

# Interstellar Medium (ISM)

Week 3

April 02 (Thursday), 2020

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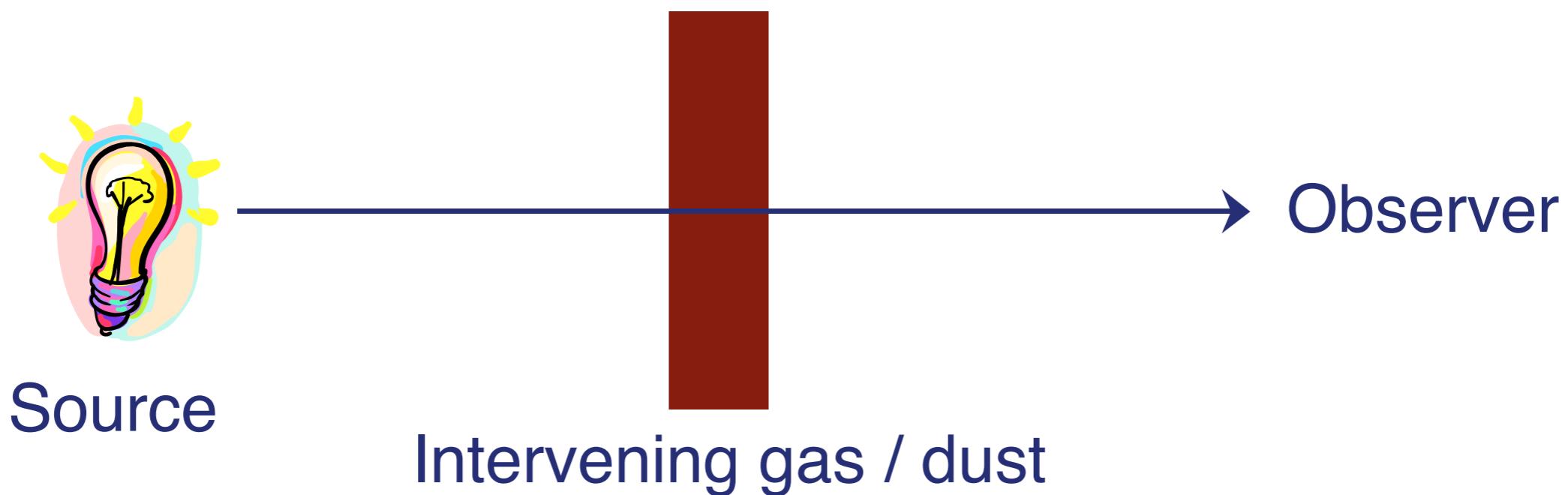
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# Radiative Transfer

# Radiative Transfer

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- How is radiation affected as it propagates through intervening gas and dust media to the observer?



# Simplification & Complexity

- Simplification:
  - Astronomical objects are normally much larger than the wavelength of radiation they emit.
  - Diffraction can be neglected.
  - Light rays travel to us along straight lines.
- Complexity:
  - At one point, photons can be traveling in several different directions.
  - For instance, at the center of a star, photons are moving equally in all directions. (However, radiation from a star seen by a distant observer is moving almost exactly radially.)
  - Full specification of radiation needs to say how much radiation is moving in each direction at every point. Therefore, we are dealing with the five- or six-dimensional problem. ( $[x, y, z] + [\theta, \phi] + [t]$ )

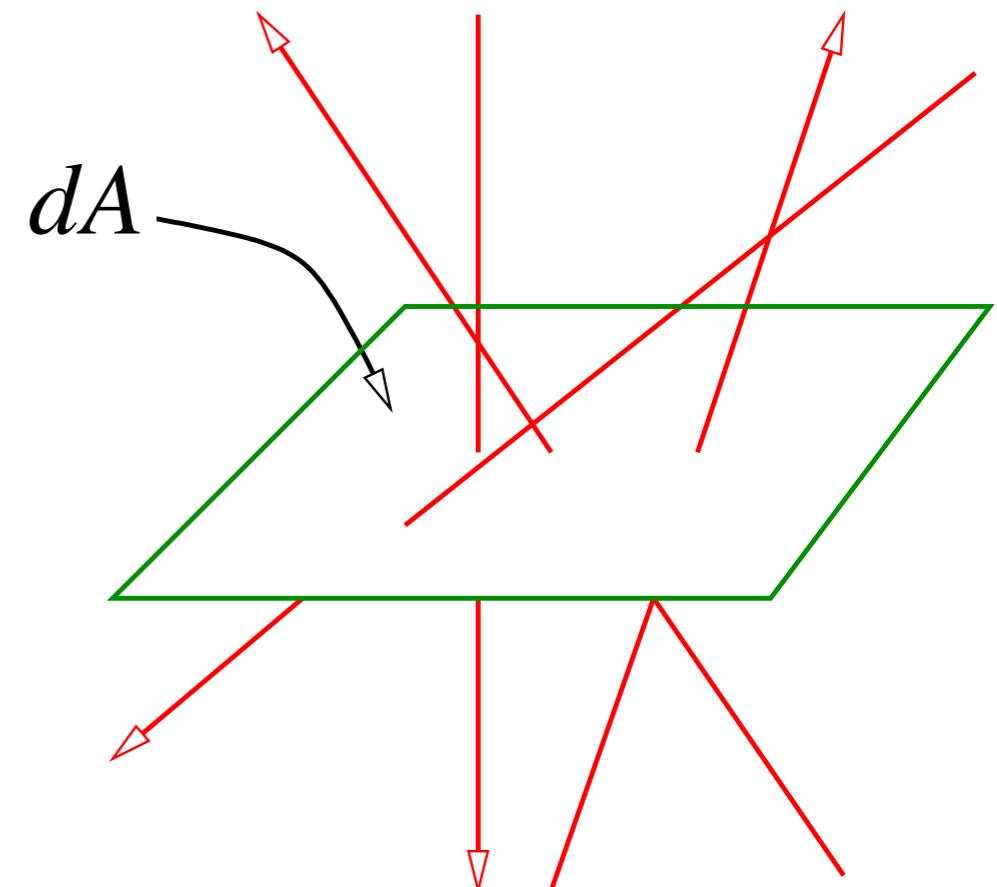


# Energy Flux

- Definition
  - Consider a small area  $dA$ , exposed to radiation for a time  $dt$ .
  - Energy flux  $F$  is defined as ***the net energy  $dE$  passing through the element of area in all directions in the time interval*** so that

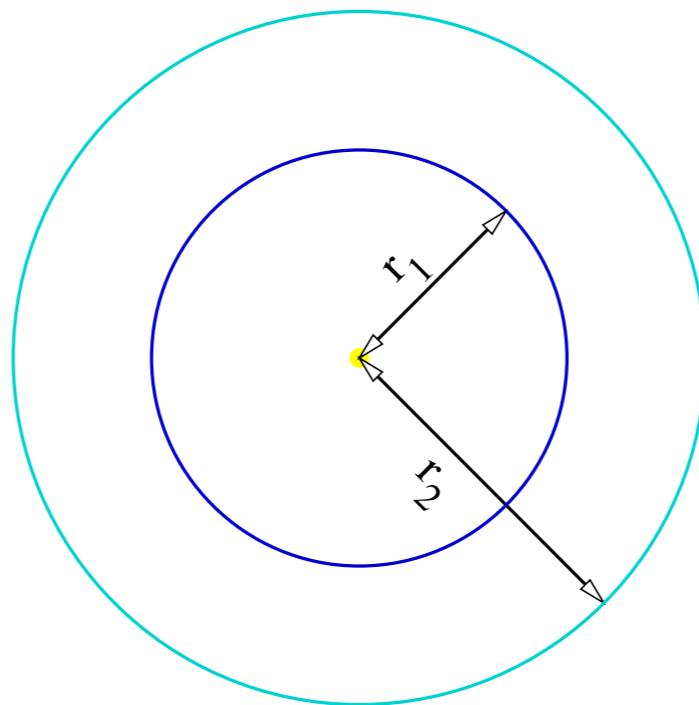
$$dE = F \times dA \times dt$$

- Note that  $F$  ***depends on the orientation of the area element  $dA$ .***
- Unit: erg cm<sup>-2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>



# Inverse Square Law

- Flux from an isotropic radiation source, i.e., a source emitting equal amounts of energy in all directions.



- Because of energy conservation, flux through two shells around the source must be the same.

$$4\pi r_1^2 F(r_1) = 4\pi r_2^2 F(r_2)$$

- Therefore, we obtain the inverse square law.

$$F = \frac{\text{const.}}{r^2}$$

# Energy Flux Density

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- Real detectors are sensitive to a limited range of wavelengths. We need to consider how the incident radiation is distributed over frequency.

Total energy flux:  $F = \int F_\nu d\nu$  Integral of  $F_\nu$  over all frequencies

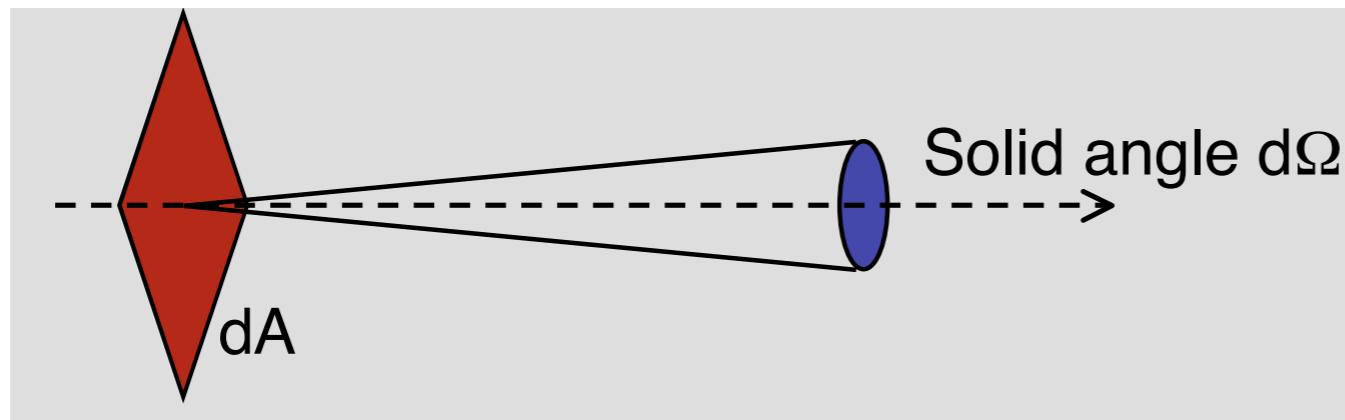
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Units: erg s<sup>-1</sup> cm<sup>-2</sup> Hz<sup>-1</sup>

- $F_\nu$  is often called the “flux density.”
- Radio astronomers use a special unit to define the flux density:  
1 Jansky (Jy) = 10<sup>-23</sup> erg s<sup>-1</sup> cm<sup>-2</sup> Hz<sup>-1</sup>

# Specific Intensity or Surface Brightness

- Recall that ***flux is a measure of the energy carried by all rays passing through a given area***
- Intensity is the energy carried along by individual rays.***



- Let  $dE_\nu$  be the amount of radiant energy which crosses the area  $dA$  in a direction  $\mathbf{k}$  within solid angle  $d\Omega$  about in a time interval  $dt$  with photon frequency between  $\nu$  and  $\nu + d\nu$ .
- The monochromatic specific intensity  $I_\nu$  is then defined by the equation.

$$dE_\nu = I_\nu(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{x}, t) dA_{\mathbf{k}} d\Omega d\nu dt$$

- Unit:  $\text{erg s}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ sr}^{-1} \text{ Hz}^{-1}$
- From the view point of an observer, the specific intensity is called ***surface brightness***.

# Relation between the flux and the specific intensity

- Let's consider a small area  $dA$ , with light rays passing through it at all angles to the normal vector  $\mathbf{n}$  of the surface.
- For rays centered about  $\mathbf{k}$ , the area normal to  $\mathbf{k}$  is

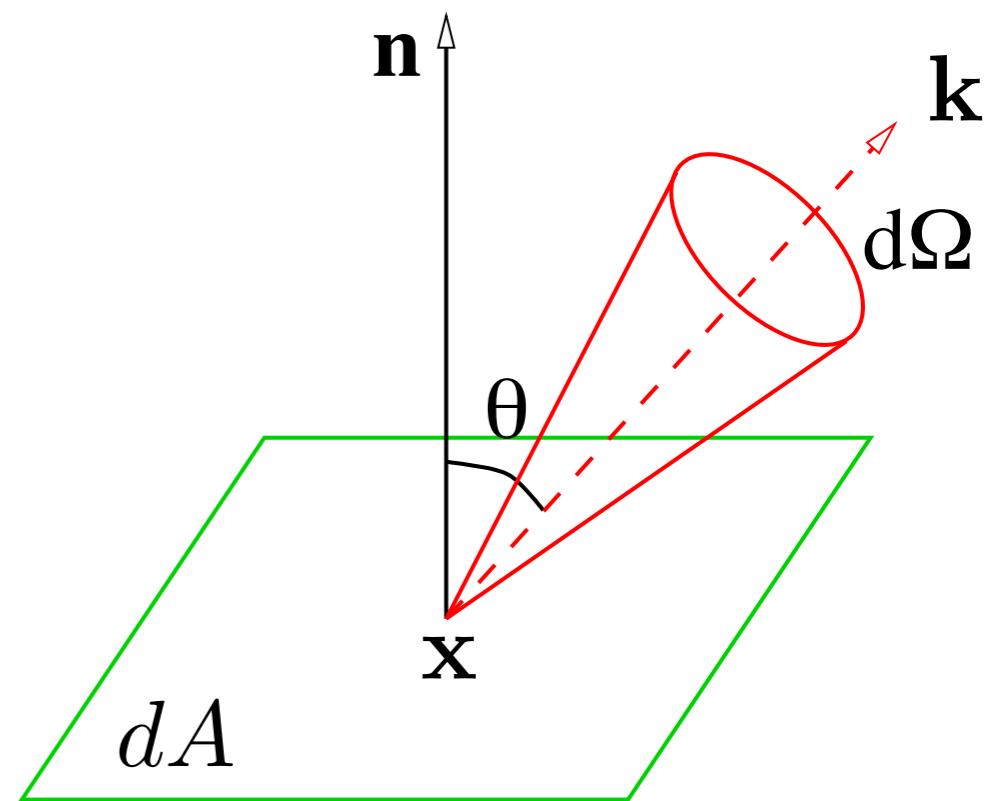
$$dA_{\mathbf{k}} = dA \cos \theta$$

- By the definition,

$$F_{\nu} dAd\nu dt = \int I_{\nu}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{x}, t) dA_{\mathbf{k}} d\Omega d\nu dt$$

- Hence, net flux in the direction of  $\mathbf{n}$  is given by integrating over all solid angles:

$$F_{\nu} = \int I_{\nu} \cos \theta d\Omega = \int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^{\pi} I_{\nu} \cos \theta \sin \theta d\theta d\phi$$



[Note] **flux** = “sum of all ray vectors” which is then projected onto a normal vector  
**intensity** = magnitude of a single ray vector

## Note

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- Intensity can be defined as per wavelength interval.

$$\begin{aligned} I_\nu |d\nu| &= I_\lambda |d\lambda| \\ \nu I_\nu &= \lambda I_\lambda \end{aligned} \quad \leftarrow \left| \frac{d\nu}{d\lambda} \right| = \frac{c}{\lambda^2} = \frac{\nu}{\lambda}$$

- Integrated intensity is defined as the intensity over all frequencies.

$$I = \int_0^\infty I_\nu d\nu = \int_0^\infty I_\lambda d\lambda$$

- In astrophysics, we plot the spectral energy distribution (SED) as  $\nu I_\nu$  versus  $\nu$  or  $\lambda I_\lambda$  versus  $\lambda$ .

