**, e.g. Johnson *UBVRI* or Sloan *ugriz*:



# Magnitudes and Broad-Band Filters

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

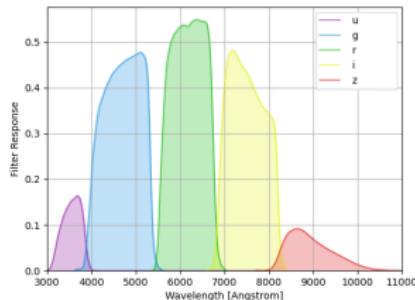
Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We often measure the flux  $F$  from astronomical objects via a logarithmic magnitude scale.

Magnitudes almost universally involve a set of **broad-band filters**, e.g. Johnson *UBVRI* or Sloan *ugriz*:



We then calculate:

$$m = -2.5 \log \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} W(\nu) d\nu + \text{const}$$

with:

$F_{\nu}$  a star's spectral energy distribution (SED)

$W(\nu)$  a filter passband

# Color Index

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We can define a **color index** as the difference between filters relative to Vega, e.g.

$$B - V = m_B - m_V = -2.5 \log \left( \frac{\int F_\nu W_B(\nu) d\nu}{\int F_\nu W_V(\nu) d\nu} \right) + 0.710$$

such that stars bluer than Vega have a negative  $B - V$  color and stars redder than Vega have a positive color.

# Color Index

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres  
The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We can define a **color index** as the difference between filters relative to Vega, e.g.

$$B - V = m_B - m_V = -2.5 \log \left( \frac{\int F_\nu W_B(\nu) d\nu}{\int F_\nu W_V(\nu) d\nu} \right) + 0.710$$

such that stars bluer than Vega have a negative  $B - V$  color and stars redder than Vega have a positive color.

**example:**  $(B - V)_\odot = +0.65$  mag.

# Absolute Magnitude

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We can define the **absolute (visual) magnitude**  $M_V$  as the apparent (visual) magnitude of a star  $m_V$  at a distance of  $d = 10$  pc.

Because  $F \propto d^{-2}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} M_V - m_V &= -2.5 \log [F(10 \text{ pc})/F(d)] \\ &= -5 \log(d/10 \text{ pc}) \\ &= 5 - 5 \log(d/\text{pc}) \end{aligned}$$

This is the **distance modulus**, which must be corrected for reddening from the interstellar medium:

$$M_V - m_V = 5 - 5 \log(d/\text{pc}) - A_V.$$

# Absolute Magnitude

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

We can define the **absolute (visual) magnitude**  $M_V$  as the apparent (visual) magnitude of a star  $m_V$  at a distance of  $d = 10$  pc.

Because  $F \propto d^{-2}$ :

$$\begin{aligned} M_V - m_V &= -2.5 \log [F(10 \text{ pc})/F(d)] \\ &= -5 \log(d/10 \text{ pc}) \\ &= 5 - 5 \log(d/\text{pc}) \end{aligned}$$

This is the **distance modulus**, which must be corrected for reddening from the interstellar medium:

$$M_V - m_V = 5 - 5 \log(d/\text{pc}) - A_V.$$

Visually, the **extinction term** is  $A_V \sim 3.1E(B - V)$  for most sight lines, where  $E(B - V) = -V - (B - V)_0$ , i.e. the difference between observed and intrinsic  $B - V$  color.

Interstellar extinction is much higher at shorter wavelengths, so IR observations of e.g. the Milky Way disk probe much further.

# Bolometric Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **bolometric flux** ( $\text{erg cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) from a star received at the top of Earth's atmosphere is the integral of the spectral flux (measured at a frequency  $\nu$  or wavelength  $\lambda$ ) over all the frequencies or wavelengths:

$$F_{\text{bol}} = \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} \, d\nu = \int_0^{\infty} F_{\lambda} \, d\lambda$$

# Bolometric Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **bolometric flux** ( $\text{erg cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) from a star received at the top of Earth's atmosphere is the integral of the spectral flux (measured at a frequency  $\nu$  or wavelength  $\lambda$ ) over all the frequencies or wavelengths:

$$F_{\text{bol}} = \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} \, d\nu = \int_0^{\infty} F_{\lambda} \, d\lambda$$

