



COURSE DATA

DATA SUBJECT

Code: 43296
Name: Stellar astrophysics
Cycle: Master's Degree
ECTS Credits: 6
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
2150 - Master's degree in Advanced Physics	Facultat de Física	1	First quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
2150 - Master's degree in Advanced Physics	Advanced astrophysics	ELECTIVES

COORDINATION

ALOY TORAS MIGUEL ANGEL

SUMMARY

Basic concepts of stellar physics. Late stages of stellar evolution and evolution after the Main Sequence. White Dwarfs. Neutron Stars. Black hole astrophysics. Supernovae and core collapse. Accretion in Astrophysics. X-ray binary stars. Galactic activity. Relativistic outflows.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Students should have completed a course equivalent to Astrophysics corresponding to the third year of a physics degree and have taken as optional course Relativity and Cosmology in the last year of a degree in physics. In any case, if these subjects have not been taken, the student should possess the following previous knowledge:

1. Rudiments of mathematical analysis and physics of fluids.
2. Basic stellar evolution and Astrophysics.



3. Lagrangian and Hamiltonian mechanics.
4. Special and General Relativity.
5. Electric and magnetic fields: electromagnetic radiation.

Since classes are taught in English, a B2 level or equivalent would be necessary to follow the course.

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Analizar una situación compleja extrayendo cuales son las cantidades físicas relevantes y ser capaz de reducirla a un modelo parametrizado.

Comprender de una forma sistemática el campo de estudio de la Física y el dominio de las habilidades y métodos de investigación relacionados con dicho campo.

Comprender la fase terminal de las estrellas que conduce a la formación de objetos compactos (enanas blancas, estrellas de neutrones o agujeros negros) incluyendo el colapso estelar que precede a la formación de estos objetos, incluyendo también fenómenos como las supernovas y las erupciones de rayos gamma.

Comprender los fundamentos teóricos de la física estelar y cómo se forman y evolucionan las estrellas a partir de aplicación de las leyes de la física.

Concebir, diseñar, poner en práctica y adoptar un proceso sustancial de investigación con seriedad académica.

Elaborar una memoria clara y concisa de los resultados de su trabajo y de las conclusiones obtenidas en el área de la Física.

Estar en disposición para seguir los estudios de doctorado y la realización de un proyecto de tesis doctoral.

Evaluar la validez de un modelo o teoría propuesto por otros miembros de la comunidad científica.

Exponer y defender públicamente el desarrollo, resultados y conclusiones de su trabajo en el área de la Física.

Ostentar la preparación para tomar decisiones correctas en la elección de tareas y en su ordenación temporal en su labor investigadora y/o profesional.

Poseer la capacidad para el desarrollo de una aptitud crítica ante el aprendizaje que le lleve a plantearse nuevos problemas desde perspectivas no convencionales.

Realizar un análisis crítico, evaluación y síntesis de ideas nuevas y complejas en el área de la Física.

Saber modelizar matemáticamente los problemas físicos sencillos nuevos, conectados con problemas conocidos. Ser capaz de expresar en términos matemáticos nuevas ideas.



Saber organizarse para planificar y desarrollar el trabajo dentro de un equipo con eficacia y eficiencia.

Ser capaces de obtener y de seleccionar la información y las fuentes relevantes para la resolución de problemas, elaboración de estrategias y asesoramiento a clientes.

Ser capaz de gestionar información de distintas fuentes bibliográficas especializadas utilizando principalmente bases de datos y publicaciones internacionales en lengua inglesa.

Students should apply acquired knowledge to solve problems in unfamiliar contexts within their field of study, including multidisciplinary scenarios.

Students should be able to integrate knowledge and address the complexity of making informed judgments based on incomplete or limited information, including reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities associated with the application of their knowledge and judgments.

Students should communicate conclusions and underlying knowledge clearly and unambiguously to both specialized and non-specialized audiences.

Students should demonstrate self-directed learning skills for continued academic growth.

Students should possess and understand foundational knowledge that enables original thinking and research in the field.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction and basic concepts

Apparent luminosities and magnitudes. Stellar masses and radii. Mass-Luminosity relation. Stellar temperatures. Spectral types. Hertzsprung-Russell diagrams. Stellar populations. The Sun: fundamental magnitudes. Equations of stellar structure. Virial Theorem.

2. Summary of stellar evolution

We will sum up the most representative evolutionary tracks of stars according to their masses. Four separated paradigmatic evolution tracks will be considered: low-mass stars, intermediate-mass stars, massive stars, and supermassive stars.

3. White Dwarfs.

Equations of state. Structure and stability. Cooling. White dwarfs in binary systems: thermonuclear supernovae.



4. Neutron stars.

Equations of state. Structure and stability. Pulsars. Magnetospheres of neutron stars. Proto-neutron stars. Cooling. Neutron stars in binary systems.