## How does specific intensity changes along a ray in free space

- Consider a bundle of rays and any two points along the rays. Construct areas  $dA_1$  and  $dA_2$  normal to the rays at these points.
  - Consider the energy carried by the rays passing through both areas. Because energy is conserved,

$$dE_1 = I_1 dA_1 d\Omega_1 d\nu dt = dE_2 = I_2 dA_2 d\Omega_2 d\nu dt$$

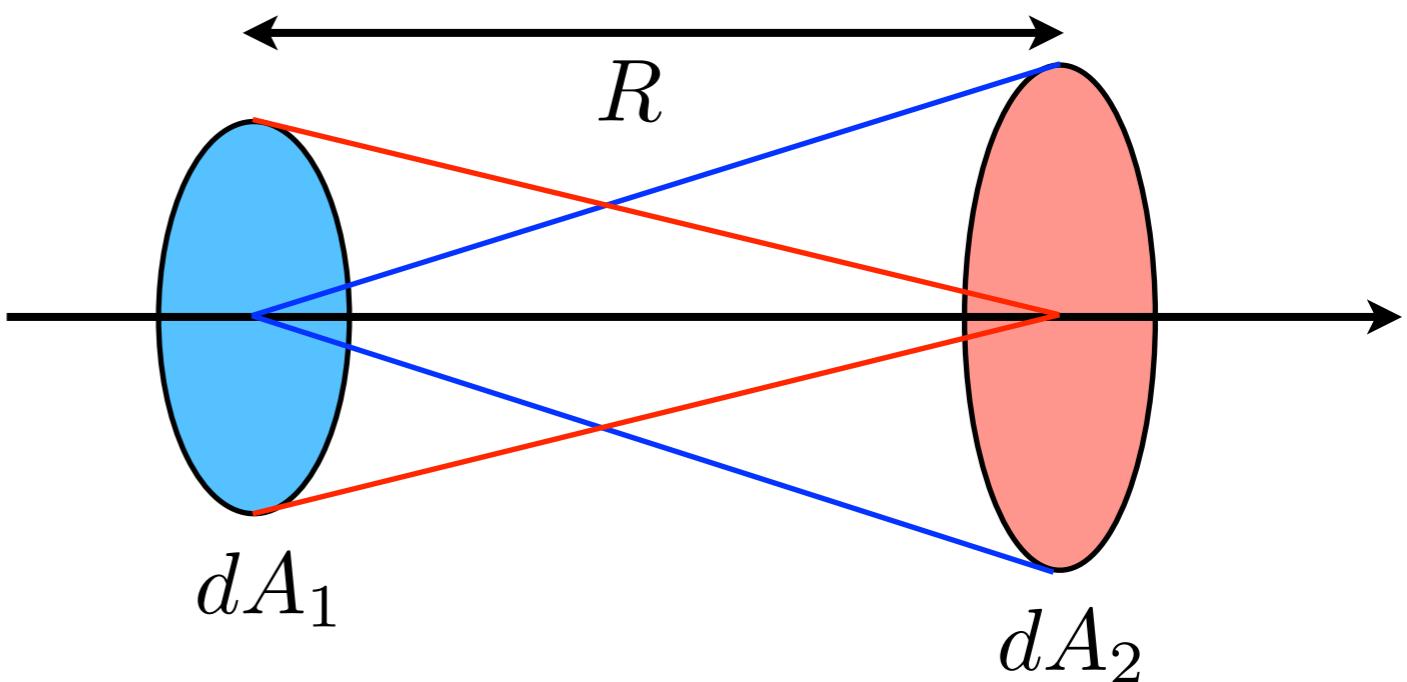
- Here,  $d\Omega_1$  is the solid angle subtended by  $dA_2$  at the location 1 and so forth.

$$d\Omega_1 = \frac{dA_2}{R^2}$$

$$d\Omega_2 = \frac{dA_1}{R^2}$$

$\rightarrow$

$$I_1 = I_2$$



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- Conclusion (the constancy of intensity):
    - the specific intensity remains the same as radiation propagates through free space.

$$I_1 = I_2$$

- If we measure the distance along a ray by variable  $s$ , we can express the result equivalently in differential form:

$$\frac{dI}{ds} = 0$$

# Specific Energy Density

- Consider a bundle of rays passing through a volume element  $dV$  in a direction  $\Omega$ .
  - Then, the energy density per unit solid angle is defined by

$$dE = u_\nu(\Omega) dV d\Omega d\nu$$

- Since radiation travels at velocity  $c$ , the volume element is

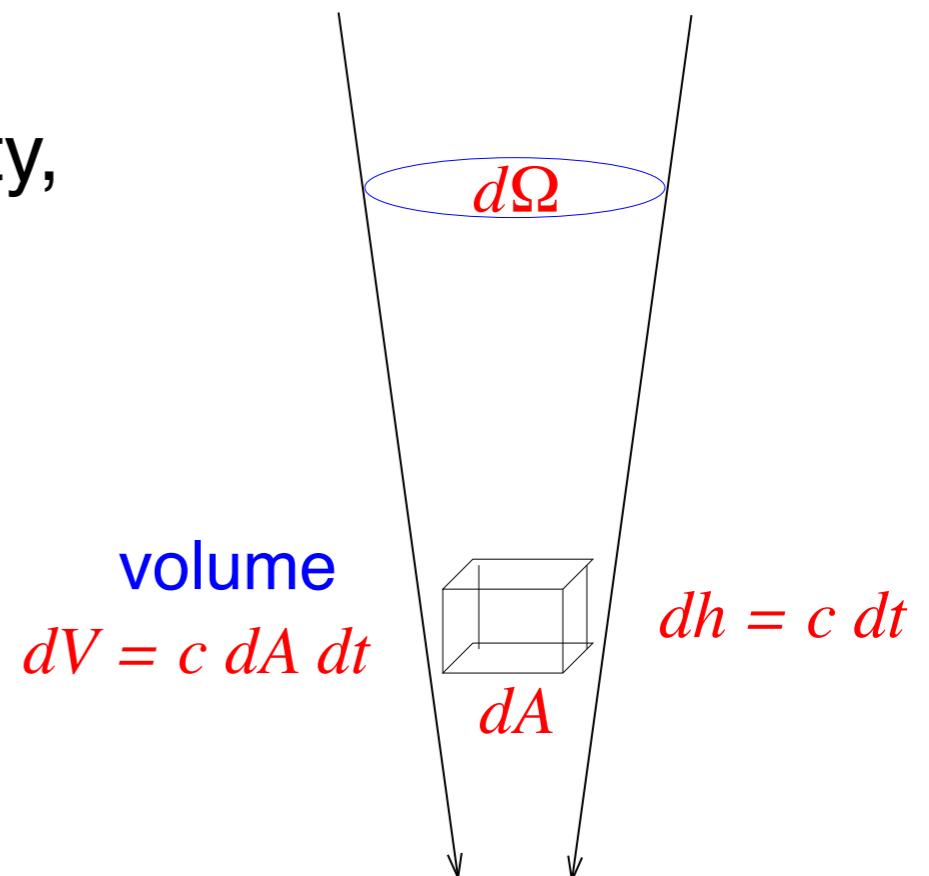
$$dV = dA(cdt)$$

- According to the definition of the intensity,

$$dE = I_\nu dA dt d\Omega d\nu$$

- Then, we have

$$u_\nu(\Omega) = I_\nu(\Omega)/c$$



# Energy Density and Mean Intensity

- Integrating over all solid angle, we obtain

$$u_\nu = \int u_\nu(\Omega) d\Omega = \frac{1}{c} \int I_\nu d\Omega$$

- Mean intensity** is defined by

$$J_\nu = \frac{1}{4\pi} \int I_\nu d\Omega$$

- Then, the energy density is

$$u_\nu = \frac{4\pi}{c} J_\nu$$

- Total energy density is obtained by integrating over all frequencies.

$$u = \int u_\nu d\nu = \frac{4\pi}{c} \int J_\nu d\nu$$

# Radiative Transfer Equation

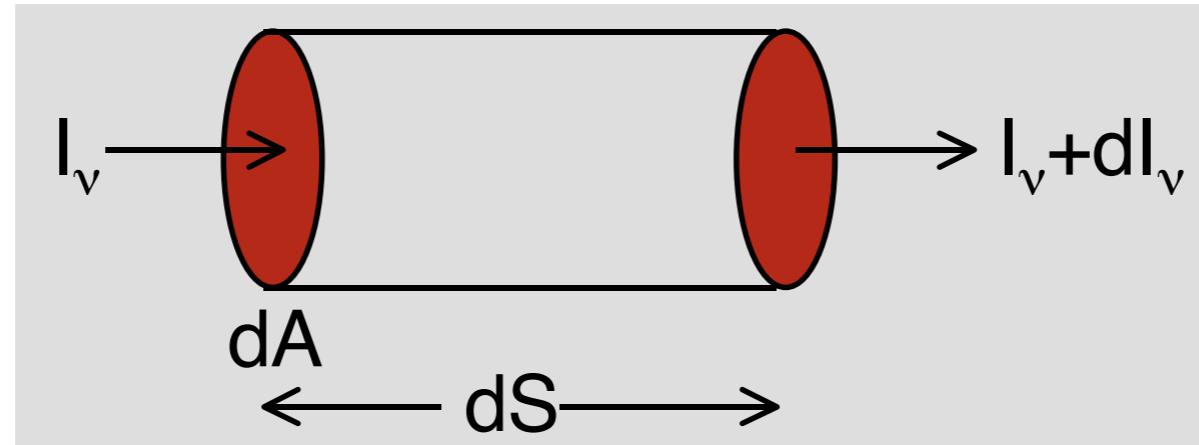
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- In reality, as a ray passes through matter, energy may be added, subtracted, or scattered from it by emission, absorption, or scattering.
  - The intensity will not in general remain constant.
  - We need to derive the radiative transfer equation.

# Emission

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- If the radiation travels through a medium which is itself emitting radiation, that will add to the energy:



- Spontaneous “**emission coefficient” or “emissivity”**  $j_\nu$  is the amount of energy emitted per unit time, per unit solid angle, per unit frequency, and per unit volume:

$$dE = j_\nu dV d\Omega dt d\nu \quad (j_\nu : \text{erg cm}^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1} \text{ Hz}^{-1})$$

- In going a distance  $ds$ , a beam of cross section  $dA$  travels through a volume  $dV = dA ds$ . Thus the intensity added to the beam is by  $ds$  is

$$dI_\nu = j_\nu ds \qquad \longleftrightarrow \qquad dE = (dI_\nu) dA d\Omega dt d\nu$$

- Therefore, the equation of radiative transfer for pure emission becomes:

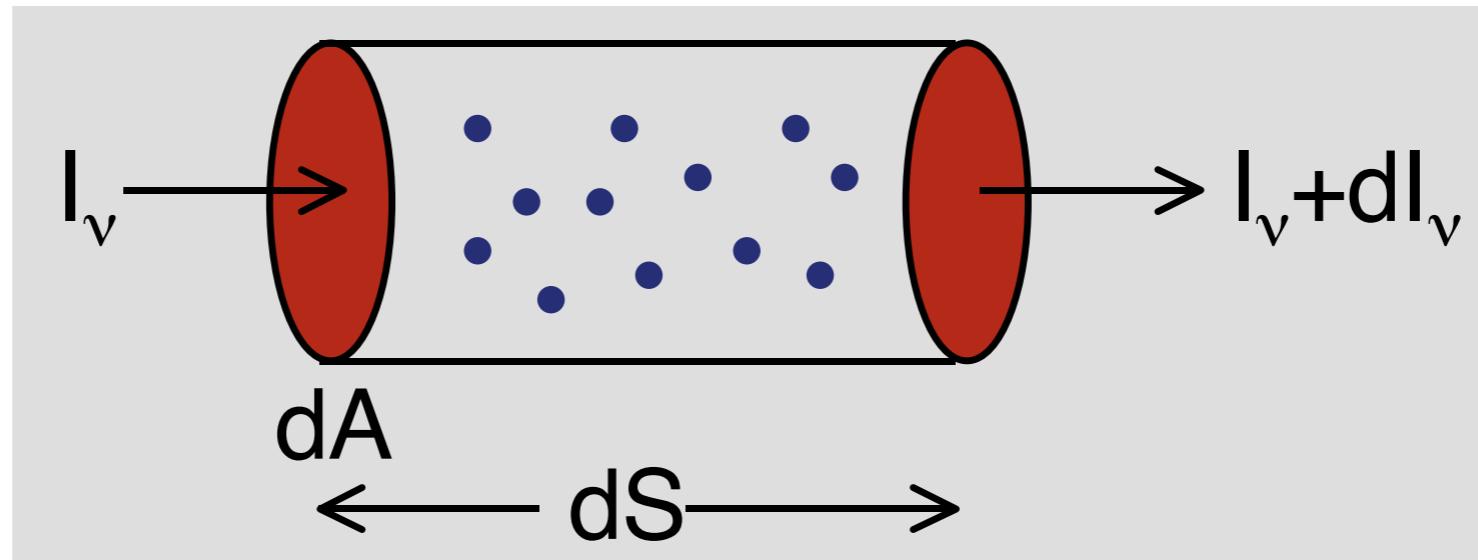
$$\frac{dI_\nu}{ds} = j_\nu$$

- If we know what  $j_\nu$  is, we can integrate this equation to find the change in specific intensity as radiation propagates through the medium:

$$I_\nu(s) = I_\nu(0) + \int_0^s j_\nu(s')ds'$$

# Absorption

- If the radiation travels through a medium which absorbs radiation, the energy in the beam will be reduced:



