

Fundamentals of Atmospheric Modeling

This comprehensive text describes the atmospheric processes, numerical methods, and computational techniques required for a scientist to successfully study air pollution and meteorology.

Computer modeling has become a powerful tool in modern atmospheric sciences, combining the disciplines of meteorology, physics, mathematics, chemistry, computer sciences, and, to a lesser extent, geology, biology, microbiology, and oceanographic sciences. This text presents fundamental equations that describe physical, chemical, and dynamical processes in the atmosphere, and it provides numerical methods to solve these equations. Along with classic methods of simulating dynamical meteorology, the text contains several numerical techniques for simulating gas and aerosol processes not available in any other text.

The book has been developed from the author's graduate courses and research at Stanford University and contains homework and computer programming assignments. It is a valuable textbook for graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses in atmospheric sciences and meteorology. It will also be useful for courses in earth sciences, environmental sciences, and applied mathematics.

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Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-63717-6 - Fundamentals of Atmospheric Modeling
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MARK Z. JACOBSON



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

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First published 1999
Reprinted 2000

Printed in the United States of America

Typeset in Sabon 10.25/13 pt. and Melior in L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

*A catalog record for this book is available from
the British Library*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Jacobson, Mark Z. (Mark Zachary)
Fundamentals of atmospheric modeling / Mark Z. Jacobson.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-521-63143-2 (hardcover). – ISBN 0-521-63717-1 (pbk.)
1. Atmospheric physics – Mathematical models. 2. Air – Pollution –
Mathematical models. I. Title.
QC861.2.J3 1999
551.5 – dc21 98-15180
CIP

ISBN 0 521 63143 2 hardback
ISBN 0 521 63717 1 paperback

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i>	<i>xi</i>
1 Introduction		1
1.1. Weather, Climate, and Air Pollution		1
1.2. Scales of Motion		2
1.2. Atmospheric Processes		3
2 Atmospheric Structure, Composition, and Thermodynamics		6
2.1. Pressure, Density, and Composition		6
2.2. Temperature Structure		11
2.3. Equation of State		19
2.4. Change in Pressure with Altitude		25
2.5. Water in the Atmosphere		28
2.6. First Law of Thermodynamics		38
2.7. Summary		49
2.8. Problems		49
2.9. Computer Programming Practice		51
3 The Continuity and Thermodynamic Energy Equations		53
3.1. Local and Total Differentiation		53
3.2. Continuity Equations		57
3.3. Expanded Continuity Equations		59
3.4. Thermodynamic Energy Equation		69
3.5. Summary		72
3.6. Problems		72
3.7. Computer Programming Practice		73
4 The Momentum Equation in Cartesian and Spherical Coordinates		74
4.1. Conversion From Cartesian to Spherical Coordinates		74
4.2. Newton's Second Law of Motion		78
4.3. Applications of the Momentum Equation		101
4.4. Summary		122
4.5. Problems		122
4.6. Computer Programming Practice		123

Contents

5	Vertical-Coordinate Conversions	124
	5.1. Altitude Coordinate	124
	5.2. Pressure Coordinate	127
	5.3. Sigma-Pressure Coordinate	135
	5.4. Sigma-Altitude Coordinate	144
	5.5. Summary	150
	5.6. Problems	151
	5.7. Computer Programming Practice	152
6	Numerical Solutions to Partial Differential Equations	153
	6.1. Ordinary and Partial Differential Equations	153
	6.2. Operator-Splitting	154
	6.3. Advection–Diffusion Equations	155
	6.4. Finite-Difference Approximations	156
	6.5. Series Expansion Methods	174
	6.6. Advection Schemes Used in Air-Quality Models	180
	6.7. Summary	181
	6.8. Problems	181
	6.9. Computer Programming Practice	181
7	Finite-Differencing the Equations of Atmospheric Dynamics	183
	7.1. Vertical Model Grid	183
	7.2. The Continuity Equation for Air	186
	7.3. The Species Continuity Equation	189
	7.4. The Thermodynamic Energy Equation	191
	7.5. The Horizontal Momentum Equations	192
	7.6. The Hydrostatic Equation	198
	7.7. Order of Calculations	198
	7.8. Time-Stepping Schemes	199
	7.9. Summary	200
	7.10. Problems	200
	7.11. Computer Programming Practice	201
	7.12. Modeling Project	201
8	Boundary-Layer Processes	203
	8.1. Turbulent Fluxes of Momentum	203
	8.2. Turbulent Fluxes of Energy and Water Vapor	204
	8.3. Friction Velocity	205
	8.4. Surface Roughness Lengths	206
	8.5. Bulk Aerodynamic Equations for Eddy Diffusion	208
	8.6. Monin–Obukhov Similarity Theory	211
	8.7. Eddy Diffusion Above the Surface Layer	220
	8.8. Ground Surface Temperature and Soil Moisture	221
	8.9. Summary	225

