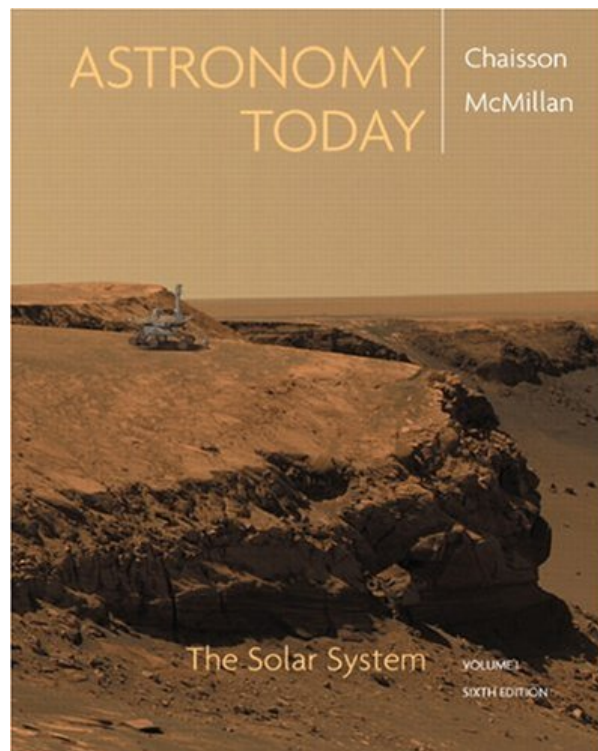
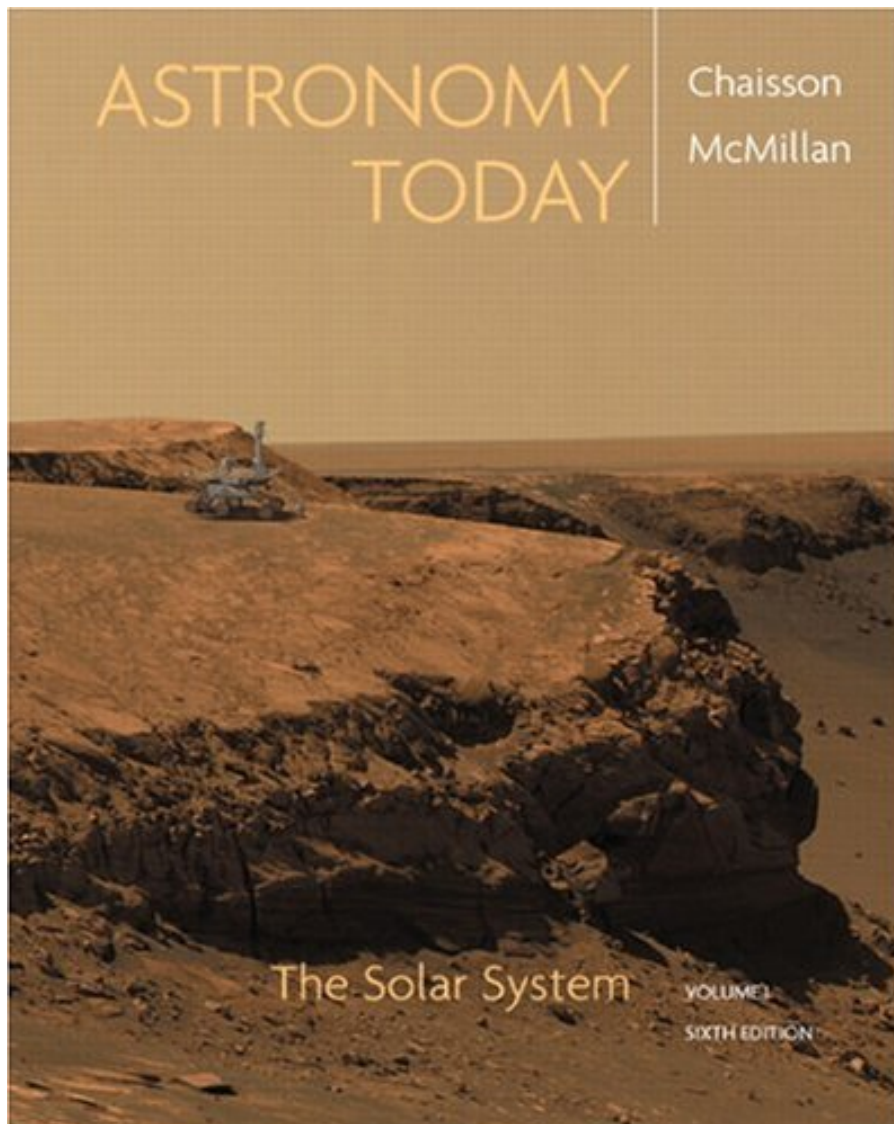


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By Cryptapocalypse

I purchased this text for our daughter, who is taking an introductory astronomy class. I never had the chance to take such a class myself but always had an interest in astronomy, so I started reading some of the chapters. To my great satisfaction, it was actually very well written, concise, and seemed to be up to date on the some of the more interesting and current issues in astronomy- dark matter/energy, inflationary universes, black holes, etc. It has an excellent explanation of black body radiation and how the emission profile of a celestial object gives can disclose both its temperature and much about its composition. It also takes care to show exactly what portion of the light spectrum is used to generate each image (of which there are many beautiful ones included), which really helps understand why optical telescopes can't solve all the scientific mysteries

(the center of the Milky Way can't even be seen in the visual spectrum due to dust). It also used a minimal amount of math, which takes away nothing from the points made. As a parent tired of forking over hundreds of dollars for textbooks that unnecessarily change edition every year (how is that possible, I ask?), I did not mind paying for this one.

Kudos to the authors for a very readable and useful text. I would recommend this book for anyone who wants to learn about astronomy but never had the opportunity. The only material that I thought might be improved was the section covering the H-R diagrams of star evolution- it would help to have a simple diagram of a typical star as it progresses through the main sequence and beyond, gaining or losing mass. The luminosity and temperature portions of the process are well described, but it's a bit hard to put it all together. Is the H-R diagram really the most useful way to understand star evolution? Regardless, this book rates as an outstanding science textbook in my opinion.

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Excellent Introduction to Astronomy

By chartjunk

I did not purchase this for a class, but as a new backyard stargazer that wanted to learn about astronomy in a little more depth than is provided in books like "Nightwatch". It is a textbook, obviously. However, I have found it to be a very accessible and enjoyable read with many fantastic illustrations to reinforce the concepts that it presents. Bear in mind that this is not a coffee table book, but a serious text of 750+ pages written to present, not just Astronomy, but the scientific method and observational evidence-based thinking to a collegiate audience of non-science majors. I am finding it to be a comprehensive treatment of astronomy, our solar system and the cosmos at large without being overwhelming. Astronomy Today will be a very rewarding read for those willing to put the time into it.

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