- Let  $n$  denote the number density of absorbers (particles per unit volume).
- Assume that each absorber has a cross-sectional area of  $\sigma_\nu$  (in units of  $\text{cm}^2$ ).
- If a beam travels through  $ds$ , total area of absorbers is

$$\text{number of absorbers} \times \text{cross-section} = n \times dA \times ds \times \sigma_\nu$$

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Fraction of radiation absorbed = fraction of area blocked:

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{I_\nu} = - \frac{ndAds\sigma_\nu}{dA} = -n\sigma_\nu ds$$

$$dI_\nu = -n\sigma_\nu I_\nu ds \equiv -\kappa_\nu I_\nu ds$$

- **Absorption coefficient** is defined as  $\kappa_\nu \equiv n\sigma_\nu$  (units:  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ), meaning the **total cross-sectional area per unit volume**.
- If we include the effect of stimulated emission in the absorption coefficient, it may be referred to as the **attenuation coefficient**. (as in Draine's book)

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- Rearranging the previous equation, we obtain the equation of radiative transfer for pure absorption:

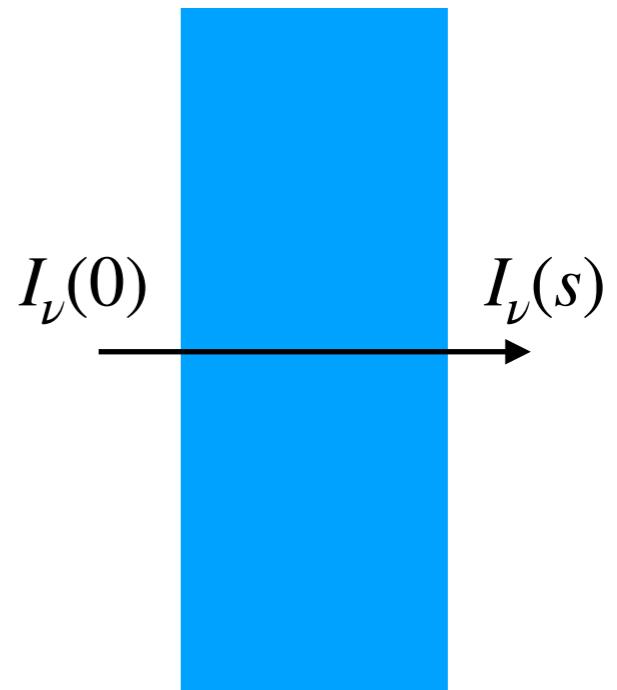
$$\frac{dI_\nu}{ds} = -\kappa_\nu I_\nu$$

- The amount of reduced energy depends on how much radiation we already have.
- Integrate to find how radiation changes along path:

$$\int_0^s \frac{dI_\nu}{I_\nu} = - \int_0^s \kappa_\nu(s') ds'$$

$$[\ln I_\nu]_0^s = - \int_0^s \kappa_\nu(s') ds'$$

$$I_\nu(s) = I_\nu(0) \exp \left[ - \int_0^s \kappa_\nu(s') ds' \right]$$



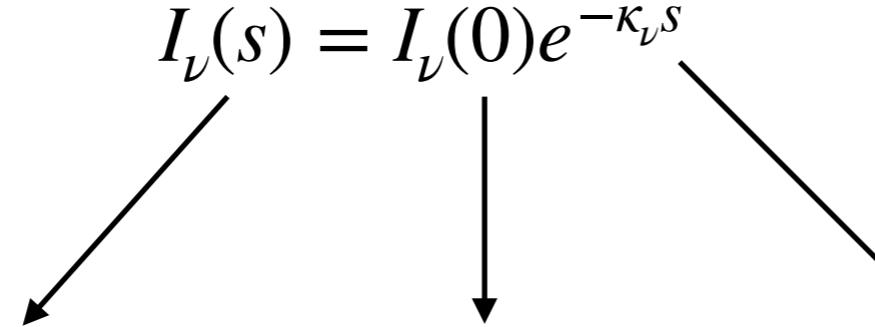
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- If the absorption coefficient is a constant (example: a uniform density gas of ionized hydrogen), then we obtain

$$I_\nu(s) = I_\nu(0)e^{-\kappa_\nu s}$$

specific intensity after distance  $s$

initial intensity at  $s = 0$ .

radiation exponentially absorbed with distance



- ***Optical depth:***
  - Imagine radiation traveling into a cloud of absorbing gas, exponential defines a scale over which radiation is attenuated.
  - When  $\int_0^s \kappa_\nu(s')ds' = 1$ , the intensity will be reduced to  $1/e$  of its original value.

- We define the optical depth  $\tau_\nu$  as:

$$\tau_\nu(s) = \int_0^s \kappa_\nu(s')ds' \quad \text{or} \quad d\tau_\nu = \kappa_\nu ds$$

- A medium is said to be ***optically thick*** at a frequency  $\nu$  if the optical depth for a typical path through the medium satisfies:

$$\tau_\nu(s) > 1$$

- The medium is ***optically thin*** if, instead:

$$\tau_\nu(s) < 1$$

- An optically thin medium is one which a typical photon of frequency  $\nu$  can pass through without being (significantly) absorbed.

# Radiative Transfer Equation

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- ***Radiative transfer equation*** with both absorption and emission is

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{ds} = -\kappa_\nu I_\nu + j_\nu$$

absorption      emission

- We can rewrite the radiative transfer equation using the optical depth as a measure of ‘distance’ rather than  $s$ :

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{\kappa_\nu ds} = -I_\nu + \frac{j_\nu}{\kappa_\nu}$$

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} = -I_\nu + S_\nu$$

- where  $S_\nu \equiv j_\nu/\kappa_\nu$  ***is called the source function.*** This is an alternative and sometimes more convenient way to write the equation.

# Mean Free Path

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- From the exponential absorption law, the probability of a photon absorbed between optical depths  $\tau_\nu$  and  $\tau_\nu + d\tau_\nu$  is

$$|dI_\nu| = \left| \frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} \right| d\tau_\nu \quad \& \quad |dI_\nu| \propto P(\tau_\nu) d\tau_\nu \quad \rightarrow \quad P(\tau_\nu) = e^{-\tau_\nu}$$

- The mean optical depth traveled is thus equal to unity:

$$\langle \tau_\nu \rangle = \int_0^\infty \tau_\nu P(\tau_\nu) d\tau_\nu = \int_0^\infty \tau_\nu e^{-\tau_\nu} d\tau_\nu = 1$$

- The mean free path is defined as the average distance a photon can travel through an absorbing material until it is absorbed.*** In a homogeneous medium, the mean free path is determined by

$$\langle \tau_\nu \rangle = \kappa_\nu \ell_\nu = 1 \quad \rightarrow \quad \ell_\nu = \frac{1}{\kappa_\nu} = \frac{1}{n\sigma_\nu}$$

- A local mean path at a point in an inhomogeneous material can be also defined.

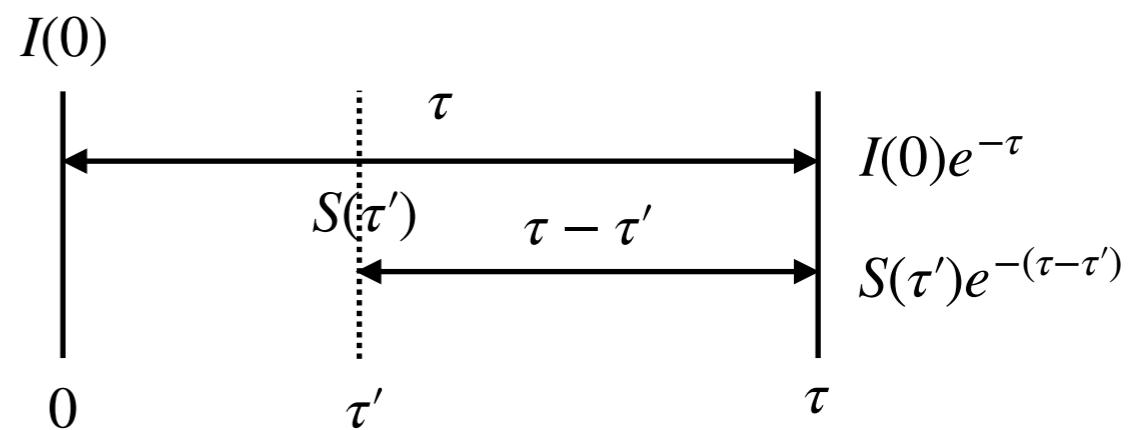
# Formal Solution of the RT equation

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} = S_\nu - I_\nu$$

$$e^{\tau_\nu} \frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} + e^{\tau_\nu} I_\nu = e^{\tau_\nu} S_\nu$$

$$\frac{d}{d\tau_\nu} (e^{\tau_\nu} I_\nu) = e^\tau S_\nu$$

$$I_\nu(\tau_\nu) = I_\nu(0)e^{-\tau_\nu} + \int_0^{\tau_\nu} e^{-(\tau_\nu - \tau'_\nu)} S_\nu(\tau'_\nu) d\tau'_\nu$$



- The solution is easily interpreted as the sum of two terms:
  - the initial intensity diminished by absorption
  - the integrated source diminished by absorption.
- For a constant source function, the solution becomes

$$\begin{aligned} I_\nu(\tau_\nu) &= I_\nu(0)e^{-\tau_\nu} + S_\nu(1 - e^{-\tau_\nu}) \\ &= S_\nu + e^{-\tau_\nu} (I_\nu(0) - S_\nu) \end{aligned}$$

# Relaxation

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- “Relaxation”

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} = S_\nu - I_\nu$$

$I_\nu > S_\nu \rightarrow \frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} < 0$ , then  $I_\nu$  tends to decrease along the ray

$I_\nu < S_\nu \rightarrow \frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} > 0$ , then  $I_\nu$  tends to increase along the ray

- ***The source function is the quantity that the specific intensity tries to approach,*** and does approach if given sufficient optical depth.

As  $\tau_\nu \rightarrow \infty$ ,  $I_\nu \rightarrow S_\nu$

# Thermal equilibrium

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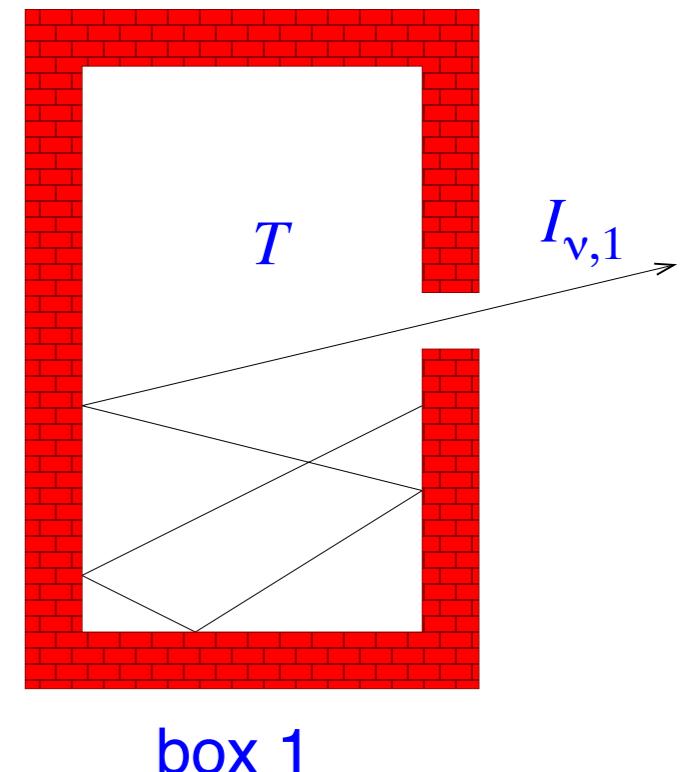
- In general, equilibrium means a state of balance.
  - ***Thermal equilibrium refers to steady states of temperature, which defines the average energy of material or photons.***
  - In a state of (complete) ***thermodynamic equilibrium (TE)***, no net flows of matter or of energy, no phase changes, and no unbalanced potentials (or driving forces), within the system. ***In TE, matter and radiation are in equilibrium at the same temperature T.***
  - If the material is (locally) in thermodynamic equilibrium at a well-defined temperature  $T$ , ***it is said to be in local thermodynamic equilibrium (LTE) even if it is not in equilibrium with the radiation field.***

# Blackbody

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- Imagine a container bounded by opaque walls with a very small hole.

- ***Photons will be scattered and absorbed many times, (and eventually trapped and completely absorbed in the box).*** Under such conditions, the particles and photons continually share their kinetic energies. In perfect thermal equilibrium, ***the average particle kinetic energy will equal to the average photon energy, and a unique temperature T can be defined.***

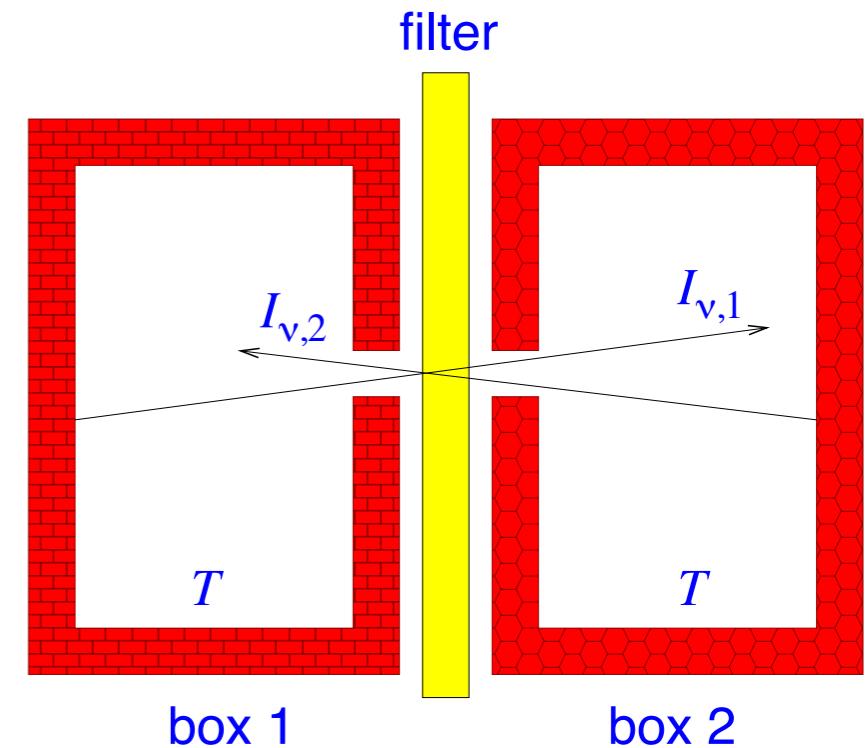


- A **blackbody** is an idealized physical body that absorbs all incident radiation regardless of frequency or angle of incidence (i.e., perfect absorber). The above cavity can be regarded to be a blackbody.
- Radiation from a blackbody in thermal equilibrium is called the **blackbody radiation**.

