Astronomy 230

Section 1– MWF 1400-1450
106 B1 Eng Hall

This Class (Lecture 37):

Future of Civilization

HW #7 is due on Dec 1st!

Next Class:

Travel

Extra Credit due by Dec 3rd!

Outline

- What are our future plans?
- We are looking for advanced civilizations, but how do we become an advanced civilizations?
- Are we free to do whatever we want with the solar system?
- Special relativity.

Interstellar Travel

- The distances are huge!
- Nearest star is 4.3 ly away or around 4 x 10^{13} km!
- 40,000,000,000,000 km! 40 TRILLION km!!!
- But, what if all communication with ET fails?
  - Wrong frequencies.
  - Everyone is listening and no one is broadcasting.
  - We fail to recognize the signal.
- We can go visit them or the microbes. "To boldly go…"
- Human colonization of the Galaxy has to start somewhere. Our own backyard!

Humans Spreading Out

- If we assume that no life is found in our solar system, we have multiple options.
  - Seed other planets with genetically engineered life or terraform the planet for terrestrial life.
  - Colonize the planets or asteroids.
  - Send robots to exploit solar system resources.

GELFs

- Genetic engineering techniques might allow us to develop organisms suitable for life on Mars, in the clouds of Venus, or the upper atmosphere of Jupiter.
- But the most likely organism would be those that are part of a larger plan to transform an environment into one suitable for human colonization.
- Terraforming– forming a planet or moon into something like the Earth conditions.

Spider genes being injected into a goat egg. Goat produces spider silk protein in milk– Biosteel.

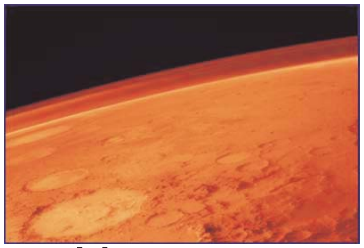
http://science.howstuffworks.com/designer-children3.htm

http://www.nexiabiotech.com

Terraforming Mars

- Mostly envision Mars for terraforming.
- Comparison:

Mars:		Earth:	
– 95.3%	carbon dioxide	– 78.1%	nitrogen
– 2.7%	nitrogen	– 20.9%	oxygen
– 1.6%	argon	– 0.1%	carbon dioxide + trace
– 0.2%	oxygen		



- Why terraform?
  - In 1-2 x 10^9 yrs, Earth will get hot.
  - Other economical possibilities.
- What are the essential ingredients?
  - Water, Oxygen, and Ozone.
- The bacteria that can build up oxygen need the water.

Or Aliens?

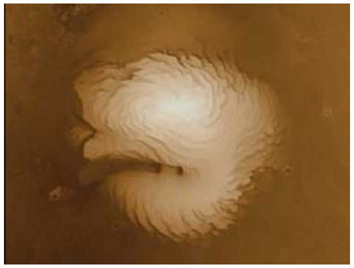
- Sometime movies are full of errors.

- But what can you do?

http://www.geocities.com/mattcash777/gallery4frames.html

Wet Mars

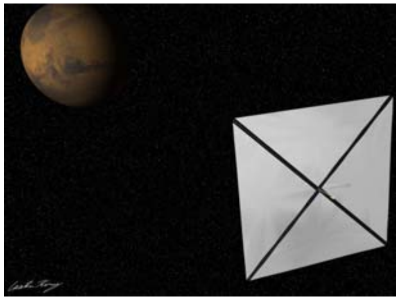
- There is clearly water on Mars frozen in the permanent ice caps or in icy deposits below the surface.
- Probably 10^{14} tons of ice in the caps, but how to melt it?
- Spread a layer of dark soil, which will sublimate the water to water vapor.
- Water vapor is a greenhouse gas, so eventually pressure and temperature goes up and liquid water can exist.
- Would take about 10,000 yrs to melt.



http://www.ucl.ac.uk/GeolSci/MTFC/marsinfo/icecap.jpg

Solar Mirror?