The luminosity ( $\text{erg/s}$ ) is the bolometric flux from the star integrated over a full sphere (at distance  $d$ ):

$$L = 4\pi d^2 F_{\text{bol}}$$

# Bolometric Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **bolometric flux** ( $\text{erg cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) from a star received at the top of Earth's atmosphere is the integral of the spectral flux (measured at a frequency  $\nu$  or wavelength  $\lambda$ ) over all the frequencies or wavelengths:

$$F_{\text{bol}} = \int_0^{\infty} F_{\nu} \, d\nu = \int_0^{\infty} F_{\lambda} \, d\lambda$$

The luminosity ( $\text{erg/s}$ ) is the bolometric flux from the star integrated over a full sphere (at distance  $d$ ):

$$L = 4\pi d^2 F_{\text{bol}}$$

Since the Earth's atmosphere is opaque to UV and some IR radiation, one cannot always directly measure the bolometric flux.

# Bolometric Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **bolometric correction** is the correction made to the absolute magnitude of an astronomical object in order to convert its visible magnitude to its bolometric magnitude.

From (Earth) atmospheric models, one can calculate **bolometric corrections** (BC) to correct measured fluxes, usually in the  $V$  band, for the total (bolometric) flux.

Usually the bolometric correction is expressed in magnitudes:

$$BC = M_{\text{bol}} - M_V$$

with  $M_{\text{bol}} = 4.74 - 2.5 \log(L/L_\odot)$

The bolometric correction scale is set by the absolute magnitude of the Sun and an adopted (arbitrary) absolute bolometric magnitude for the Sun.

**example:**

For our Sun,  $BC = -0.08$  mag. This is a small correction since our Sun emits most radiation in the visual.

Hot OB stars have a very large negative  $BC$ , since most of the energy is emitted in the UV.

# Bolometric Flux

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The bolometric correction for a range of stars with different **spectral types** and groups is given in the following table:

Spectral Type	Main Sequence	Giants	Supergiants
O3	-4.3	-4.2	-4.0
G0	-0.10	-0.13	-0.1
G5	-0.14	-0.34	-0.20
K0	-0.24	-0.42	-0.38
K5	-0.66	-1.19	-1.00
M0	-1.21	-1.28	-1.3

The bolometric correction is large and negative both for early type (hot) stars and for late type (cool) stars: For early type stars, a substantial part of the produced radiation is in the UV. For late type stars, a large part is in the IR. For a star like the Sun, the correction is only marginal because the Sun radiates most of its energy in the visual wavelength range.

Bolometric corrections are typically **derived** from using a color-magnitude diagram and a theoretical model of the star's atmosphere.

# Spectral Classes

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The **spectral classes** (Morgan-Keenan (MK); earlier version called the Harvard classification scheme) uses **ratios of spectral line strengths** to classify stars.

MK spectral class	class characteristics
O	hot stars with He II absorption
B	He I absorption; H developing later
A	very strong H, decreasing later; Ca II increasing
F	Ca II stronger; H weaker; metals developing
G	Ca II strong; Fe and other metals strong; H weaker
K	strong metallic lines; CH and CN bands developing
M	very red; TiO bands developing strong

O-type stars have the bluest  $B - V$  and highest  $T_{\text{eff}}$ . OBA stars are *early-type* stars, whereas cooler stars are *late-type*.

Spectral classes are each subdivided into up to 10 divisions, e.g. O2 ... O9, B0 ... B9