# Blackbody radiation if the universal function.

- Now, consider another cavity (box 2), also at the same temperature, but made of different material or shape and connect two cavities with a filter transparent only in the narrow frequency range  $\nu$  and  $\nu + d\nu$ .

- In equilibrium at  $T$ , radiation should transfer no net energy from one cavity to the other. Otherwise, one cavity will cool down and the other heats up; this violates the second law of thermodynamics.
- Therefore, the intensity or spectrum that passes through the holes should be a universal function of  $T$  and should be isotropic.
- The intensity and spectrum of the radiation emerging from the hole should be independent of the wall material (e.g., wood, copper, or concrete, etc) and any absorbing material that may be inside the cavity.



- The universal function is called the Planck function  $B_\nu(T)$ .
- This is the **blackbody radiation**.

## Kirchhoff's Law in TE

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- In (full) thermodynamic equilibrium at temperature  $T$ , by definition, we know that

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{ds} = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad I_\nu = B_\nu(T)$$

- We also note that

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{ds} = -\kappa_\nu I_\nu + j_\nu$$

- Then, we can obtain ***the Kirchhoff's law for a system in TE:***

$$\frac{j_\nu(T)}{\kappa_\nu(T)} = B_\nu(T)$$

- This is remarkable because it connects the properties  $j_\nu(T)$  and  $\kappa_\nu(T)$  of any kind of matter to the single universal spectrum  $B_\nu(T)$ .

## Kirchhoff's Law in LTE

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- Recall that Kirchhoff's law was derived for a system in thermodynamic equilibrium.
- ***Kirchhoff's law applies not only in TE but also in LTE:***
  - Recall that  $B_\nu(T)$  is independent of the properties of the radiating /absorbing material.
  - In contrast, both  $j_\nu(T)$  and  $\kappa_\nu(T)$  depend only on the materials in the cavity and on the temperature of that material; they do not depend on the ambient radiation field or its spectrum.
  - Therefore, the Kirchhoff's law should be true even for the case of LTE.
  - ***In LTE, the ratio of the emission coefficient to the absorption coefficient is a function of temperature and frequency only.***
  - This generalized version of Kirchhoff's law is an exceptionally valuable tool for calculating the emission coefficient from the absorption coefficient or vice versa.

# Implications of Kirchhoff's Law

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- A good absorber is a good emitter, and a poor absorber is a poor emitter. (In other words, a good reflector must be a poor absorber, and thus a poor emitter.)

$$j_\nu = \kappa_\nu B_\nu(T) \rightarrow j_\nu \text{ increases as } \kappa_\nu \text{ increases}$$

- It is not possible to thermally radiate more energy than a blackbody, at equilibrium.

$$j_\nu < B_\nu(T) \text{ because } \kappa_\nu < 1$$

- The radiative transfer equation in LTE can be rewritten:

$$\frac{dI_\nu}{d\tau_\nu} = -I_\nu + B_\nu(T)$$

- Remark:**

- **Blackbody radiation** means  $I_\nu = B_\nu(T)$ . An object for which the intensity is the Planck function is emitting blackbody radiation.
- **Thermal radiation is defined to be radiation emitted by “matter” in LTE.** Thermal radiation means  $S_\nu = B_\nu(T)$ . An object for which the source function is the Planck function is emitting thermal radiation.
- **Thermal radiation becomes blackbody radiation only for optically thick media.**

- 
- To see the difference between thermal and blackbody radiation,
    - consider a slab of material with optical depth  $\tau_\nu$  that is producing thermal radiation.
    - If no light is falling on the back side of the slab, the intensity that is measured on the front side of the slab is

$$\begin{aligned}I_\nu(\tau_\nu) &= I_\nu(0)e^{-\tau_\nu} + S_\nu (1 - e^{-\tau_\nu}) \\&= B_\nu (1 - e^{-\tau_\nu})\end{aligned}$$

- If the slab is optical thick at frequency  $\nu$  ( $\tau_\nu \gg 1$ ), then

$$I_\nu \approx B_\nu$$

- If the slab is optically thin ( $\tau_\nu \ll 1$ ), then

$$I_\nu \approx \tau_\nu B_\nu \ll B_\nu$$

This indicates that the radiation, although thermal, will not be blackbody.

Thermal radiation becomes blackbody radiation only for optical thick media.

# The Planck Spectrum (Quantum Mechanics)

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- There is no perfect blackbody.
  - However, the cosmic microwave background comes quite close; stars can sometimes be usefully approximated as blackbodies.
  - By the end of the 19th century, the blackbody spectrum was fairly well known empirically, from laboratory studies. In 1900, Max Planck, using his idea of quantized energies, derived the blackbody spectrum.
- How to calculate the blackbody spectrum?
  - Intensity spectrum is related to the energy density:

$$J_\nu = \frac{c}{4\pi} u_\nu$$

- Energy density =  
Number density of photon states x Average energy of each state
- Number density of photon states =  
**number of states per solid angle per volume per frequency**

- 
- (1) Number density of photon state:
    - Consider a photon propagating in direction  $\mathbf{n}$  inside a box with dimensions  $L_x, L_y, L_z$  in x, y, z directions.

- wave vector:  $\mathbf{k} = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda} \mathbf{n} = \frac{2\pi\nu}{c} \mathbf{n}$

- If each dimension of the box is much longer than a wavelength, the photon can be represented by standing wave in the box.
- number of nodes in each direction:  $n_x = k_x L_x / 2\pi$
- number of node changes in a wave number interval (if  $n_i \gg 1$ ):

$$\Delta n_x = \frac{L_x \Delta k_x}{2\pi}$$

- number of states in 3D wave vector element  $\Delta k_x \Delta k_y \Delta k_z = d^3 k$  :

$$\Delta N = \Delta n_x \Delta n_y \Delta n_z = 2 \frac{L_x L_y L_z d^3 k}{(2\pi)^3} = 2 \frac{V d^3 k}{(2\pi)^3}$$


 two independent polarizations

- 
- the density of states (**number of states per solid angle per volume per frequency**):

$$d^3k = k^2 dk d\Omega = \frac{(2\pi)^3 \nu^2 d\nu d\Omega}{c^3}$$

$$\rightarrow \rho_s = \frac{dN}{V d\nu d\Omega} = \frac{2\nu^2}{c^3}$$

- (2) Average energy of each state:

- Each state may contain  $n$  photons of energy  $h\nu$ .
- The energy of the state is  $E_n = nh\nu$ .
- The probability of a state of energy  $E_n$  is proportional to  $e^{-\beta E_n}$ , where  $\beta = (k_B T)^{-1}$  and  $k_B$  is the Boltzmann's constant. (from statistical mechanics)
- Therefore, the average energy is:

$$\langle E \rangle = \frac{\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} E_n e^{-\beta E_n}}{\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} e^{-\beta E_n}} = -\frac{\partial}{\partial \beta} \ln \left( \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} e^{-\beta E_n} \right)$$

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} e^{-\beta E_n} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (e^{-\beta h\nu})^n = (1 - e^{-\beta h\nu})^{-1}$$

$$\langle E \rangle = \frac{h\nu e^{-\beta h\nu}}{1 - e^{-\beta h\nu}} = \frac{h\nu}{\exp(h\nu/k_B T) - 1}$$

- Energy density, integrated over all solid angle:

$$u_\nu = 4\pi\rho_s \langle E \rangle = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3/c^3}{\exp(h\nu/k_B T) - 1}$$

- Planck Law:

$$B_\nu = \frac{2h\nu^3/c^2}{\exp(h\nu/k_B T) - 1} \text{ or } B_\lambda = \frac{2hc^2/\lambda^5}{\exp(hc/\lambda k_B T) - 1}$$

See “Fundamentals of Statistical and Thermal Physics” (Frederick Reif)  
or “Astrophysical Concepts” (Harwit) for more details.

# Spectrum of blackbody radiation

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- The frequency dependence of blackbody radiation is given by the ***Planck function***:

$$B_\nu(T) = \frac{2h\nu^3/c^2}{\exp(h\nu/k_B T) - 1} \quad \text{or} \quad B_\lambda(T) = \frac{2hc^2/\lambda^5}{\exp(hc/\lambda k_B T) - 1}$$

$h = 6.63 \times 10^{-27}$  erg s (Planck's constant)

$k_B = 1.38 \times 10^{-16}$  erg K<sup>-1</sup> (Boltzmann's constant)

- Energy density:***

$$u_\nu(T) = \frac{4\pi}{c} B_\nu(T) = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3/c^3}{\exp(h\nu/k_B T) - 1}$$

Note that the textbook Ryden's "Interstellar and Intergalactic Medium" use  $\varepsilon_\nu(T)$  to denote the energy density.

- 
- Photon occupation number:
    - The photon occupation number is dimensionless, and is simply the average number of photons per mode per polarization.

$$n_\gamma(\nu) = \frac{c^2}{2h\nu^3} I_\nu(\nu)$$

- If the radiation field is a blackbody, the photon occupation number is given by

$$n_\gamma(\nu; T) = \frac{1}{\exp(h\nu/k_B T) - 1}$$

Bose-Einstein statistics

# Stefan-Boltzmann Law

---

- Emergent flux is proportional to  $T^4$ .

$$F = \pi \int B_\nu(T) d\nu = \pi B(T)$$

←

$$B(T) = \int B_\nu(T) d\nu = \frac{ac}{4\pi} T^4 = \frac{\sigma}{\pi} T^4$$

$$F = \sigma T^4$$

Stephan – Boltzmann constant :  $\sigma = \frac{2\pi^5 k_B^4}{15c^2 h^3} = 5.67 \times 10^{-5} \text{ erg cm}^2 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-4} \text{ sr}^{-1}$

- Total energy density (***another form of the Stefan-Boltzmann law***)

$$u = \frac{4\pi}{c} \int B_\nu(T) d\nu = \frac{4\pi}{c} B(T)$$

$$u(T) = \left( \frac{T}{3400 \text{ K}} \right)^4 \text{ erg cm}^{-3}$$

$$u = aT^4$$

radiation constant :  $a \equiv \frac{4\sigma}{c} = 7.57 \times 10^{-15} \text{ erg cm}^{-3} \text{ K}^{-4}$

# Rayleigh-Jeans Law & Wien Law

## Rayleigh-Jeans Law (low-energy limit)

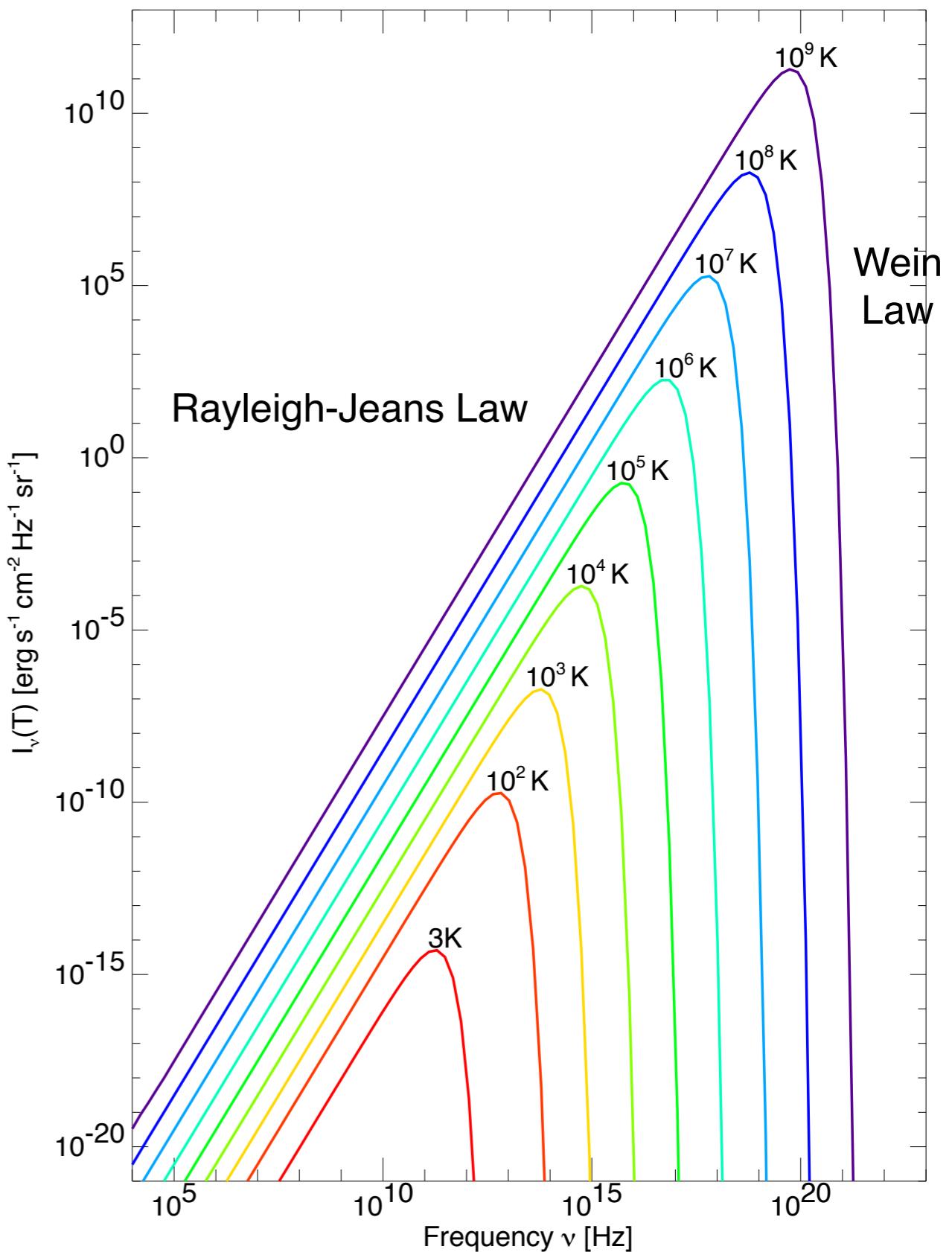
$$h\nu \ll k_B T \quad (\nu \ll 2 \times 10^{10} (T/1\text{ K}) \text{ Hz})$$

$$I_\nu^{RJ}(T) = \frac{2\nu^2}{c^2} k_B T$$

## Wien Law (high-energy limit)

$$h\nu \gg k_B T$$

$$I_\nu^W(T) = \frac{2h\nu^3}{c^2} \exp\left(-\frac{h\nu}{k_B T}\right)$$



# Characteristic Temperatures

---

- **Brightness Temperature:**

- The brightness temperature is defined to be the temperature such that a blackbody at that temperature would have specific intensity:

$$I_\nu = B_\nu(T_b) \rightarrow T_b(\nu) = \frac{h\nu/k_B}{\ln [1 + 2h\nu^3/(c^2 I_\nu)]}$$