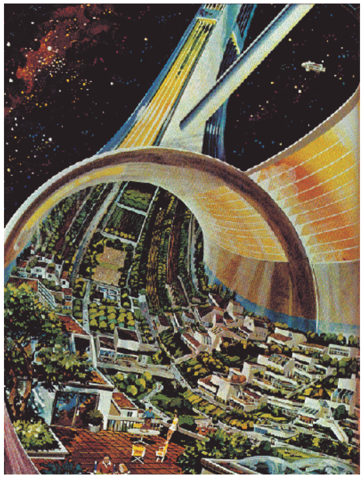
- Could build huge solar mirrors in space to add light to mars– size of Texas for 2% increase.
- Power needed to melt the icecap (remember only first step) is equivalent to 2500 yrs of the US energy output!
- A solar sail satellite (diameter of 125 km) above the pole should melt the icecap in 10 yrs.
- Other options: GE bacteria to add greenhouse gases, nanobots, etc.
- Bottom line, at this time it would be very costly and time consuming to terraform Mars.



http://www.futurespace.de/gallery/pictures/sail-mars1.jpg

Space Colonies?

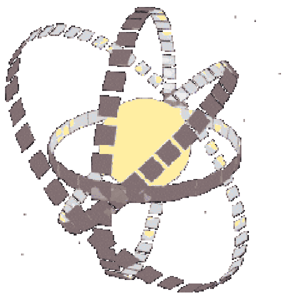
- Super-duper version of the Space Station.
- Collect materials from Moon, and make a large space structure.
- Artificial gravity from rotation– life could exist.
- But why?
- Hard to justify the expense.
- Maybe solar power collector– beaming microwaves back to Earth.



http://static.howstuffworks.com/gif/space-station-space-settlement.gif

Dyson Spheres– Recap

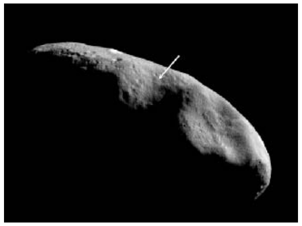
- Again, one could imagine a Dyson Sphere around the Sun to collect the sunlight.
- If other advanced civilizations built one, could we detect it?
- If at 1AU, the sphere would be about 300 K and emit in the IR.
- But if we detected it, we would think it was a star surrounded by dust-- a circumstellar disk of a young star or a blown out shell of dust from an old star.



http://www.homoexcelsior.com/omega.db/datum/megascale_engineering/dyson_sphere/237

Asteroid Living and…

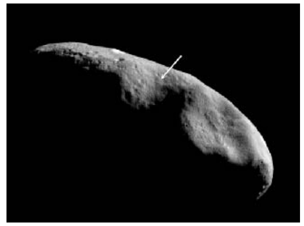
- Mining the Apollo (near Earth) asteroids for metals is a possible economical driver for life in space.
- But all of this requires moving machines, humans, or material around the solar system.
- Today, if there were piles of gold lying on the Moon, it would not be cost effective to go get it.



http://apollo-society.org/images/near_arrow_sm.jpg

Asteroid Living and…

- But, remember to date human space travel has cost 10 times as much as remote "robot" travel.
- Probably devise ways to mine remotely.
- Efficient mining requires more and more intelligent robots.
- What if they get too smart?
- Still self-replicating space probes could be result of such advances.



http://apollo-society.org/images/near_arrow_sm.jpg

Space Probed

- A single probe is constructed and dispatched to a nearby star system
- It surveys the system in an intelligent and exhaustive manner
- After which, the probe uses the energy and available raw materials of the system to reproduce itself .
- Dispatches its "children" onwards to repeat its mission in other star systems
- The parent probe is then able to choose whether it wants to stay in the system or not, depending on what it found
- Still needs a way to get to other worlds.

Energy into Propulsion

- For any type of space travel, we need an energy source to propel the vehicle.
- The basic idea is to convert some stored energy into *energy of motion* for the spacecraft
- Two ways basically:
  1. Process some sort of fuel
     - Carried onboard
     - Collected from space and processed
  2. Other, non-fuel-like energy source:
     - Solar (if near a star)
     - Gravity (using an astronomical body's gravity field to propel a ship)

We got a speed limit!