Contents

8.10. Problems	226
8.11. Computer Programming Practice	226
9 Cloud Thermodynamics and Dynamics	227
9.1. Fog and Cloud Types and Formation Mechanisms	227
9.2. Moist- and Pseudoadiabatic Processes	231
9.3. Cloud Development by Free Convection	235
9.4. Entrainment	237
9.5. Vertical Momentum Equation in a Cloud	239
9.6. Convective Available Potential Energy	241
9.7. Cumulus Parameterizations	242
9.8. Summary	243
9.9. Problems	244
9.10. Computer Programming Practice	244
10 Radiative Energy Transfer	245
10.1. Energy Transfer Processes	245
10.2. Electromagnetic Spectrum	247
10.3. Light Processes	255
10.4. Absorption and Scattering by Gases and Particles	261
10.5. Visibility	276
10.6. Optical Depth	279
10.7. Solar Zenith Angle	280
10.8. The Radiative Transfer Equation	283
10.9. Summary	295
10.10. Problems	296
10.11. Computer Programming Practice	297
11 Gas-Phase Species, Chemical Reactions, and Reaction Rates	298
11.1. Atmospheric Gases and Their Molecular Structures	298
11.2. Chemical Reactions and Photoprocesses	303
11.3. Reaction Rates	305
11.4. Reaction Rate Coefficients	308
11.5. Sets of Reactions	312
11.6. Stiff Systems	314
11.7. Summary	316
11.8. Problems	316
11.9. Computer Programming Practice	317
12 Urban, Free-Tropospheric, and Stratospheric Chemistry	318
12.1. Free-Tropospheric Photochemistry	318
12.2. Urban Photochemistry	335
12.3. Stratospheric Photochemistry	351
12.4. Summary	370

Contents

12.5. Problems	370
12.6. Computer Programming Practice	371
13 Methods of Solving Chemical Ordinary Differential Equations	373
13.1. Characteristics of Chemical ODEs	373
13.2. Analytical Solutions to ODEs	376
13.3. Taylor Series Solution to ODEs	376
13.4. Forward Euler Solution to ODEs	377
13.5. Backward Euler Solution to ODEs	379
13.6. Simple Exponential and Quasi-Steady-State Solutions to ODEs	380
13.7. Multistep Implicit–Explicit (MIE) Solution to ODEs	381
13.8. Gear’s Solution to ODEs	385
13.9. Family Solution to ODEs	393
13.10. Summary	396
13.11. Problems	397
13.12. Computer Programming Practice	397
13.13. Modeling Project	399
14 Particle Components, Size Distributions, and Size Structures	400
14.1. Effects of Particles	400
14.2. Aerosol, Fog, and Cloud Composition	403
14.3. Discrete Size Distributions	404
14.4. Continuous Size Distributions	409
14.5. Evolution of Size Distributions Over Time	416
14.6. Summary	421
14.7. Problems	422
14.8. Computer Programming Practice	422
15 Aerosol Emissions and Nucleation	423
15.1. Emissions	423
15.2. Nucleation	426
15.3. Summary	434
15.4. Problems	434
15.5. Computer Programming Practice	435
16 Coagulation	436
16.1. Fully Implicit Coagulation	436
16.2. Semiimplicit Coagulation	438
16.3. Coagulation over Multiple Particle Distributions	440
16.4. Coagulation Kernel	442
16.5. Comparison with Analytical Solutions	448
16.6. Application of Coagulation Equations	450
16.7. Summary	451

Contents

16.8. Problems	451
16.9. Computer Programming Practice	451
17 Condensation, Evaporation, Deposition, and Sublimation	453
17.1. Fluxes To and From a Single Drop	453
17.2. Corrections to Growth Parameters	456
17.3. Fluxes to a Particle with Multiple Components	465
17.4. Fluxes to a Population of Particles	466
17.5. Solutions to Growth Equations	467
17.6. Effects of Condensation on Coagulation	472
17.7. Ice Crystal Growth	473
17.8. Summary	474
17.9. Problems	474
17.10. Computer Programming Practice	475
18 Chemical Equilibrium and Dissolution Processes	476
18.1. Definitions	476
18.2. Equilibrium Equations and Relations	477
18.3. Temperature Dependence of the Equilibrium Coefficient	483
18.4. Forms of Equilibrium-Coefficient Equations	484
18.5. Mean Binary Activity Coefficients	486
18.6. Temperature Dependence of Mean Binary Activity Coefficients	488
18.7. Mean Mixed Activity Coefficients	490
18.8. The Water Equation	491
18.9. Example Equilibrium Problem	495
18.10. Method of Solving Equilibrium Equations	496
18.11. Solid Formation and Deliquescence Relative Humidity	498
18.12. Equilibrium-Solver Results	500
18.13. Nonequilibrium between Gas and Particle Phases	501
18.14. Solution to Growth Equations for a Soluble Species	505
18.15. Simulations under Atmospheric Conditions	506
18.16. Summary	508
18.17. Problems	509
18.18. Computer Programming Practice	509
19 Aqueous Chemistry	511
19.1. Significance of Aqueous Chemical Reactions	511
19.2. Common Reactions	514
19.3. Diffusion within a Drop	519
19.4. Solving Growth and Aqueous Chemical ODEs	520
19.5. Summary	524