# Spectral Classes

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

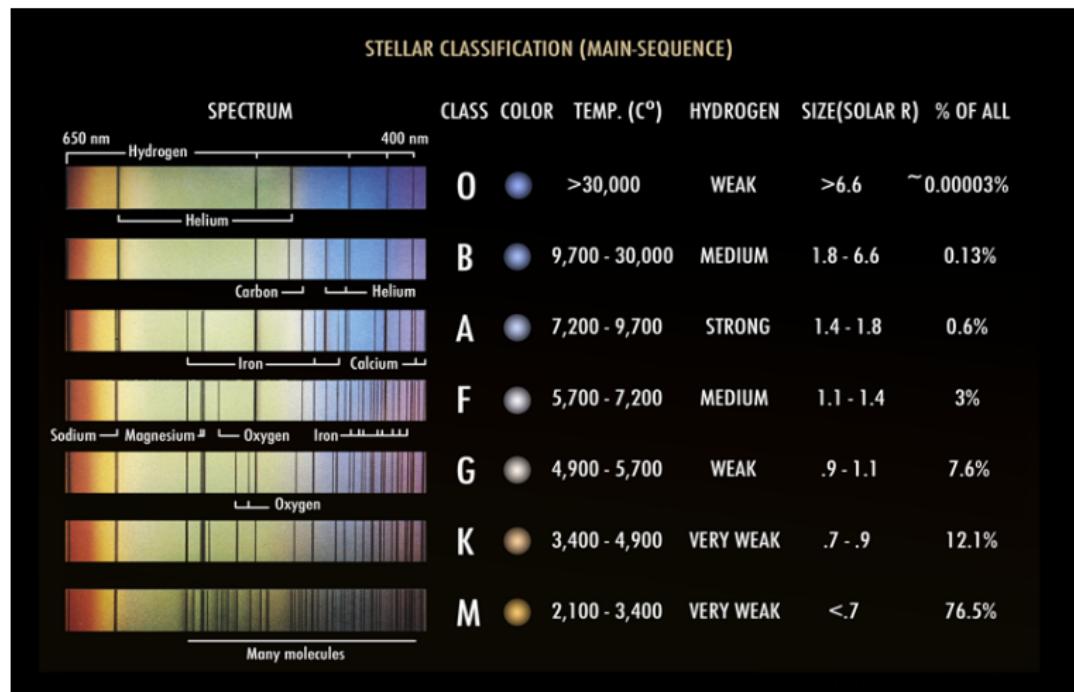
The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

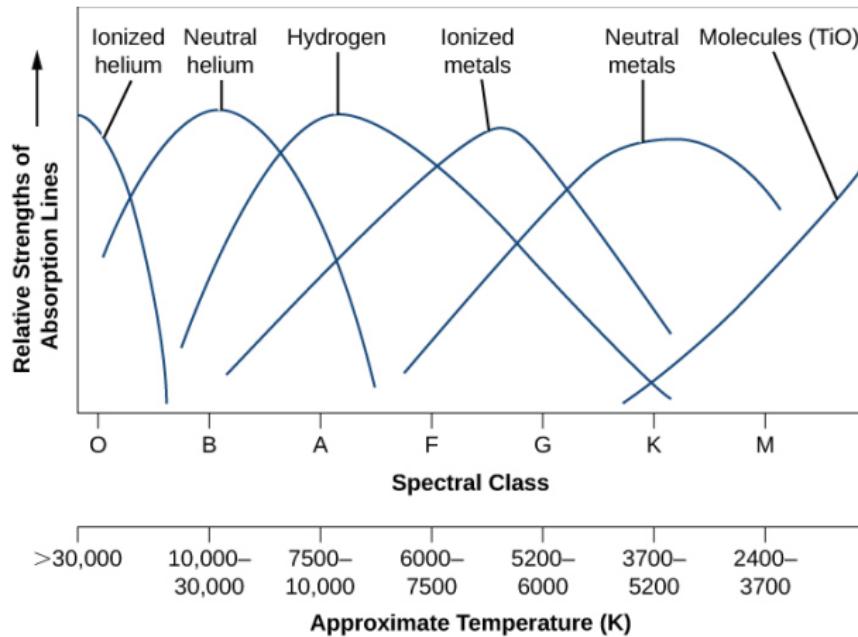
Summary



# Spectral Classes

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction  
Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres  
The Origin of  
Spectra  
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres  
Fluxes and  
Filters  
Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes  
Summary



# Luminosity Classes

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

There are certain problems with the spectral classes:

- spectra could have the same lines present (indicating same effective temperature), but different line widths
- stars could have the same effective temperature (hence also color and spectral class) but vary enormously in luminosity and thus absolute magnitude.

# Luminosity Classes

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

There are certain problems with the spectral classes:

- spectra could have the same lines present (indicating same effective temperature), but different line widths
- stars could have the same effective temperature (hence also color and spectral class) but vary enormously in luminosity and thus absolute magnitude.

To account for this, a second classification scheme, the **Luminosity Class** was added to the original concept of Spectral Class.

