

HIGHER EDUCATION CERTIFICATE IN ASTRONOMY

The Interstellar Medium: SYLLABUS 2010

Dr. MARK WESTMOQUETTE

(1) OVERVIEW OF THE INTERSTELLAR MEDIUM

- Evidence for the existence of the ISM
- Basic physical and chemical properties of the ISM
- Dust, interstellar extinction and reddening
- Types of clouds: H II regions, Dark clouds, Reflection nebulae
- Phases of the ISM: cold, warm and hot

(2) PHOTOIONIZED NEBULAE – H II REGIONS

- Photoionization and recombination of Hydrogen
- Heating and cooling processes in H II regions
 - Forbidden lines
 - Temperature and density diagnostics
- Sizes of H II regions: Strömgren spheres
- Heating and cooling of Diffuse Interstellar Clouds

(3) DIFFUSE CLOUDS

- Heating and cooling mechanisms
- Absorption line formation
- Gas phase chemical abundances & depletion
- Dust, extinction & reddening
- Giant molecular clouds, molecules and radio/(sub-)mm emission

(4) STAR FORMATION

- How does it happen?
 - Hydrostatic equilibrium
 - Fragmentation and the Jeans' Mass
 - Pre-main sequence evolution
- Observational signatures of star formation
 - T Tauri stars, Proplyds, Protostar jets
- Classification of protostars
- Triggering mechanisms