An Introduction to Plasma Astrophysics and Magnetohydrodynamics (Astrophysics and Space Science Library)

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Most of the visible matter in the universe exists in the plasma state. Plasmas are of major importance for space physics, solar physics, and astrophysics. On Earth they are essential for magnetic controlled thermonuclear fusion.

This textbook collects lecture notes from a one-semester course taught at the K.U. Leuven to advanced undergraduate students in applied mathematics and physics. A particular strength of this book is that it provides a low threshold introduction to plasmas with an emphasis on first principles and fundamental concepts and properties.

The discussion of plasma models is to a large extent limited to Magnetohydrodynamics (MHD) with its merits and limitations clearly explained. MHD provides the students on their first encounter with plasmas, with a powerful plasma model that they can link to familiar classic fluid dynamics. The solar wind is studied as an example of hydrodynamics and MHD at work in solar physics and astrophysics.

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