5. Supernovae and stellar collapse

Observational properties of supernova explosions. Relation between stellar collapse and hydrodynamic supernovae. Physics of the collapse. Bound phase. Post-bounce phase. Key aspects for the shock survival after the core bounce. Delayed mechanism. Convection and rotation as elements that help to explode a supernova. The role of the magnetic field in the supernova explosion mechanism.

6. Accretion in Astrophysics. I. Inflow.

We shall give the student a broad view of the astrophysical scenarios in which accretion is the key element for converting gravitational energy into other types of energy that lead to multitude of observed phenomenologies. We will consider the case of accretion in binary systems and active galactic nuclei and discuss in depth the case of geometrically thin accretion disks. The basic model of Shakura-Sunyaev disk will be introduced. We shall develop the concepts needed to understand the processes of stationary accretion, emphasizing cases in which the central object (acretor) is a compact object (typically a black hole). We will study the solutions of the Einstein equations of Kerr type black holes, the dynamics of test particles around black holes. Spectrum of masses and observational evidences of the existence of black holes.

7. Accretion in Astrophysics. II. Outflows.

We will consider the most relevant mechanisms for extracting energy from accretion processes, in particular, the Blandford-Znajek and Blandford-Payne processes. Relativistic jet physics in binary stars and active galaxies: jet composition, dynamics and energy transport. Impact on the interstellar and intergalactic medium and astrophysical relevance.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	39,00
Seminar	3,00
Other activities	4,00
Total hours	46,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES



Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	3,00
Individual or group project	20,00
Independent study and work	30,00
Preparation of lessons	35,00
Preparation for assessment activities	10,00
Resolution of case studies	6,00
Total hours	104,00

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

- MD1 – Standard theory lecture.
- MD3 – Problem solving.
- MD4 – Problems.
- MD5 – Seminars.
- MD8 – Conferences of experts.

EVALUATION

- SE1 - Written exam on the theory and practical lectures: based on the results of learning and the specific objectives of each subject.
- SE3 - Continuous evaluation of students in the classes of theory and practice: participatory assistance and exercises in the classroom.
- SE5 - Evaluation of non-presential activities related to theory and practical lectures: reports (and problems) submitted.
- SE7 - Oral presentation and exhibition of works in the classroom.

The exam will contribute 40% of the total grade, and it is necessary to obtain more than 4 points out of 10 in order to pass the subject. 60% of the grade is obtained through continuous evaluation. In this part, individual exercises contribute 30%, and group work contributes another 30%.

This evaluation system will be used for both the first and second call.

REFERENCES

- Referencia b1: Kippenhahn, R. Weigert, H., Stellar Structure and Evolution. Second Edition, Springer-Verlag, Berlin (1991)
- Referencia b2: Karttunen et al., Fundamental Astronomy. Fifth Edition., Springer-Verlag, Berlin (2007)
- Referencia b3: Janka, H.-T., Conditions for shock revival by neutrino heating in core-collapse supernovae, A&A, 368, 527 (2001)



- Referencia b4: Filippenko, A., Optical spectra of Supernovae, ARAA, 35, 309 (1997)
- Referencia b5: Vedrenne, G. & Atteia, J.L., Gamma-Ray Bursts: The brightest explosions in the Universe. Springer; Praxis Publishing Ltd, Chichester, UK (2009)
- Referencia b6: Shapiro, S.L., Teukolsky, S.A., Black Holes, White Dwarfs and Neutron Stars. John Wiley and Sons, Nueva York (1983)
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- Referencia b8: Frank, J., King, A. Raine, D., Accretion Power in Astrophysics. Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1992)
- Referencia c1: Arnett, D., Supernovae and Nucleosynthesis. Princeton University Press (1996)
- Referencia c2: Clayton D.D., Principles of Stellar Evolution and Nucleosynthesis. Chicago University Press (1983)
- Referencia c3: G.S. Bisnovatyi-Kogan, Stellar Physics II, Springer-Verlag Berlín (2001)
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- Referencia c5: LeVeque, R.J., Mihalas, E., Dorfi, E.A., Müller, E. Computational Methods for Astrophysical Fluid Flow: Saas-Fee Advanced Course 27. Lecture Notes 1997. Swiss Society for Astrophysics and Astronomy (Saas-Fee Advanced Courses) Springer, 1998
- Referencia c6: Piran, T., The physics of gamma-ray bursts, Reviews of Modern Physics, 76, 1143 (2005)
- Referencia c7: N.K. Glendenning, Compact Stars: Nuclear Physics, Particle Physics, and General Relativity, Second Edition, Springer-Verlag, Berlin (2000)
- Referencia c8: Mészáros, P., High-Energy Radiation from Magnetized Neutron Stars. The University of Chicago Press (1992)
- Referencia c9: Boettcher, M., Harris, D.E., Krawczynski, H., Relativistic Jets from Active Galactic



Nuclei, Wiley-VCH, Weinheim (2012)

- Referencia c10: C.W. Misner, K.S.Thorne, J.A.Wheeler, Gravitation. W.H. Freeman and Co., San Francisco, CA (1973)