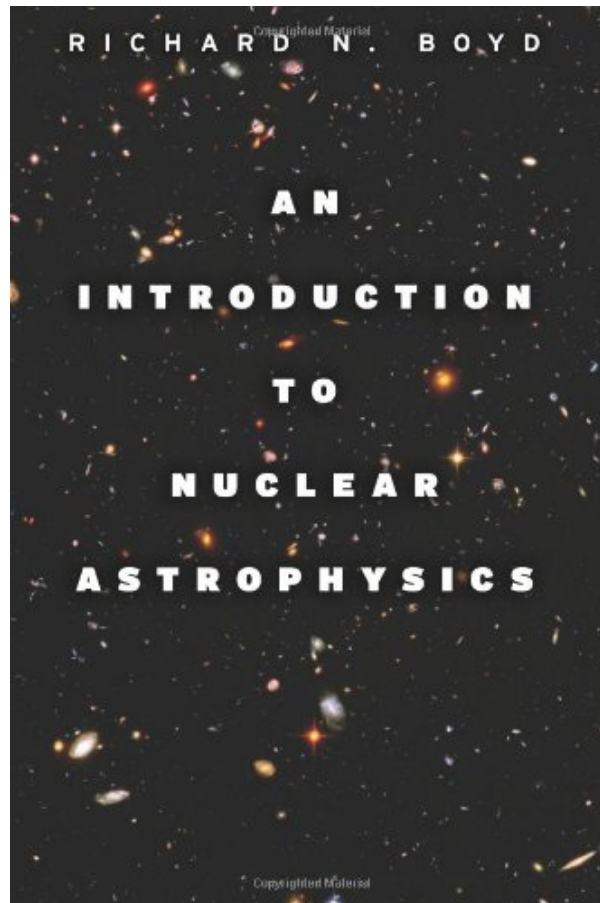
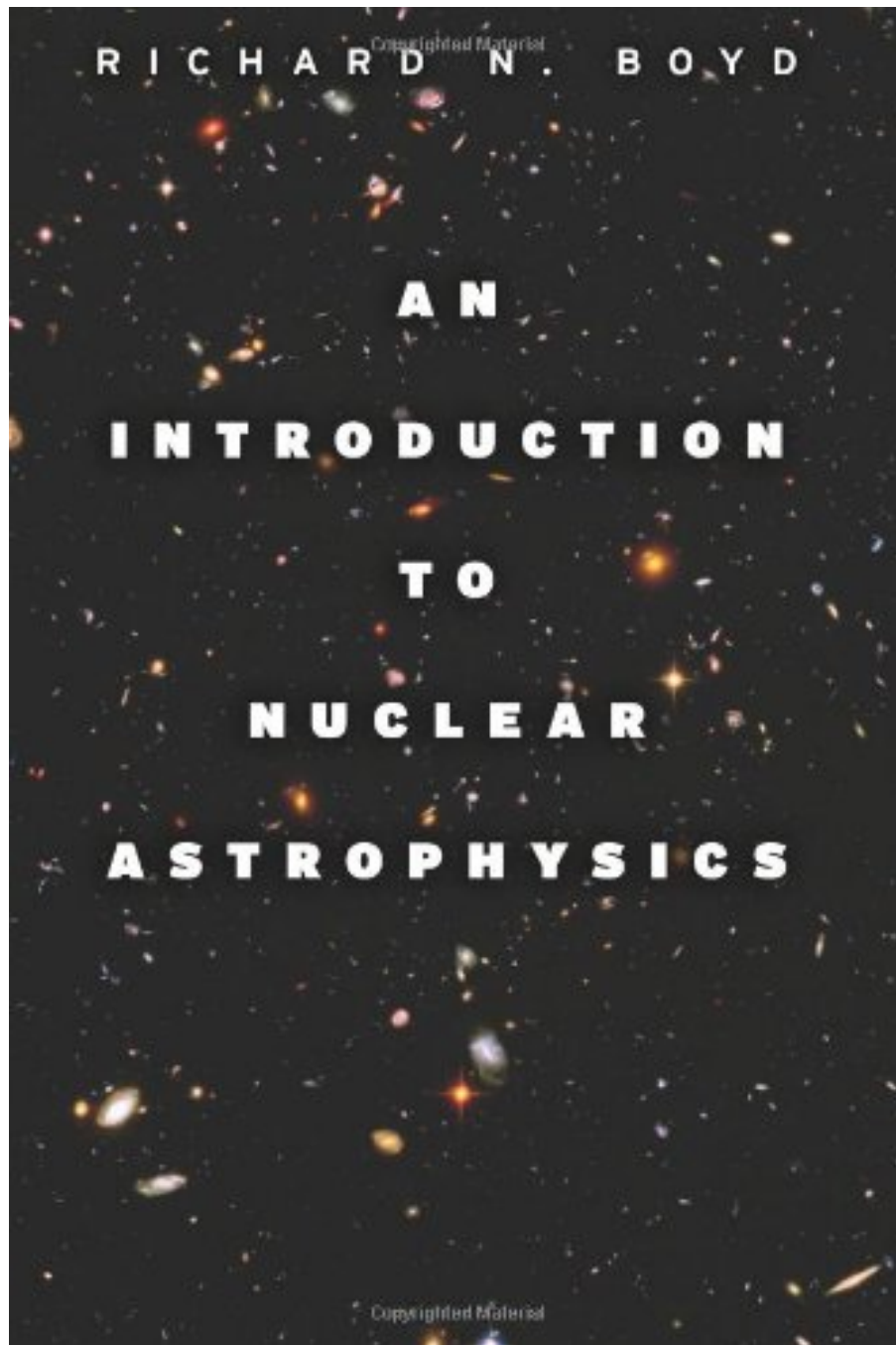