# Luminosity Classes

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

Luminosity class	class characteristics
0 or Ia+	hypergiants or extremely luminous supergiants
Ia	luminous supergiants
Iab	intermediate-size luminous supergiants
Ib	less luminous supergiants
II	bright giants
III	normal giants
IV	subgiants
V	main-sequence stars (dwarfs)
sd (prefix) or VI	subdwarfs
D (prefix) or VII	white dwarfs

Marginal cases are allowed; for example, a star may be either a supergiant or a bright giant, or may be in between the subgiant and main-sequence classifications. In these cases, two special symbols are used:

A slash (/) means that a star is either one class or the other.

A dash (-) means that the star is in between the two classes.

# The Hertzsprung-Russel (H-R) Diagram

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

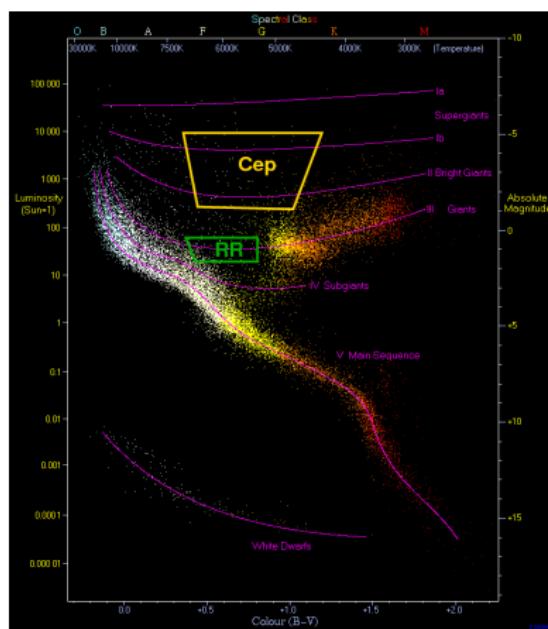
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

early 20th century: E. Hertzsprung and H. N. Russell noted that a scatter plot of a measure of stellar **luminosity** (absolute magnitude) vs. a measure of the stellar **temperature** (spectral type, color) shows structure:



An observational Hertzsprung-Russell diagram with 22,000 stars from the Hipparcos Catalogue and 1,000 from the Gliese Catalogue of nearby stars.

# The Hertzsprung-Russel (H-R) Diagram

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

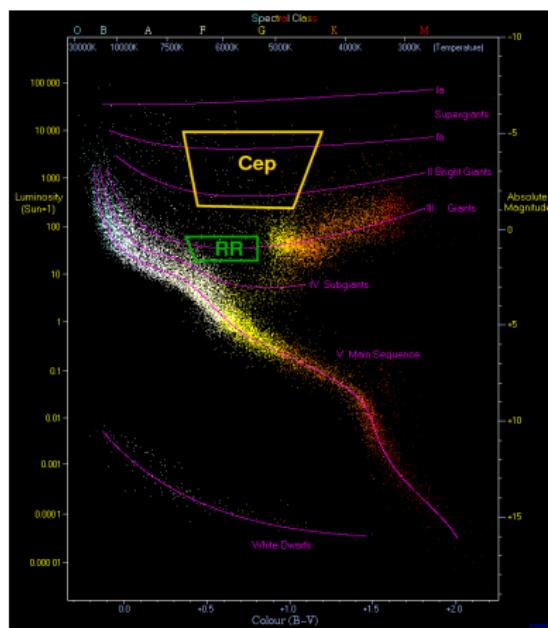
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

early 20th century: E. Hertzsprung and H. N. Russell noted that a scatter plot of a measure of stellar **luminosity** (absolute magnitude) vs. a measure of the stellar **temperature** (spectral type, color) shows structure:



**main sequence:** a band extending from hot, high-luminosity stars to cool, low-luminosity stars, containing the vast majority of stars;  
Hydrogen fusion ( $H$  burning,  $H \rightarrow He$ ) in the core; the longest evolution stage