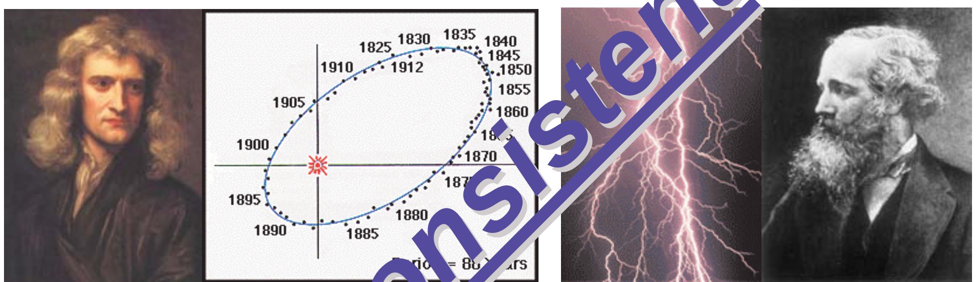
- No matter what we do, we can not go faster than the speed of light!
- That naturally occurs when one demands that the speed of light *must* be the same regardless of who measures it.
- This is completely counter-intuitive!
- Basis of Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity.

http://www.rpi.edu/dept/phys/Dept2/APPhys1/optics/optics/node4.html

Two Threads of Thought in Physics up to 1900

Mechanics
(Newton's Laws)

Electromagnetism
(Maxwell's Equations)



Inconsistent!

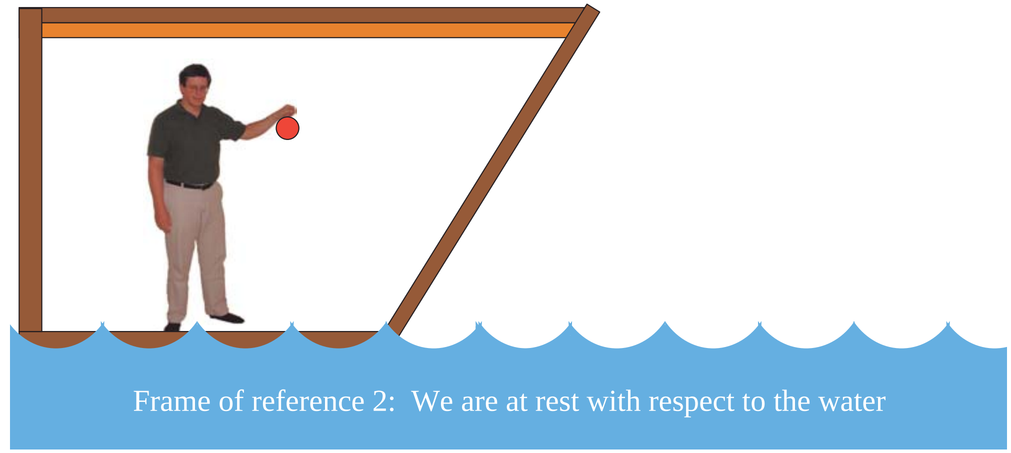
All motion is relative
No speed is special

The speed of light is the **same** for all observers

Galileo's ship thought experiment

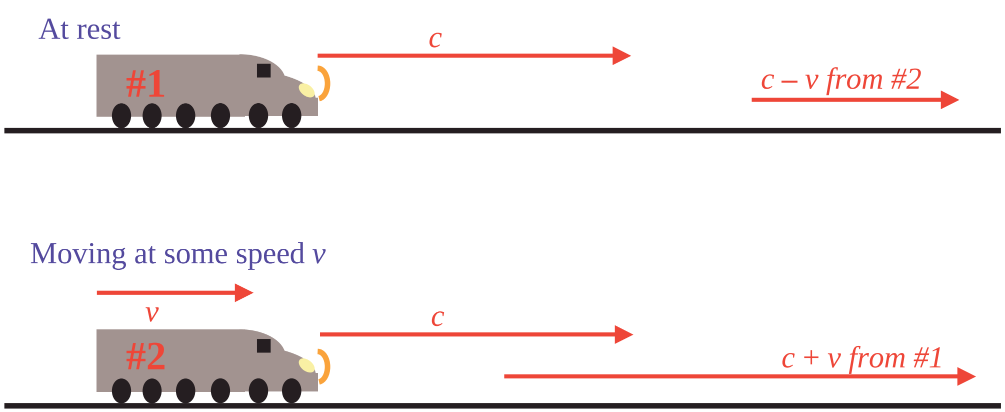
No experiment within the ship's cabin can detect the ship's motion if the ship moves in the same direction at a constant velocity. This is still true, even when considering the speed of light.