- **Antenna Temperature:**

- Radio astronomers are used to working at very low frequencies. They define the antenna temperature as being the brightness temperature in the Rayleigh-Jeans tail.

$$I_\nu = \frac{2\nu^2}{c^2} k_B T_b \rightarrow T_A \equiv \frac{c^2}{2k_B \nu^2} I_\nu$$

- Radiative transfer equation in the RJ limit:

- ▶ If the matter is in LTE and has its energy levels populated according to an excitation temperature  $T_{\text{exc}} \gg h\nu/k_B$ , then the source function is given by

$$S_\nu(T_{\text{exc}}) = (2\nu^2/c^2) k_B T_{\text{exc}}$$

- ▶ Then, RT equation becomes

$$\frac{dT_A}{d\tau_\nu} = -T_A + T_{\text{exc}} \quad \text{if } h\nu \ll k_B T_{\text{exc}}$$

$$T_A = T_A(0)e^{-\tau_\nu} + T_{\text{exc}}(1 - e^{-\tau_\nu}) \quad \text{if } T_{\text{exc}} \text{ is constant.}$$

- 
- **Color Temperature:**
    - By fitting the spectrum to a blackbody curve without regarding to vertical scale (absolute intensity scale), a color temperature  $T_c$  is obtained.
    - The color temperature correctly gives the temperature of a blackbody source of unknown absolute scale.
  - **Effective Temperature:**
    - The effective temperature of a source is obtained by equating the actual flux  $F$  to the flux of a blackbody at temperature  $T_{\text{eff}}$ .

$$F = \int \int I_\nu \cos \theta d\nu d\Omega = \sigma T_{\text{eff}}^4$$

- **Excitation Temperature:**
  - The excitation temperature of level  $u$  relative to level  $\ell$  is defined by

$$\frac{n_u}{n_\ell} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{k_B T_{\text{exc}}}\right) \rightarrow T_{\text{exc}} \equiv \frac{E_{u\ell}/k_B}{\ln\left(\frac{n_\ell/g_\ell}{n_u/g_u}\right)} \quad (E_{u\ell} \equiv E_u - E_\ell)$$

- Radio astronomers studying the 21 cm line sometimes use the term “**spin temperature**”  $T_{\text{spin}}$  for excitation temperature.

# Neutral Medium 1

- Excitation & De-excitation

# Atomic Processes

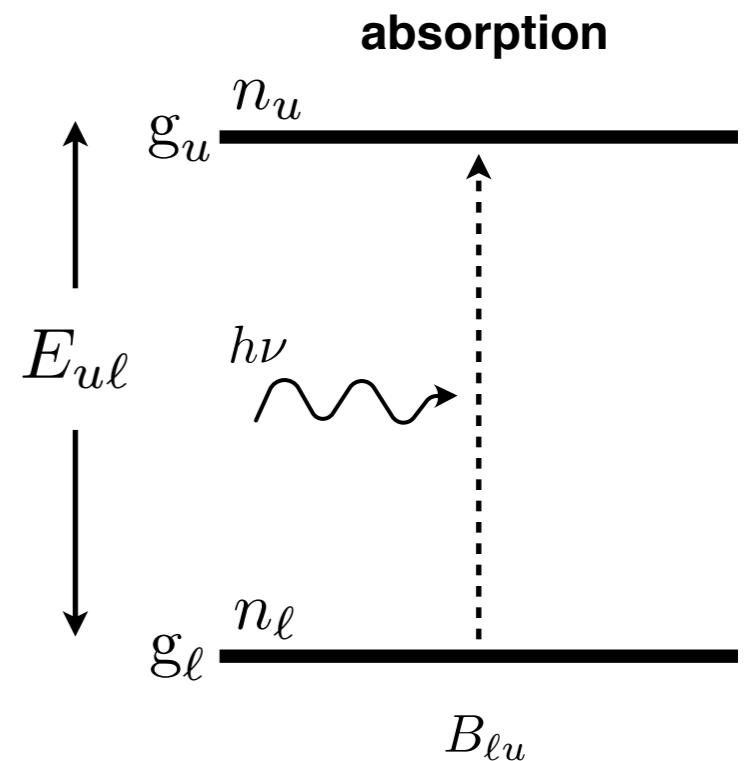
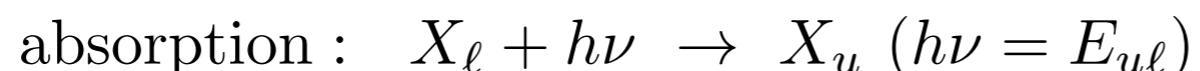
- **Excitation and de-excitation (Transition)**
  - ▶ Radiative excitation (photoexcitation; photoabsorption)
  - ▶ Radiative de-excitation (spontaneous emission and stimulated emission)
  - ▶ Collisional excitation
  - ▶ Collisional de-excitation
- **Emission Line**
  - ▶ Collisionally-excited emission lines
  - ▶ Recombination lines (recombination following photoionization or collisional ionization)
- **Ionization**
  - ▶ Photoionization and Auger-ionization
  - ▶ Collisional Ionization (Direct ionization and Excitation-autoionization)
- **Recombination**
  - ▶ Radiative recombination  $\Leftrightarrow$  Photoionization
  - ▶ Dielectronic Recombination (not dielectric!)
  - ▶ Three-body recombination  $\Leftrightarrow$  Direct collisional ionization
- **Charge exchange**

# Radiative Excitation and De-excitation (Absorption and Emission)

- Three Radiative Transitions and Einstein Coefficients

- Absorption:**

- If an absorber (atom, ion, molecule, or dust grain)  $X$  is in a lower level  $\ell$  and there is radiation present with photons having an energy equal to  $E_{u\ell}$ . The absorber can absorb a photon and undergo an upward transition.



- The rate per volume at which the absorbers absorb photons will be proportional to both the energy density  $u_\nu$  of photons of the appropriate energy and the number density  $n_\ell$  of absorbers in the lower level  $\ell$ .

$$\left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} = - \left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} = n_\ell B_{\ell u} u_\nu$$

- The proportionality constant  $B_{\ell u}$  is the **Einstein B coefficient** for the upward transition  $\ell \rightarrow u$ .

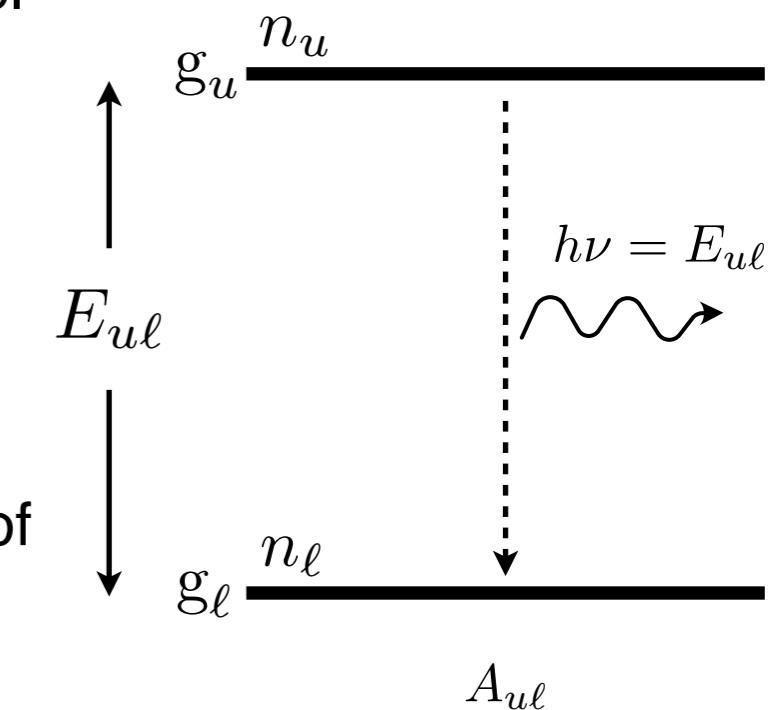
- **Emission:**

- An absorber X in an excited level  $u$  can decay to a lower level  $\ell$  with emission of a photon. There are two ways this can happen:

spontaneous emission :  $X_u \rightarrow X_\ell + h\nu$  ( $h\nu = E_{ul}$ )

stimulated emission :  $X_u + h\nu \rightarrow X_\ell + 2h\nu$  ( $h\nu = E_{ul}$ )

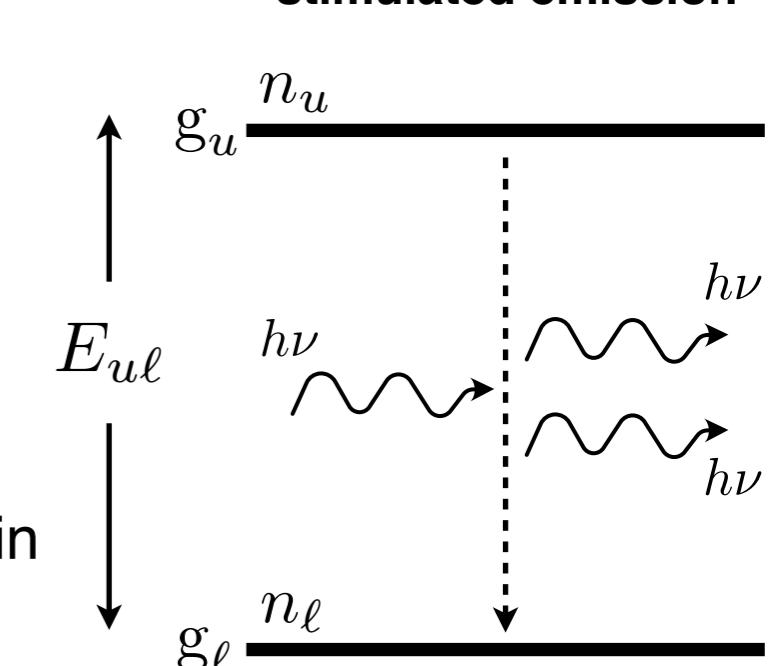
spontaneous emission



- Spontaneous emission** is a random process, independent of the presence of a radiation field.
- Stimulated emission** occurs if photons of the identical frequency, polarization, and direction of propagation are already present, and the rate of stimulated emission is proportional to the energy density  $u_\nu$  of these photons.

$$\left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell} = - \left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell} = n_u (A_{ul} + B_{ul} u_\nu)$$

stimulated emission



- The probability per unit time  $A_{ul}$  is the Einstein A coefficient for spontaneous transition. The coefficient  $B_{ul}$  is the Einstein B coefficient for the downward transition  $u \rightarrow \ell$ .

$B_{ul}$

# Relations between the Einstein coefficients

---

- The three Einstein coefficients are not independent.
- ***In thermal equilibrium***, the radiation field becomes the “blackbody” radiation field and the two levels must be populated according to the Boltzmann distribution.

$$(u_\nu)_{\text{TE}} = \frac{4\pi}{c} B_\nu(T) = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3}{c^3} \frac{1}{e^{h\nu/k_B T} - 1}$$

$$\left( \frac{n_u}{n_\ell} \right)_{\text{TE}} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} e^{-E_{u\ell}/k_B T} \quad \text{Here, } E_{u\ell} = h\nu.$$

- The net rate of change of level  $u$  should be equal to zero, in TE.

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{dn_u}{dt} &= \left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} + \left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell} \\ &= n_\ell B_{\ell u} u_\nu - n_u (A_{u\ell} + B_{u\ell} u_\nu) \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$n_\ell B_{\ell u} u_\nu - n_u (A_{u\ell} + B_{u\ell} u_\nu) = 0$$

$$(n_\ell B_{\ell u} - n_u B_{u\ell}) u_\nu = n_u A_{u\ell}$$

$$\begin{aligned} u_\nu &= \frac{n_u A_{u\ell}}{n_\ell B_{\ell u} - n_u B_{u\ell}} \\ &= \frac{(n_u A_{u\ell}) / (n_\ell B_{\ell u})}{1 - (n_u B_{u\ell}) / (n_\ell B_{\ell u})} \\ &= \frac{(g_u/g_\ell) e^{-h\nu/kT} (A_{u\ell}/B_{\ell u})}{1 - (g_u/g_\ell) e^{-h\nu/kT} (B_{u\ell}/B_{\ell u})} \quad \leftarrow \quad \frac{n_u}{n_\ell} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} e^{-h\nu_{u\ell}/kT_{\text{exc}}} \\ &= \frac{(g_u/g_\ell) (A_{u\ell}/B_{\ell u})}{e^{h\nu/kT} - (g_u/g_\ell) (B_{u\ell}/B_{\ell u})} \end{aligned}$$

Compare the above with Planck function,

$$u_\nu = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3}{c^3} \frac{1}{e^{h\nu/kT} - 1}$$

We then obtained the following relations:

$$(g_u/g_\ell) (A_{u\ell}/B_{\ell u}) = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3}{c^3}$$

$$(g_u/g_\ell) (B_{u\ell}/B_{\ell u}) = 1$$

[Note] If there is no stimulated emission ( $B_{u\ell} = 0$ ), the only way to make the left eq. consistent with the Planck function is to assume  $h\nu/kT \gg 1$  (Wien's regime). The stimulated emission is negligible. In other words, the stimulated emission term is required in the Rayleigh-Jean regime.