# The Hertzsprung-Russel (H-R) Diagram

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

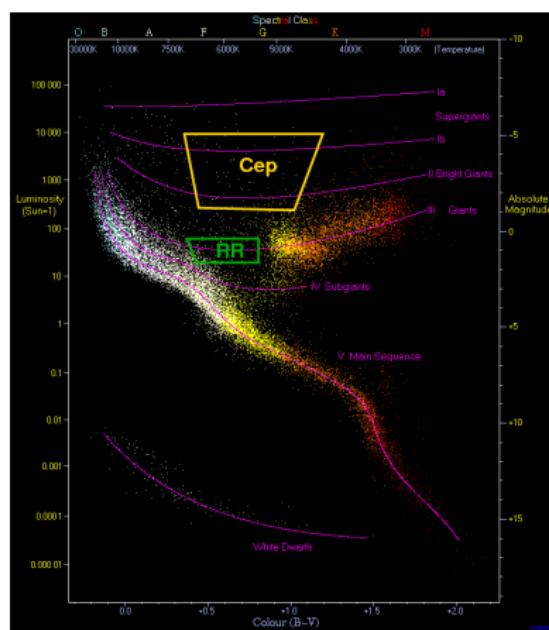
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

early 20th century: E. Hertzsprung and H. N. Russell noted that a scatter plot of a measure of stellar **luminosity** (absolute magnitude) vs. a measure of the stellar **temperature** (spectral type, color) shows structure:



**giants:** After  $\sim 10\%$  of the mass of a  $M < M_{\odot}$  star has been converted from H to He, the star expands: it becomes a red giant with a helium core and a hydrogen burning shell. The star heats up and moves along the horizontal branch in the H-R diagram, then cools off as the core burning stops. The once again red star then goes to higher luminosity on the asymptotic giant branch (AGB). Finally it ejects its envelope and becomes a planetary nebulae containing a white dwarf ( $M \leq 1.4M_{\odot}$ ,  $R \sim R_{\oplus}$ ).

# The Hertzsprung-Russel (H-R) Diagram

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

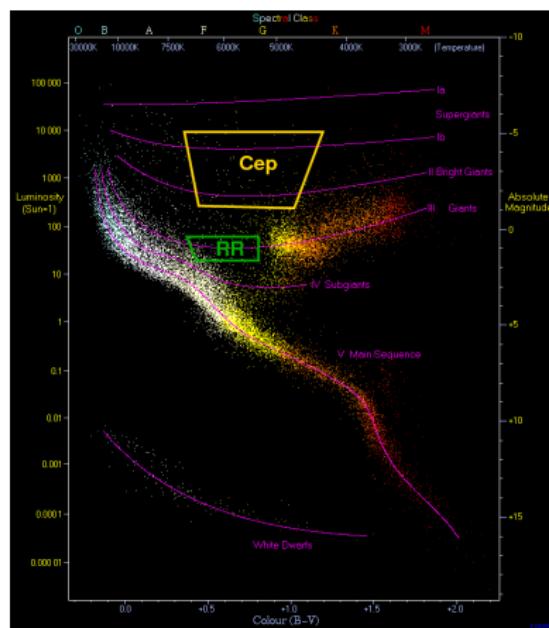
Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

early 20th century: E. Hertzsprung and H. N. Russell noted that a scatter plot of a measure of stellar **luminosity** (absolute magnitude) vs. a measure of the stellar **temperature** (spectral type, color) shows structure:



## instability strip:

Stars, such as RR Lyrae stars and Cepheids, that have evolved off the main sequence and pulsate due to He III (doubly ionized helium). When the star contracts, the density and temperature of the He II layer below the atmosphere increases. He II starts to transform into He III (second ionization). This causes the opacity of the star to increase, the energy flux from the interior of the star is effectively absorbed. The temperature of the star rises and it begins to expand. After expansion, He III begins to recombine into He II, the opacity drops. This lowers the surface temperature of the star. The outer layers contract and the cycle starts from the beginning.

# Summary

Stellar  
Atmospheres  
(1)

Introduction

Observing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

The Origin of  
Spectra

Describing  
Stellar  
Atmospheres

Fluxes and  
Filters

Spectral Types  
and  
Luminosity  
Classes

Summary

The stellar atmosphere is a **region** connecting unseen interior to vacuum exterior, and includes photosphere, chromosphere and corona.

The stellar atmosphere is **characterized** by ( $T_{\text{eff}}$ ,  $\log g$ ) which links physical properties of atmosphere to spectral classification (Spectral Type, Luminosity class).

Primary energy transport mechanism: radiation.

Stellar flux measured in magnitudes via broad-band filters, using Vega as zero point.

Bolometric flux represents integral over all wavelengths (related to visual flux via bolometric correction).