AN INTRODUCTION TO NUCLEAR ASTROPHYSICS BY RICHARD N. BOYD



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Review

“Nuclear astrophysics is the exciting symbiosis of nuclear physics, astrophysics, and astronomy. Richard N. Boyd succeeds in capturing the ever-growing fascination and breadth of the field in this monograph, which will serve as both a comprehensive introductory text for students and a valuable collection of reference material for teachers.” (Karlheinz Langanke, Gesellschaft für Schwerionenforschung and Technische Universität Darmstadt)

“Richard Boyd’s Introduction to Nuclear Astrophysics is sure to become a standard resource, both for the student and professional alike. This highly engaging and readable work provides the most thorough and up-to-date coverage of the subject yet, and includes excellent problem sets at the end of each chapter, perfectly suited to graduate-level students.”

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About the Author

Richard N. Boyd is science director at the National Ignition Facility in Livermore, California.

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Nuclear astrophysics is the study of how all naturally occurring elements formed and evolved into our present universe via nuclear processes, beginning with the Big Bang and continuing today in astrophysical objects such as stars, x-ray bursters, and supernovae. Emerging from traditional studies in astrophysics and particle research, this cross-disciplinary field touches upon astronomy, astrophysics, cosmology, and particle physics.

In *An Introduction to Nuclear Astrophysics*, author Richard Boyd includes basic nomenclature and information so that students from astronomy or physics can quickly orient themselves in the material. Subsequent chapters describe earthbound and space born instruments operating in service to nuclear astrophysics worldwide; background topics such as nuclear and neutrino physics, scattering formalism, and thermonuclear reaction rates; and information on galactic chemical evolution, solar nucleosynthesis, s- and r-processes, and gamma-ray bursts. Each chapter includes problem sets against which students may test their knowledge before moving ahead, and the author has included copious references intended to guide students to further study.

An Introduction to Nuclear Astrophysics is an essential textbook for undergraduate and graduate students in astronomy and astrophysics. It is also an invaluable overview of the subject for researchers in nuclear astrophysics and related fields.

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About the Author

Richard N. Boyd is science director at the National Ignition Facility in Livermore, California.

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An Excellent Overview

By D. Kahl

A little over 20 years ago, there were not many books on nuclear astrophysics, but now there are a number of good choices. One might at first wonder if another book was needed, but on reading Dr. Richard Boyd's book, one can in hindsight realize that his perspective is a welcome addition to the literature.

In a graduate course I took on nuclear astrophysics one year before this text was released, our professor did not have a specific text for the course, and instead provided selected readings from a variety of excellent books. This was absolutely the correct choice for the course as Dr. Alan Chen taught it, but ideally it's nice to have a single book instead of selected readings, as the flow and nomenclature are all self-consistent. I think now for such a course, the correct book exists, namely Boyd's book. Due to the well-written nature of the text, I even imagine this book could be used for an advanced undergraduate course, and that is an exciting prospect, because I think nuclear astrophysics would readily capture the interest of students with it's multi-disciplinary breadth.

Most other texts in nuclear astrophysics focus on particular subjects or approaches to the field, where as Boyd succeeds in attempting to present a single unified view. The book has such a friendly and approachable tone, that one sometimes has to be careful to not breeze through the more technical parts of the book discussing finer points, as these warrant more consideration by the unfamiliar reader to be fully appreciated. The inclusion of colored figures is also a nice touch, which I don't believe any other texts on this topic splurge for. For me, this was unexpected given the very reasonable price of the hardcover edition. No point is left amiss, and Boyd even includes one of my favorite astrophysics pictures as the dust jacket, one of the Hubble Space Telescope deep field images (or maybe it's ultra deep?).

The book also has a more modern feel, often citing (reputable) web sites for images and information. In this way, the book, on occasion, reads a bit more like a doctoral thesis than a text book; maybe this was more striking to me as the book has one identically cited image as my own Master's thesis. One may take this opinion as a criticism or a compliment. Theses are sometimes the best source of information, where the author gives details omitted elsewhere. However, some might think I insinuate that it's not up to "text book"

standards, although this is not my express intention, but I could see some people disfavoring a more contemporary approach if they are expecting a more conforming standard text that only cites literature. For me it was also unexpected, but I think it's likely necessary in any text so broad in scope, and the writing quality is excellent, and so I find it to be just fine.

What's perhaps most exciting is that Boyd mentions in the beginning that he appreciates feedback for making the second edition. Many books in nuclear astrophysics only get published as the first edition, or republications of the same work, and this is promising for keeping the book up to date, or the correction of any minor mistakes that may be lurking somewhere (I can't recall any in Boyd's, but in my experience most lengthy documents are not fail-safe). I look forward to buying the second edition as well.

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