In summary, we obtained the following relations between the Einstein coefficients.

$$A_{u\ell} = \frac{8\pi h\nu^3}{c^3} B_{u\ell}$$

$$B_{\ell u} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} B_{u\ell}$$

$$B_{u\ell} = \frac{c^3}{8\pi h\nu^3} A_{u\ell}$$

$$B_{\ell u} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \frac{c^3}{8\pi h\nu^3} A_{u\ell}$$

- 
- We note the Einstein coefficients are intrinsic properties of the absorbing material, irrelevant to the assumption of TE. Hence, the relations between the Einstein coefficients should hold in any condition.
  - Using the relation, we can rewrite the downward and upward transition rates:

$$\left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} = n_\ell \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \frac{c^3}{8\pi h\nu^3} A_{u\ell} u_\nu \quad \left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell} = n_u A_{u\ell} \left( 1 + \frac{c^3}{8\pi h\nu^3} u_\nu \right)$$

- It is helpful to use a dimensionless quantity, the photon occupation number:

$$n_\gamma \equiv \frac{c^2}{2h\nu^3} I_\nu \quad \xrightarrow{\text{averaging over directions}} \quad \langle n_\gamma \rangle = \frac{c^2}{2h\nu^3} J_\nu = \frac{c^3}{8\pi h\nu^3} u_\nu$$

- Then, the above transition rates are simplified:

$$\left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} = n_\ell \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} A_{u\ell} \langle n_\gamma \rangle \quad \left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell} = n_u A_{u\ell} (1 + \langle n_\gamma \rangle)$$

- The photon occupation number determines the relative importance of stimulated and spontaneous emission: stimulated emission is important only when  $\langle n_\gamma \rangle \gg 1$ .

## Absorption and Emission Coefficients in terms of Einstein coefficients

---

- The Einstein coefficients are useful means of analyzing absorption and emission processes. However, we often find it even more useful to use cross section because the cross section has a natural geometric meaning.
- (pure) Absorption cross section:**
  - The number density of photons per unit frequency interval is  $u_\nu/h\nu$ . Let  $\sigma_{\ell u}(\nu)$  be the cross section for absorption of photons for the transition  $\ell \rightarrow u$ . Then, the absorption rate is

$$\left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} = n_\ell \int d\nu \sigma_{\ell u}(\nu) c \frac{u_\nu}{h\nu} \approx n_\ell u_\nu \frac{c}{h\nu} \int d\nu \sigma_{\ell u}(\nu)$$

- Here, we assumed that  $u_\nu/h\nu$  do not vary appreciably over the line profile of the cross section. Therefore, we derive a simple relation between the absorption cross section and the Einstein B coefficient:

$$\int d\nu \sigma_{\ell u}(\nu) = \frac{h\nu_{u\ell}}{c} B_{\ell u} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \frac{c^2}{8\pi\nu_{u\ell}^2} A_{u\ell}$$

- If the cross section has a normalized profile of  $\phi_\nu$ , we can write the absorption cross section as follows:

$$\sigma_{\ell u}(\nu) = \frac{h\nu_{u\ell}}{c} B_{\ell u} \phi_\nu = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \frac{c^2}{8\pi\nu_{u\ell}^2} A_{u\ell} \phi_\nu \quad \text{with} \quad \int \phi_\nu d\nu = 1$$

- **(effective) Absorption Coefficient**

- We note that the stimulated emission is proportional to the energy density of ambient radiation field. In the radiative transfer equation, it is convenient to include the stimulated emission term in the absorption coefficient as a negative absorption.

$$\left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} - \left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell}^{\text{stimulated}} = n_\ell B_{\ell u} u_\nu - n_u B_{u \ell} u_\nu$$

$$= n_\ell B_{\ell u} u_\nu - n_u \left( \frac{g_\ell}{g_u} B_{\ell u} \right) u_\nu$$

- Therefore, we may define the cross section for stimulated emission and the net (effective) absorption coefficient as follows:

$$\sigma_{u\ell} = \frac{g_\ell}{g_u} \sigma_{\ell u}$$

$$\kappa_\nu = n_\ell \sigma_{\ell u} - n_u \sigma_{u\ell}$$

$$= n_\ell \sigma_{\ell u} \left( 1 - \frac{n_u/n_\ell}{g_u/g_\ell} \right)$$

pure absorption coefficient

- Using the definition of the excitation temperature, we can rewrite them:

$$\kappa_\nu = n_\ell \sigma_{\ell u} \left[ 1 - \exp \left( -\frac{h\nu_{u\ell}}{k_B T_{\text{exc}}} \right) \right] \quad \text{or} \quad \sigma_\nu^{\text{eff}} = \sigma_{\ell u} \left[ 1 - \exp \left( -\frac{h\nu_{u\ell}}{k_B T_{\text{exc}}} \right) \right]$$

---

- ***Emission coefficient (Emissivity)***

- The emissivity is defined as the power radiated per unit frequency per unit solid angle per unit volume.
- The line emissivity can be expressed in terms of the spontaneous downward transition rate:

$$4\pi \int d\nu j_\nu = h\nu_{u\ell} \left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell}^{\text{spontaneous}}$$

- Comparing with the definition of the Einstein A coefficient, we obtain:

$$\int d\nu j_\nu = n_u \frac{A_{u\ell}}{4\pi} h\nu_{u\ell}$$

- If the emission line has a normalized profile of  $\phi_\nu$ , we can write the emissivity as follows:

$$j_\nu = n_u \frac{A_{u\ell}}{4\pi} h\nu_{u\ell} \phi_\nu \quad \text{with} \quad \int d\nu \phi_\nu = 1$$

- 
- The correction factor for the stimulated emission in absorption coefficient:

- For Ly $\alpha$  line,

$$h\nu_{u\ell} = 10.2 \text{ eV} \rightarrow 1 - \exp\left(-\frac{h\nu_{u\ell}}{k_B T_{\text{exc}}}\right) = 1 - \exp\left(-\frac{1.1837 \times 10^5 \text{ K}}{T_{\text{exc}}}\right)$$

$$\simeq 1 \quad \text{for } T_{\text{exc}} \approx T_{\text{gas}} < 1 \times 10^5 \text{ K}$$

- ▶ The stimulated emission is negligible.

- For 21 cm line,

$$h\nu_{u\ell} = 6 \mu\text{eV} \rightarrow 1 - \exp\left(-\frac{h\nu_{u\ell}}{k_B T_{\text{exc}}}\right) = 1 - \exp\left(-\frac{0.068 \text{ K}}{T_{\text{exc}}}\right)$$

$$\simeq \frac{0.068 \text{ K}}{T_{\text{exc}}} \ll 1 \quad \text{for } T_{\text{exc}} \approx T_{\text{gas}} \sim 100 \text{ K}$$

- ▶ The correction for stimulated emission is very important. We, therefore, need to take into account the stimulated emission in dealing with the 21 cm line.

- Two limiting cases:

- At radio and sub-mm frequencies, the upper levels are often appreciably populated, and it is important to include both spontaneous and stimulated emission.
- When we consider propagation of optical, UV, or X-ray radiation in cold ISM, the upper levels of atoms and ions usually have negligible populations, and stimulated emission can be neglected.

- **Source Function:**

$$\begin{aligned}
 S_\nu &= \frac{j_\nu}{\kappa_\nu} \\
 &= \frac{n_u \frac{A_{u\ell}}{4\pi} h\nu_{u\ell} \phi_\nu^{\text{emiss}}}{n_\ell \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \frac{c^2}{8\pi\nu_{u\ell}^2} A_{u\ell} \phi_\nu^{\text{abs}} [1 - \exp(-h\nu_{u\ell}/k_B T_{\text{exc}})]} && \leftarrow \frac{n_u}{n_\ell} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \exp(-h\nu_{u\ell}/k_B T_{\text{exc}}) \\
 &= \frac{2h\nu_{u\ell}^3}{c^2} \frac{1}{\exp(h\nu_{u\ell}/k_B T_{\text{exc}}) - 1} && \leftarrow \phi_\nu^{\text{emiss}} = \phi_\nu^{\text{abs}}
 \end{aligned}$$

- This is called ***generalized Kirchhoff's law***.
- The intrinsic profiles for absorption and emission are the same.
  - ▶ The source function should approach the Planck function in LTE. For this to be true, the intrinsic profile of emission line should be the same as that of absorption line.
  - ▶ We will show, later, that the intrinsic emission and absorption profiles are, indeed, the same, using a semi-classical model for an atom.

# Maser Lines

---

- Population inversion
  - Under some conditions, a process may act to “pump” an excited state  $u$  by either collisional or radiative excitation of a higher level  $u'$  that then decays to populate level  $u$ . If this pumping process is rapid enough (relative to the processes that depopulate  $u$ ), it may be possible for the relative level populations between  $u$  and  $\ell$  to satisfy the inequality (also to have a negative excitation temperature).

$$n_u > \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} n_\ell \quad \rightarrow \quad T_{\text{exc}, u\ell} < 0.$$

- When this population inversion occurs, stimulated emission is stronger than pure absorption, and ***the radiation is amplified as it propagates***. Then, the effective absorption coefficient, optical depth, and attenuation factor are

$$\kappa_\nu = \sigma_{\ell u} \left( 1 - \frac{n_u/g_u}{n_\ell/g_\ell} \right) < 0, \quad \tau_\nu = \int \kappa_\nu ds < 0, \quad e^{-\tau_\nu} > 1$$

- Maser
  - Such population inversion have been observed for microwave transitions of H I, OH, H<sub>2</sub>O, and SiO, and hence we speak of ***maser (microwave amplification by stimulated emission of radiation)*** emission.

- 
- Observational properties
    - If  $|k_B T_{\text{exc}, u\ell}| \gg h\nu$ , the RT equation becomes 
$$\begin{aligned} T_A &= T_A(0)e^{-\tau_\nu} + T_{\text{exc}}(1 - e^{-\tau_\nu}) \\ &= (T_A(0) + |T_{\text{exc}}|)e^{|\tau_\nu|} - |T_{\text{exc}}| \end{aligned}$$
    - The factor  $e^{|\tau_\nu|}$  is in some cases very large - some OH and H<sub>2</sub>O masers have been observed to have  $T_A > 10^{11}$  K.
    - We note that
      - ▶  $e^{|\tau_\nu|}$  is more strongly peaked on the sky than  $|\tau_\nu|$  - the angular size of the maser is less than the actual transverse dimension of the maser region.
      - ▶  $e^{|\tau_\nu|}$  is more strongly in  $\nu$  than  $|\tau_\nu|$  - the maser line is narrower than the actual velocity distribution of the maser species.
    - Some maser can be very bright, allowing the use of interferometry, as well as observations of sources at large distances.
      - ▶ This has enabled measurements of proper motion of maser spots in star-forming regions of the MW, as well as in material orbiting a supermassive black hole in the spiral galaxy NGC 4258 (Hernstein et al. 1999).

# Oscillator Strength

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- In the previous slides, we characterized the absorption cross section by the Einstein A coefficient. Equivalently, we can express the cross section in terms of the oscillator strength for the absorption transition  $\ell \rightarrow u$ , defined by the relation:

$$\int \sigma_{\ell u}(\nu) d\nu = \frac{\pi e^2}{m_e c} f_{\ell u} \quad \rightarrow \quad \sigma_{\ell u}(\nu) = \frac{\pi e^2}{m_e c} f_{\ell u} \phi_\nu$$

- Here, the factor  $\frac{\pi e^2}{m_e c}$  is the cross-section for a classical oscillator model.
- The oscillator strength is the factor which corrects the classical result. The quantum mechanical process can be interpreted as being due to a (fractional) number  $f$  of equivalent classical electron oscillators of the same frequency.
- The Einstein A coefficient is related to the absorption oscillator strength of the upward transition by

$$A_{u\ell} = \frac{8\pi^2 e^2 \nu_{u\ell}^2}{m_e c^3} \frac{g_\ell}{g_u} f_{\ell u} = \left( \frac{0.8167 \text{ cm}}{\lambda_{u\ell}} \right)^2 \frac{g_\ell}{g_u} f_{\ell u} [\text{s}^{-1}]$$

- For 21.1 cm line,  $g_u = 3$ ,  $g_\ell = 1$  ( $g_F = 2F + 1$ )  $f_{\ell u} = 5.75 \times 10^{-12}$   
 $A_{u\ell} = 2.88 \times 10^{-15} [\text{s}^{-1}] = (11 \text{ Myr})^{-1}$
- For Ly $\alpha$  (1215.67 Å) line,  $g_u = 3$ ,  $g_\ell = 1$  ( $g_L = 2L + 1$ )  $f_{\ell u} = 0.4164$  for  $1^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow 2^2P$   
 $A_{u\ell} = 6.265 \times 10^8 [\text{s}^{-1}]$   $f_{\ell u} = 0.27760$  for  ${}^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow {}^2P_{3/2}$   
 $= 0.13881$  for  ${}^2S_{1/2} \rightarrow {}^2P_{1/2}$