Contents

19.6. Problems	524
19.7. Computer Programming Practice	525
20 Sedimentation and Dry Deposition	526
20.1. Sedimentation	526
20.2. Dry Deposition	529
20.3. Dry-Deposition and Sedimentation Calculations	534
20.4. Summary	536
20.5. Problems	536
20.6. Computer Programming Practice	537
21 Model Design, Application, and Testing	538
21.1. Steps in Model Formulation	538
21.2. Example Model Simulations	553
21.3. Summary	559
21.4. Problems	559
21.5. Computer Programming Practice	559
Appendix A Conversions, Constants, and Symbols	561
A.1. Conversions and Constants	561
A.2. List of Symbols	563
Appendix B Tables	577
B.1. Standard Atmospheric Variables versus Altitude	577
B.2. Solar Irradiance at the Top of the Atmosphere	578
B.3. Gas-Phase Species	579
B.4. Gas-Phase Reactions	591
B.5. Equilibrium and Aqueous-Chemistry Species	601
B.6. Thermodynamic Data	602
B.7. Equilibrium Reactions	603
B.8. Aqueous-Phase Reactions	605
B.9. Solute Activity Coefficient Data	608
B.10. Water Activity Data	610
B.11. Surface Resistance Data	611
B.12. More Surface Resistance Data	612
<i>References</i>	613
<i>Index</i>	635

Additional information concerning the book can be found on the author's web site at:

<http://efml.stanford.edu/FAMbook/FAMbook.html>

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Preface

Modern atmospheric science is a field that combines meteorology, physics, mathematics, chemistry, computer sciences, and to a lesser extent geology, biology, microbiology, and oceanographic sciences. Until the late 1940s scientific studies of the atmosphere were limited primarily to studies of the weather. At that time, heightened concern about air pollution caused a surge of atmospheric chemistry studies, and computer modeling of meteorology and air pollution commenced. Since the late 1940s, the number of meteorological and air-pollution studies has increased rapidly, and meteorological and air-pollution models have slowly merged.

BRIEF HISTORY OF METEOROLOGICAL SCIENCES

The history of atmospheric sciences begins with weather forecasting. Forecasting originally grew out of three needs – for farmers to produce crops, sailors to survive at sea, and populations to avoid weather-related disasters such as floods. Every society has forecast wind, rain, and other weather events. Some forecasts are embodied in platitudes and lore. Virgil stated, “Rain and wind increase after a thunderclap.” The Zuni Indians had a saying, “If the first thunder is from the east, winter is over.” Human experiences with the weather have led to more recent forecast rhymes, such as, “Rainbow in morning, sailors take warning. Rainbow at night, a sailor’s delight.”

Primitive forecasts have also been made based on animal and insect behavior or the presence of a human ailment. Bird migration was thought to predict oncoming winds. This correlation has since proved unreliable. Rheumatism, arthritis, and gout have been associated with the onset of rain, but such ailments are usually unrelated to the weather. The presence of locusts has correctly been associated with rainfall in that locusts fly downwind until they reach an area of converging winds, where rain is likely to occur.

In the 1870s, forecasting based on observations and experience became a profession. Many felt that early professional forecasting was more of an art than a science, since it was not based on scientific theory. Although the number of data available to forecasters was large and increasing, the data were not always used. Data were gathered by observers who used instruments that measured winds, pressure, temperature, humidity, and rainfall. Many of these instruments had been developed over the previous two centuries, although ideas and crude technologies existed prior to that time.

Preface

The Greeks, around 430 B.C., may have been the first to measure winds. Yet, reliable instruments to measure wind force and direction were not developed until the seventeenth century. In 1667 Robert Hooke developed the **pressure-plate anemometer**, which measured the deflection and force of wind on a sheet of metal hanging vertically. This principle was used again in the **pressure-tube anemometer**, thought of earlier but not built until the 1740s. Windmills were used as early as 644 A.D. in Persia, but the first **cup anemometer**, which applies the principle of the windmill to measure wind speed, was not developed until the seventeenth century, in France. In the nineteenth century, additional work on the anemometer was carried out by T. R. Robinson and W. H. Dines.