Frame of reference 1: We are moving with the ship



Why Galileo and Maxwell Can't Both Be Right

Consider two locomotives emitting light from their headlamps:



Why Galileo and Maxwell Can't Both Be Right

So the speed of light can't be the same for everyone if Galileo – and our intuition – are right. But Maxwell says it is constant!

Something must happen. And what must happen for Galileo and Maxwell to be both right, is that there is a modification of time and distance. Remember

$$speed = \frac{dist}{time}$$

Distance and time become relative to the observer.

Approaching the "c"

- The clocks on a ship accelerating to "c" would appear to stop completely from someone at rest.
- The ship would appear infinitely thin in length along its direction of motion.
- The mass of an object as it approaches "c" becomes infinite
  - So does its kinetic energy– requires more power.

http://www.richard-seaman.com/Travel/Japan/Hiroshima/AtomicBombMuseum/IndividualArtifacts/

Gamma

The factor by which all of these changes occur is called "gamma"

$$\gamma = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1-\frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

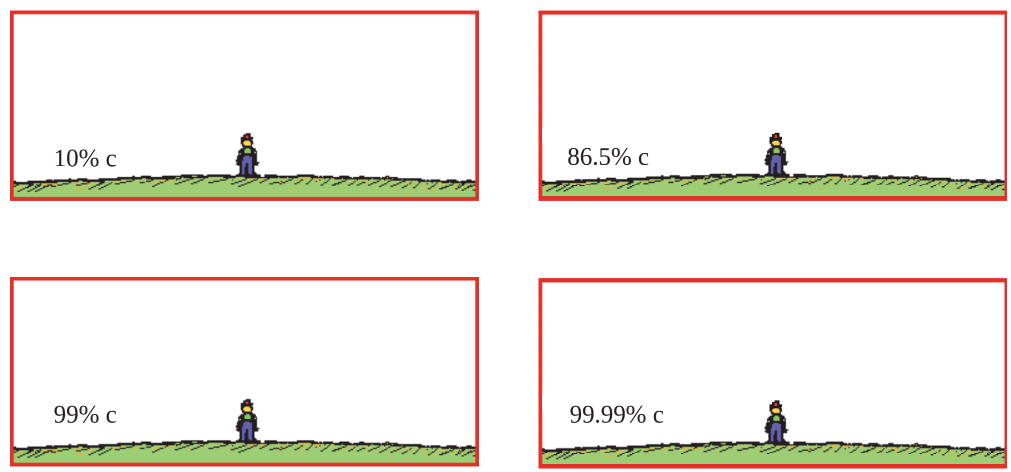
Counterintuitive Result #1

Moving objects appear shorter in the direction of relative motion (Lorentz contraction)

Fraction of the speed of light	% of original length
0.00	100%
0.001	99.99995%
0.01	99.995%
0.1	99.5%
0.5	86.6%
0.9	43.6%
0.99	14.1%

Counterintuitive Result #1

Moving objects appear shorter in the direction of relative motion (Lorentz contraction)



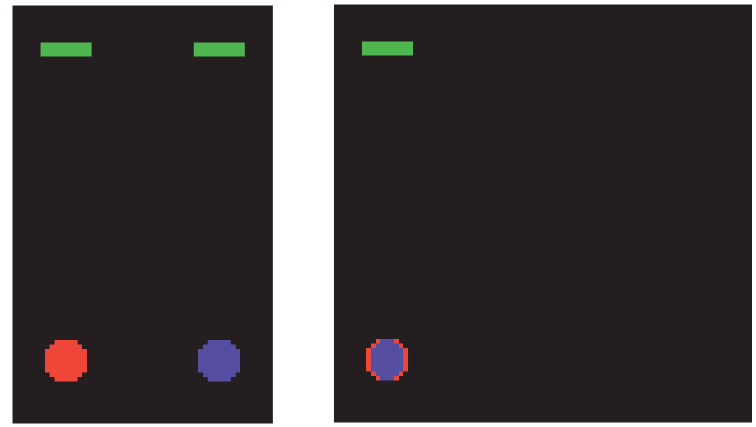
http://www.physicsclassroom.com/mmedia/specrel/lc.html