# Collisional Excitation & De-excitation

- **Collisional Rate (Two Level Atom)**

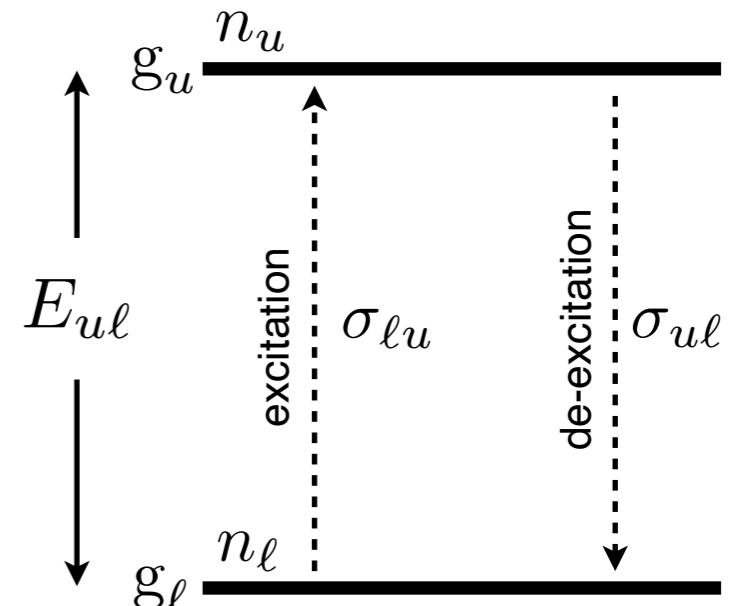
- ▶ The cross section  $\sigma_{\ell u}$  for collisional excitation from a lower level  $\ell$  to an upper level  $u$  is, in general, inversely proportional to the impact energy (or  $v^2$ ) above the energy threshold  $E_{ul}$  and is zero below.
- ▶ The collisional cross section can be expressed in the following form using a dimensionless quantity called the ***collision strength***  $\Omega_{\ell u}$ :

$$\begin{aligned}\sigma_{\ell u}(v) &= (\pi a_0^2) \left( \frac{hR_\infty}{\frac{1}{2}m_e v^2} \right) \frac{\Omega_{\ell u}}{g_\ell} \text{ cm}^2 \quad \text{for } \frac{1}{2}m_e v^2 > E_{ul} \\ &= \frac{h^2}{4\pi m_e^2 v^2} \frac{\Omega_{\ell u}}{g_\ell}\end{aligned}$$

or  $\sigma_{\ell u}(E) = \frac{h^2}{8\pi m_e E} \frac{\Omega_{\ell u}}{g_\ell} \quad \left( E = \frac{1}{2}m_e v^2 \right)$

where,  $a_0 = \frac{\hbar^2}{m_e e^2} = 5.12 \times 10^{13}$  cm, Bohr radius

$$R_\infty = \frac{m_e e^4}{4\pi \hbar^3} = 109,737 \text{ cm}^{-1}, \text{ Rydberg constant} \quad \left( \hbar = \frac{h}{2\pi} \right)$$

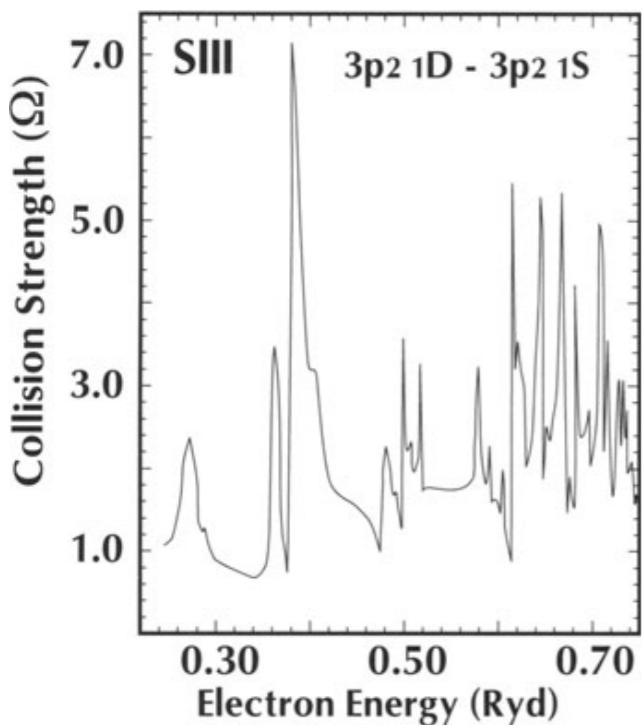


- ▶ The collision strength  $\Omega_{\ell u}$  is a function of electron velocity (or energy) but is often approximately constant near the threshold. Here,  $g_\ell$  and  $g_u$  are the statistical weights of the lower and upper levels, respectively.

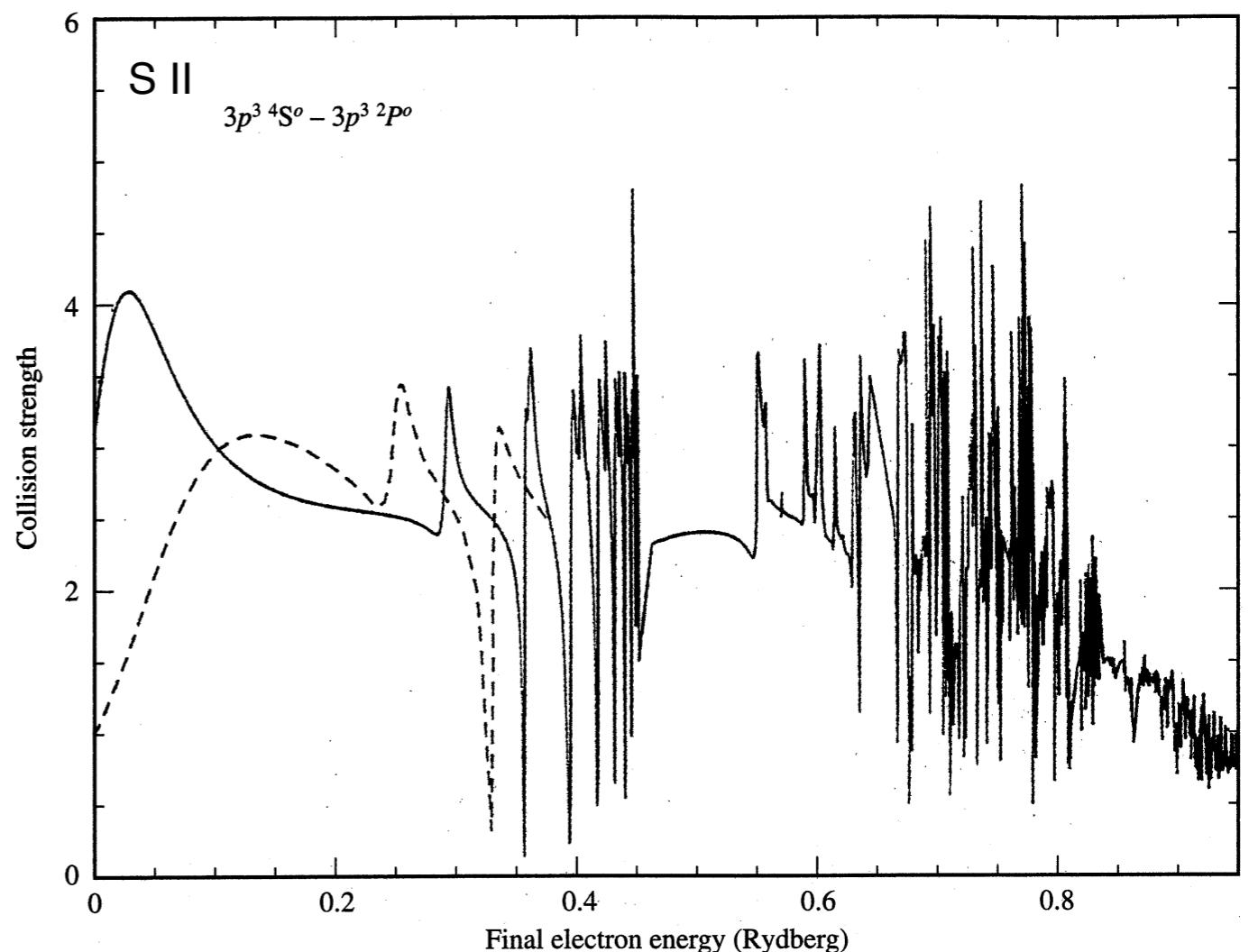
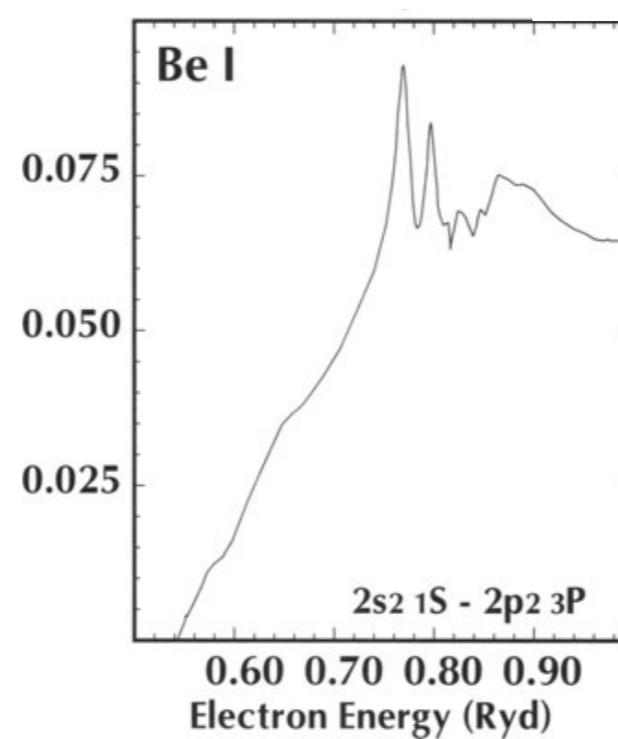
- Collision Strength

- Quantum mechanical calculations show that (1) the resonance structure in the collision strengths is important and (2) the collision strength increases with energy for neutral species.
- It has a value in a range of  $10^{-2} < \langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle < 10$

Tayal (1996)



Badnell (1999)



solid - Ramsbottom et al. (1996)  
dashed - Cai & Pradhan (1993)

- Advantage of using the collision strength is that (1) it removes the primary energy dependence for most atomic transitions and (2) they have the symmetry between the upper and the lower states.

**The principle of detailed balance** states that ***in thermodynamic equilibrium each microscopic process is balanced by its inverse.***

$$n_e n_\ell v_\ell \sigma_{\ell u}(v_\ell) f(v_\ell) dv_\ell = n_e n_u v_u \sigma_{u\ell}(v_u) f(v_u) dv_u$$

Here,  $v_\ell$  and  $v_u$  are related by  $\frac{1}{2}m_e v_\ell^2 = \frac{1}{2}m_e v_u^2 + E_{u\ell}$ , and  $f(v)$  is a Maxwell velocity distribution of electrons. Using the Boltzmann equation of thermodynamic equilibrium,

$$\frac{n_u}{n_\ell} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right)$$

we derive the following relation between the cross-sections for excitation and de-excitation are

$$g_\ell v_\ell^2 \sigma_{\ell u}(v_\ell) = g_u v_u^2 \sigma_{u\ell}(v_u) \quad \text{Here, } \frac{1}{2}m_e v_\ell^2 = \frac{1}{2}m_e v_u^2 + E_{u\ell}$$

or

$$g_\ell(E + E_{u\ell}) \sigma_{\ell u}(E + E_{u\ell}) = g_u E \sigma_{u\ell}(E)$$

and the symmetry of the collision strength between levels.

$$\Omega_{\ell u} = \Omega_{u\ell}$$

more precisely  $\Omega_{u\ell}(E + E_{u\ell}) = \Omega_{u\ell}(E)$

These two relations were derived in the TE condition. However, ***the cross-sections are independent on the assumptions, and thus the above relations should be always satisfied.***

► Collisional excitation and de-excitation rates

The ***collisional de-excitation rate per unit volume per unit time, which is thermally averaged,*** is

$$\begin{aligned} \left( \frac{dn_\ell}{dt} \right)_{u \rightarrow \ell} &= n_e n_u \int_0^\infty v \sigma_{u\ell}(v) f(v) dv \\ &= n_e n_u k_{u\ell} \quad [\text{cm}^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}] \end{aligned}$$

$$k_{u\ell} \equiv \langle \sigma v \rangle_{u \rightarrow \ell}$$

$$\begin{aligned} k_{u\ell} &= \int_0^\infty v \sigma_{u\ell}(v) f(v) dv \\ &= \left( \frac{2\pi\hbar^4}{k_B m_e^3} \right)^{1/2} T^{-1/2} \frac{\langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle}{g_u} \\ &= \frac{8.62942 \times 10^{-6}}{T^{1/2}} \frac{\langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle}{g_u} \quad [\text{cm}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}], \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Here, } \langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle = \int_0^\infty \Omega_{u\ell}(E) e^{-E/k_B T} d(E/k_B T)$$

and the ***collisional excitation rate per unit volume per unit time*** is

$$\left( \frac{dn_u}{dt} \right)_{\ell \rightarrow u} = n_e n_\ell k_{\ell u}$$

$$k_{\ell u} \equiv \langle \sigma v \rangle_{\ell \rightarrow u}$$

$$\begin{aligned} k_{\ell u} &= \int_{v_{\min}}^\infty v \sigma_{\ell u}(v) f(v) dv \quad \text{Here, } \frac{1}{2} m_e v_{\min}^2 = E_{u\ell} \\ &= \left( \frac{2\pi\hbar^4}{k_B m_e^3} \right)^{1/2} T^{-1/2} \frac{\langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right) \end{aligned}$$

Here,  $k_{\ell u}$  and  $k_{u\ell}$  are the collisional rate coefficient for excitation and de-excitation coefficients in units of  $\text{cm}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , respectively. We also note that ***the rate coefficients for collisional excitation and de-excitation are related by***

$$k_{\ell u} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} k_{u\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right)$$

$$\langle \sigma v \rangle_{\ell \rightarrow u} = \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \langle \sigma v \rangle_{u \rightarrow \ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right)$$

# Sum rule for collision strengths

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- Quantum mechanical sum rule for collision strengths for the case where one term consists of a singlet ( $S = 0$  or  $L = 0$ ) and the second consists of a multiplet: the collision strength of each fine structure level  $J$  is related to the total collision strength of the multiplet by

$$\Omega_{(SLJ, S'L'J')} = \frac{(2J' + 1)}{(2S' + 1)(2L' + 1)} \Omega_{(SL, S'L')}$$

Here,  $(2J'+1)$  is the statistical weight of an individual level in the multiplet, and  $(2S'+1)$  ( $2L'+1$ ) is the statistical weight of the multiplet.

We can regard the collision strength as “shared” amongst these levels in proportion to the statistical weights of the individual levels ( $g_J = 2J+1$ ).

- We will learn that ***the flux ratio between the fine structure lines in a multiplet is proportional to the ratio of their collision strengths, provided that the energy gap between the fine structure levels are small.*** Then, the flux ratio is determined by the ratio of their statistical weights.

