The Big Bang Theory & Expansion of the Universe
What is our physical place in the universe?

• Our “Cosmic Address”
Example: the Sun’s Spectrum
Distinct energy levels lead to distinct emission or absorption lines.

Emission: atom loses energy

Absorption: atom gains energy
Doppler Shift

Sound the driver hears

Sound observer 1 beam

Car traveling toward the right

Observer 1

Observer 2

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Definition: Redshift

- The measure of the amount a spectral line is shifted in wavelength
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster nebula in</th>
<th>Distance in light-years</th>
<th>Redshifts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virgo</td>
<td>78,000,000</td>
<td>H + K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ursa Major</td>
<td>1,000,000,000</td>
<td>1,200 km s⁻¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corona Borealis</td>
<td>1,400,000,000</td>
<td>15,000 km s⁻¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bootes</td>
<td>2,500,000,000</td>
<td>22,000 km s⁻¹</td>
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- **Virgo**: 78,000,000 light-years, 1,200 km s⁻¹
- **Ursa Major**: 1,000,000,000 light-years, 15,000 km s⁻¹
- **Corona Borealis**: 1,400,000,000 light-years, 22,000 km s⁻¹
- **Bootes**: 2,500,000,000 light-years, 39,000 km s⁻¹
- **Hydra**: 3,960,000,000 light-years, 61,000 km s⁻¹
Hubble Law - 1929

Originally $H_0 \sim 500 \text{ km/s/Mpc}$
• Galaxies are all moving away from each other, so every galaxy sees the same Hubble expansion, i.e. there is no center.

• The cosmic expansion is the unfolding of all space since the big bang, i.e. there is no edge.

• We are limited in our view by the time it takes distant light to reach us, i.e. the universe has an edge in time not space.
Hubble Constant Determinations

$H_0$ since 1920

$H_0$ (km/s/Mpc) vs. Date

1920 1940 1960 1980 2000
Expansion is Accelerating!

• The plots on the right were the data from supernovae that showed that the expansion of the universe is not constant but has changed value over time.
• More distant supernovae are dimmer than expected.
• Something ("Dark Energy") is causing the expansion to accelerate. We don’t know what Dark Energy is – only that it appears to counteract gravity.
Cosmology: What We Know

1. Redshift – it’s cosmic expansion, *not* Doppler
If the Universe is expanding, then reversing that expansion (going backwards in time) indicates that the Universe must have been smaller in the past.
Blackbody (Thermal) Radiation

Temperature increasing
Two Properties of Thermal Radiation:

1. Hotter objects emit more light at all frequencies per unit area.
2. Hotter objects emit photons with a higher average energy.
Infrared Light – Human Body Glows!
Discovery of the Cosmic Microwave Background

1964

Bob Wilson

Arno Penzias
Cosmology: What We Know

2. Background Radiation – thermal, at 2.73K
Measuring the Cosmic Microwave Background

$T = 2.725 \text{ K}$

$\Delta T = 3.35 \text{ mK}$

$\Delta T = 18 \mu\text{K}$

$\Delta T = 18 \mu\text{K}$

WMAP
An image of quantum fluctuations blown up to the size of the universe.
The cosmic microwave background Radiation’s “surface of last scatter” is analogous to the light coming through the clouds to our eye on a cloudy day.

We can only see the surface of the cloud where light was last scattered.
3. Galaxies in past look younger (smaller and more irregular)

4. Deuterium and Helium synthesized (higher temperatures in the past)
Status of the Big Bang

There is evidence for expansion, and the universe was hotter and denser in the distant past.

The microwave background and the helium abundance cannot easily be explained in any other way.

There are hundreds of thousands of big bang photons in every breath you take: the big bang is all around us.

It is a theory, but a theory with a web of evidence to support it. The theory is mute about the cause of the cause.
A Schematic Outline of the Cosmic History

- The Big Bang
  The Universe filled with ionized gas

- The Universe becomes neutral and opaque
  The Dark Ages start

Galaxies and Quasars begin to form
The Reionization starts

The Cosmic Renaissance
The Dark Ages end

Reionization complete, the Universe becomes transparent again

Galaxies evolve

The Solar System forms

Today: Astronomers figure it all out!

S.G. Djorgovski et al. & Digital Media Center, Caltech
How do our lifetimes compare to the age of the Universe?

- The Cosmic Calendar: a scale on which we compress the history of the universe into 1 year.
- This is a time scale model where 14 billion years equals 1 year, i.e. 14,000,000,000:1.
- Our lives would scale similarly, so 80 years goes down by a factor of 14 billion too.
- In the scale model, a human life is about 2 tenths of a second!
**The Cosmic Calendar: January-November**

- **January 1 (15 bya):** Big Bang
- **March 20 (12 bya):** Galaxies form
- **October 6 (3.6 bya):** Life established, first fossils, photosynthesis (?)
- **September 2 (5 bya):** Formation of our solar system
- **September 14 (4.5 bya):** Earth formed
- **November 14 (2 bya):** Complex single cells
- **November 19 (1.8 bya):** Free oxygen
- **November 21 (1.7 bya):** Evidence of multicellular organisms (?)

1 day ≈ 42 million years
1 hour ≈ 1.75 million years
1 minute ≈ 30,000 years
Now home in on the more recent span of the history of life and of humans and civilization.
The Raw Material for Astrobiology

• **Space:** the potential habitable worlds around ten thousand billion billion stars; ours is just one.

• **Time:** a cosmic history of nearly 14 billion years; life took less than \( \frac{1}{2} \text{ billion years} \) to start here.

“If they not be inhabited, what a waste of space.”

Thomas Carlyle, Scottish Essayist (1795-1881)