Length Contraction

- This effect has some benefits:
  - Outside observers will see that the length of the spaceship has shrunk.
    - This doesn't really help or harm us
  - But, from the astronaut point of view, the entire universe outside their window has shrunk in the direction of motion, making the trip shorter!
- It's all relative.

Counterintuitive Result #2

Time appears to advance more slowly for moving objects (<u>time dilation</u>)



Red & blue at rest Blue moving to right

A. Hamilton (Colorado)

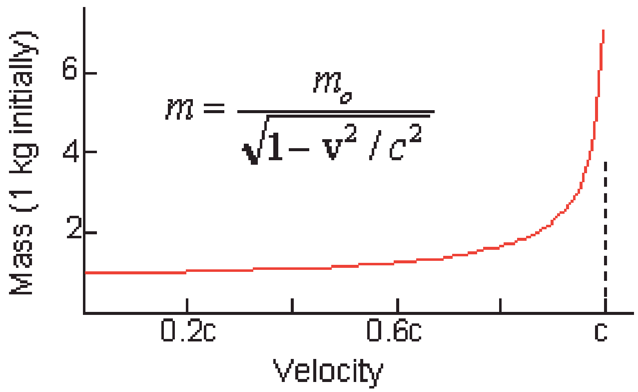
Time Dilation

- The effects of time dilation are curious but not prohibitive for space travel
  - Astronauts will age less than the Earth-bound folks waiting for the return. Can spoil the homecoming celebrations.
  - The faster you go, the bigger difference between astronaut time and Earth time
- Example: Trip to the center of the Galaxy and back. Accelerate at 1g for the first half and decelerate for second half and you can go 30,000 ly in 20 years! But more than 30,000 years has elapsed on Earth!

Mass Increase

- The increase of effective mass (and kinetic energy) with velocity makes acceleration and deceleration more difficult if you intend to travel close to "c"
  - This translates to very costly starflight in terms of required energy.
  - And now the interstellar dust that you strike at relativistic speeds appears as larger mass.
  - For 99% speed of light travel, 5.5 meters of shield would erode every year.

The gamma factor and mass:

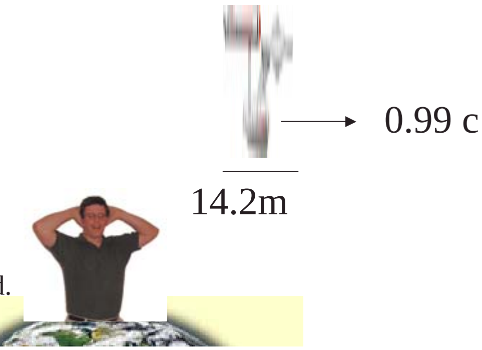


Infinite Mass!!!!

So, what does that mean?

- If you're on a 100m spaceship going near the speed of light (.99 c), the spaceship would look 100m long, but someone on the Earth would observe the spaceship to only be 14m long.
- As you speed by the Earth your clock would tick 1 second, and an observer would tick about 7 seconds– $\gamma = 7$.

Paul's Twin brother (on the Earth) is 7 seconds older for ever second.



And Paul's mass increased by a factor of 7.

Special Relativity Summary

All motion is relative, except for that of light. Light travels at the same speed in all frames of reference.

Objects moving close to the speed of light appear to shrink in the direction of travel.

Time appears to advance more slowly for objects moving close to the speed of light.

Relativity deals with the question:

How do the laws of nature appear to change when you change your state of motion …

Special Relativity

… when your velocity relative to something else is close to the speed of light?

General Relativity

… when you are in a strong gravitational field?

The future:

- May bring us closer to the speed of light
  - Right now we can travel through space at about c/25,000
  - Maybe fusion-powered crafts could in the near future reach 0.01c