- C-like ions ( $1s^2 2s^2 2p^2 \rightarrow 1s^2 2s^2 2p^2$ ) forbidden or inter combination transitions.

ground states (triplet) -  ${}^3P_0 : {}^3P_1 : {}^3P_2 = 1 : 3 : 5$

excited states (singlets) -  ${}^1D_2, {}^1S_1$

- Li-like ions ( $1s^2 2s^1 \rightarrow 1s^2 2p^1$ ) resonance transitions

ground state (singlet) -  ${}^2S_{1/2}$

excited states (doublet) -  ${}^2P_{3/2} : {}^2P_{1/2} = 2 : 1$

# Collisionally-Excited Emission Line

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- Emission line flux

- In the low density limit, the collisional rate between atoms and electrons is much slower than the (spontaneous) radiative de-excitation rate of the excited level. Thus, we can balance the collisional feeding into level  $u$  by the rate of radiative transition back down to level  $\ell$ . The level population is determined by

$$n_e n_\ell k_{\ell u} = A_{u\ell} n_u$$

$$\frac{n_u}{n_\ell} = \frac{n_e k_{\ell u}}{A_{u\ell}}$$

$$= \frac{n_e}{A_{u\ell}} \beta \frac{\langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle}{g_\ell} T^{-1/2} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right)$$

where  $A_{u\ell}$  is the Einstein coefficient for spontaneous emission. The line emissivity is given by

$$4\pi j_{u\ell} = E_{u\ell} A_{u\ell} n_u = E_{u\ell} n_e n_\ell k_{\ell u}$$

$$= n_e n_\ell E_{u\ell} \frac{8.62942 \times 10^{-6}}{T^{1/2}} \frac{\langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right) \text{ [erg cm}^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}\text{]}$$

$$\simeq \beta \chi n_e^2 E_{u\ell} T^{-1/2} \frac{\langle \Omega_{u\ell} \rangle}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{u\ell}}{kT}\right)$$

Here,  $\beta = \left(\frac{2\pi\hbar^4}{km_e^2}\right)^{1/2} = 8.62942 \times 10^{-6}$   
 $\chi = n_\ell/n_e$

For low temperature, the exponential term dominates because few electrons have energy above the threshold for collisional excitation, so that the line rapidly fades with decreasing temperature.

At high temperature, the  $T^{-1/2}$  term controls the cooling rate, so the line fades slowly with increasing temperature.

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- ▶ In **high-density limit**, the level population are set by the Boltzmann equilibrium, and the line emissivity is

$$\begin{aligned} 4\pi j_{ul} &= E_{\ell u} A_{ul} n_u \\ \frac{n_u}{n_\ell} &= \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{ul}}{kT}\right) \\ &= n_\ell E_{\ell u} A_{ul} \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{\ell u}}{kT}\right) \\ &\simeq \chi n_e E_{\ell u} A_{ul} \frac{g_u}{g_\ell} \exp\left(-\frac{E_{\ell u}}{kT}\right) \end{aligned}$$

Here, the line flux scales as  $n_e$  rather than  $n_e^2$ , but the line flux tends to a constant value at high temperature.

- ▶ **Critical density** is defined as the density where the radiative depopulation rate matches the collisional de-excitation for the excited state.

$$\begin{aligned} A_{ul} n_u &= n_e n_u k_{ul} \\ n_{\text{crit}} &= \frac{A_{ul}}{k_{ul}} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \rightarrow n_{\text{crit}} &= A_{ul} \frac{g_u}{\beta \langle \Omega_{ul} \rangle} T^{1/2} \\ &= 1.2 \times 10^3 \frac{A_{ul}}{10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}} \frac{g_u}{\langle \Omega_{ul} \rangle} \left( \frac{T}{10^4 \text{ K}} \right)^{1/2} [\text{cm}^{-3}] \end{aligned}$$

- ▶ At densities higher than the critical density, collisional de-excitation becomes significant, and the forbidden lines will be weaker as the density increases.

At around the critical density, the “line emissivity vs density” plotted in log-log scale changes slope from +2 to +1.

- As can be seen in Tables and the formula, collisional de-excitation is negligible for resonance and most forbidden lines in the ISM.

Collision strengths at  $T = 10^4$  K

Table 4.1 in The Interstellar Medium [Lequeux]

Ion	$\ell$	u	$E_\ell/k$	$E_u/k$	$\lambda_{ul}$	$n_{H,\text{crit}}(u)$	
			(K)	(K)	( $\mu\text{m}$ )	$T = 100\text{ K}$ ( $\text{cm}^{-3}$ )	$T = 5000\text{ K}$ ( $\text{cm}^{-3}$ )
C II	$^2\text{P}_{1/2}^o$	$^2\text{P}_{3/2}^o$	0	91.21	157.74	$2.0 \times 10^3$	$1.5 \times 10^3$
CI	$^3\text{P}_0$	$^3\text{P}_1$	0	23.60	609.7	620	160
	$^3\text{P}_1$	$^3\text{P}_2$	23.60	62.44	370.37	720	150
O I	$^3\text{P}_2$	$^3\text{P}_1$	0	227.71	63.185	$2.5 \times 10^5$	$4.9 \times 10^4$
	$^3\text{P}_1$	$^3\text{P}_0$	227.71	326.57	145.53	$2.3 \times 10^4$	$8.4 \times 10^3$
Si II	$^2\text{P}_{1/2}^o$	$^2\text{P}_{3/2}^o$	0	413.28	34.814	$1.0 \times 10^5$	$1.1 \times 10^4$
Si I	$^3\text{P}_0$	$^3\text{P}_1$	0	110.95	129.68	$4.8 \times 10^4$	$2.7 \times 10^4$
	$^3\text{P}_1$	$^3\text{P}_2$	110.95	321.07	68.473	$9.9 \times 10^4$	$3.5 \times 10^4$

Table 17.1 in [Draine]

- However, it is not true for the 21 cm hyperfine structure line of hydrogen.
- The critical density for 21cm line is as low as  $1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ cm}^{-3}$  at  $T = 100 \text{ K}$ .

$$A_{ul} = 2.88 \times 10^{-15} \text{ [s}^{-1}\text{]}$$

Ion	Transition l-u	$\lambda$ $\mu\text{m}$	$A_{ul}$ $\text{s}^{-1}$	$\Omega_{ul}$	$n_{crit}$ $\text{cm}^{-3}$
C I	$^3\text{P}_0 - ^3\text{P}_1$	609.1354	$7.93 \times 10^{-8}$	–	(500)
	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_2$	370.4151	$2.65 \times 10^{-7}$	–	(3000)
C II	$^2\text{P}_{1/2} - ^2\text{P}_{3/2}$	157.741	$2.4 \times 10^{-6}$	1.80	47 (3000)
	$^3\text{P}_0 - ^3\text{P}_1$	205.3	$2.07 \times 10^{-6}$	0.41	41
N II	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_2$	121.889	$7.46 \times 10^{-6}$	1.38	256
	$^3\text{P}_2 - ^1\text{D}_2$	0.65834	$2.73 \times 10^{-3}$	2.99	7700
O III	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^1\text{D}_2$	0.65481	$9.20 \times 10^{-4}$	2.99	7700
	$^2\text{P}_{1/2} - ^2\text{P}_{3/2}$	57.317	$4.8 \times 10^{-5}$	1.2	1880
O I	$^3\text{P}_2 - ^3\text{P}_1$	63.184	$8.95 \times 10^{-5}$	–	$2.3 \times 10^4$ ( $5 \times 10^5$ )
	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_0$	145.525	$1.7 \times 10^{-5}$	–	$3400$ ( $1 \times 10^5$ )
O II	$^3\text{P}_2 - ^1\text{D}_2$	0.63003	$6.3 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$1.8 \times 10^6$
	$^4\text{S}_{3/2} - ^2\text{D}_{5/2}$	0.37288	$3.6 \times 10^{-5}$	0.88	1160
O III	$^4\text{S}_{3/2} - ^2\text{D}_{3/2}$	0.37260	$1.8 \times 10^{-4}$	0.59	3890
	$^3\text{P}_0 - ^3\text{P}_1$	88.356	$2.62 \times 10^{-5}$	0.39	461
Ne II	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_2$	51.815	$9.76 \times 10^{-5}$	0.95	3250
	$^3\text{P}_2 - ^1\text{D}_2$	0.50069	$1.81 \times 10^{-2}$	2.50	$6.4 \times 10^5$
Ne III	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^1\text{D}_2$	0.49589	$6.21 \times 10^{-3}$	2.50	$6.4 \times 10^5$
	$^1\text{D}_2 - ^1\text{S}_0$	0.43632	1.70	0.40	$2.4 \times 10^7$
Ne II	$^2\text{P}_{1/2} - ^2\text{P}_{3/2}$	12.8136	$8.6 \times 10^{-3}$	0.37	$5.9 \times 10^5$
	$^3\text{P}_2 - ^3\text{P}_1$	15.5551	$3.1 \times 10^{-2}$	0.60	$1.27 \times 10^5$
S II	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_0$	36.0135	$5.2 \times 10^{-3}$	0.21	$1.82 \times 10^4$
	$^2\text{P}_{1/2} - ^2\text{P}_{3/2}$	34.8152	$2.17 \times 10^{-4}$	7.7	$(3.4 \times 10^5)$
S II	$^4\text{S}_{3/2} - ^2\text{D}_{5/2}$	0.67164	$2.60 \times 10^{-4}$	4.7	1240
	$^4\text{S}_{3/2} - ^2\text{D}_{3/2}$	0.67308	$8.82 \times 10^{-4}$	3.1	3270
S III	$^3\text{P}_0 - ^3\text{P}_1$	33.4810	$4.72 \times 10^{-4}$	4.0	1780
	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_2$	18.7130	$2.07 \times 10^{-3}$	7.9	$1.4 \times 10^4$
S IV	$^2\text{P}_{1/2} - ^2\text{P}_{3/2}$	10.5105	$7.1 \times 10^{-3}$	8.5	$5.0 \times 10^4$
	$^2\text{P}_{1/2} - ^2\text{P}_{3/2}$	6.9853	$5.3 \times 10^{-2}$	2.9	$1.72 \times 10^6$
Ar III	$^3\text{P}_2 - ^3\text{P}_1$	8.9914	$3.08 \times 10^{-2}$	3.1	$2.75 \times 10^5$
	$^3\text{P}_1 - ^3\text{P}_0$	21.8293	$5.17 \times 10^{-3}$	1.3	$3.0 \times 10^4$
Fe II	$^6\text{D}_{7/2} - ^6\text{D}_{5/2}$	35.3491	$1.57 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$(3.3 \times 10^6)$
	$^6\text{D}_{9/2} - ^6\text{D}_{7/2}$	25.9882	$2.13 \times 10^{-3}$	–	$(2.2 \times 10^6)$

# Line Diagnostics

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- Under the conditions of very low density and weak radiation fields,

- The vast majority of the atoms reside in the ground state.

**collisional excitation timescale >> radiative decay time scale**

This condition will remain true even if the excited state has a radiative lifetime of several second, which is frequently the case for the forbidden transitions observed in ionized astrophysical plasmas.

- Flux of an emission line  $\propto$  Flux number of collisions  $\propto$  Product of the number densities of the two colliding species by the probability that a collision will produce a collisional excitation.
- If the energy gap between the ground state and the excited state  $E_{\ell u}$  is much larger than the mean energy of the colliding species ( $\sim k_B T$ ), then, because there are few very energetic collisions, relatively few collisional excitations can occur. Therefore, the resulting emission line will be very much weaker than when  $E_{\ell u} < k_B T$ .

This gives us ***the possibility of measuring temperature from the relative strengths of lines coming from excited levels at different energies above the ground state.***

- At high enough densities,
  - The collisional timescales are short.
  - The population in any upper level is set by the balance between collisional excitation, and the collisional de-excitation out of these levels, and are governed by the Boltzmann equilibrium.
- At intermediate densities,
  - The collisional rates and the radiative decay rates are compatible.
  - The intensity of an emission line is determined by both the temperature and the density.
  - If the temperature is known, the density can be determined from the intensity ratio of two such lines.
- Temperature & Density Diagnostics will be discussed later.

# Homework

from Draine's problems

**1** A local HI cloud is interposed between us and the cosmic microwave background with temperature  $T_{\text{CMB}} = 2.7255 \text{ K}$ . Suppose that the HI in the cloud has a spin temperature  $T_{\text{spin}} = 50 \text{ K}$ , and that the optical depth at line-center (of the 21 cm line) is  $\tau = 0.1$ . The cloud is extended. We observe the cloud with a radio telescope.

- (a) What will be the (absolute) brightness temperature  $T_B$  at line-center of the 21 cm line? Express your answer in deg K. You may assume that  $h\nu \ll kT_B$ .
- (b) What will be the (absolute) intensity at line-center of the 21 cm line? Express your answer in  $\text{Jy sr}^{-1}$ .

**2** Consider a photon of frequency  $h\nu$  entering a slab of material containing two-level atoms with excitation temperature  $T_{u\ell}$ . At the frequency of the photon, let the optical depth of the slab be  $\tau$ .

- (a) Let  $P_{\text{abs}}$  be the probability that the original photon will undergo absorption before exiting from the slab. Give an expression for  $P_{\text{abs}}$  in terms of  $\tau$  and  $h\nu/kT_{u\ell}$ . Hint: here,  $\tau$  is the optical depth for pure absorption.
- (b) Consider a photon that crossed the slab without being absorbed. Let  $P_{\text{stim.em.}}$  be the probability that the incident photon will stimulate emission of one or more photons. Give an expression for  $P_{\text{stim.em.}}$  in terms of  $\tau$  and  $h\nu/kT_{u\ell}$ .

**3** Suppose that we have a molecule with three energy levels – denoted 0, 1, 2 – ordered according to increasing energy,  $E_0 < E_1 < E_2$ . Let  $g_0, g_1, g_2$  be the degeneracies of the levels. Suppose that there is radiation present with  $h\nu = E_2 - E_0$ , due to an external source plus emission in the  $2 \rightarrow 0$  transition.

Let  $\zeta_{02}$  be the absorption probability per unit time for a molecule in level 0, with a transition to level 2. Let  $A_{20}, A_{21}$ , and  $A_{10}$  be the Einstein A coefficients for decays  $2 \rightarrow 0$ ,  $2 \rightarrow 1$ , and  $1 \rightarrow 0$  by spontaneous emission of a photon. Ignore collisional processes. → Hint: this mean no external radiation field for  $2 \rightarrow 1$  and  $1 \rightarrow 0$

- (a) Ignoring possible absorption of photons in the  $2 \rightarrow 1$  and  $1 \rightarrow 0$  transitions, obtain an expression for the ratio  $n_1/n_0$ , where  $n_i$  is the number density of molecules in level  $i$ .  $n_2/n_1$
- (b) How large must  $\zeta_{02}$  be for this molecule to act as a maser in the  $1 \rightarrow 0$  transition?
- (c) Is it possible for this system to have maser emission in the  $2 \rightarrow 1$  transition? If so, what conditions must be satisfied? Hint: find a relation between  $A_{21}$  and  $A_{10}$  to make the solution self-consistent.