The **mercury barometer**, used to measure air pressure, was invented in 1643 by Evangelista Torricelli (1608–1647), an associate of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). Toricelli invented the barometer (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 1980)

to make an instrument which might show the changes of the air, now heavier and coarser, now lighter and more subtle.

By 1663, the Royal Society of London had built its own barometer based on Torricelli's model. The **aneroid barometer**, which represented an advance over the mercury barometer, was not adequately developed until 1843. The aneroid barometer contains no fluid. Instead, it measures pressure by gauging the expansion and contraction of a tightly sealed metal cell that contains no air.

A third important invention for meteorologists was the thermometer. Prior to 1600, Galileo devised the **thermoscope**, which measured the expansion of air to estimate temperature changes. The instrument did not have a scale and was unreliable. Torricelli's mercury barometer, which contained fluid, led to the invention of the **liquid-in-glass thermometer** in Florence by the mid-seventeenth century. In the early eighteenth century, useful thermometer scales were developed by Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit of Germany (1686–1736) and Anders Celsius of Sweden (1701–1744).

A fourth important invention was the **hygrometer**, which measures humidity. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) was probably the first to implement a hygrometer. He based his idea on notes of Nicolas Cryfts, who suggested in 1450 that a hygroscope could be constructed with dried wool placed on a scale. The change in weight of the wool would give a rough idea of the change in humidity. Wood and seaweed were used later in place of wool. In the seventeenth century, gut, string, cord, and hair were also used to measure humidity, since the change in length of these materials with humidity could be measured crudely. The hair hygrometer is still used today, although another instrument, the **psychrometer**, is more accurate. A psychrometer consists of two liquid-in-glass thermometers mounted together, one with a dry bulb and the other with a bulb covered with a moistened cloth.

Following the inventions above, observations of pressure, temperature, humidity, wind force, wind direction, and rainfall became regular. By the nineteenth century, weather-station networks and meteorological tables were common. Observers

Preface

gathered data and forecasters used the data to predict the weather, but neither observers nor forecasters applied significant theory in their work. Theoreticians studied physical laws of nature but did not take advantage of the abundance of data available.

One of the first weather theoreticians was Aristotle, who wrote *Meteorologica* about 340 B.C. In that text, Aristotle attempted to explain the cause of winds, clouds, rain, mist, dew, frost, snow, hail, thunder, lightning, thunderstorms, halos, rainbows, and mock suns. On the subject of winds, he wrote (Lee 1951)

These, then are the most important different winds and their positions. There are two reasons for there being more winds from the northerly than from the southerly regions. First, our inhabited region lies towards the north; second, far more rain and snow is pushed up into this region because the other lies beneath the sun and its course. These melt and are absorbed by the earth and when subsequently heated by the sun and the earth's own heat cause a greater and more extensive exhalation.

On the subject of thunder, he wrote,

Let us now explain lightning and thunder, and then whirlwinds, firewinds and thunderbolts: for the cause of all of them must be assumed to be the same. As we have said, there are two kinds of exhalation, moist and dry; and their combination (air) contains both potentially. It condenses into cloud, as we have explained before, and the condensation of clouds is thicker towards their farther limit. Heat when radiated disperses into the upper region. But any of the dry exhalation that gets trapped when the air is in process of cooling is forcibly ejected as the clouds condense and in its course strikes the surrounding clouds, and the noise caused by the impact is what we call thunder.

Aristotle's monograph established a method of qualitatively explaining meteorological problems. Since Aristotle was incorrect about nearly all his meteorological conclusions, *Meteorologica* was never regarded as a significant work. Aristotle made observations, as evidenced by diagrams and descriptions in *Meteorologica*, but he did not conduct experiments. Lacking experiments, his conclusions, while rational, were not scientifically based.

Aristotle's method of rationalizing observations with little or no experiment governed meteorological theory through the seventeenth century. In 1637, René Descartes (1596–1650) wrote *Les Météores*, a series of essays attached to *Discours de la Méthode*. In some parts of this work, Descartes improved upon Aristotle's treatise by discussing experiments. In other parts, Descartes merely expanded or reformulated many of Aristotle's explanations. On the subject of northerly winds, Descartes wrote (Olscamp 1965)

We also observe that the north winds blow primarily during the day, that they come from above to below, and that they are very violent, cold and dry. You can see the explanation of this by considering that the earth EBFD [referring to a diagram] is covered with many clouds and mists near the poles E and F, where it is hardly heated by the sun at all; and that at B, where the sun is immediately overhead, it excites a

Preface

quantity of vapors which are quite agitated by the action of its light and rise into the air very quickly, until they have risen so high that the resistance of their weight makes it easier for them to swerve, . . .

Like Aristotle, Descartes was incorrect about many explanations. Despite some of the weaknesses of his work, Descartes is credited for being one of the first in meteorological sciences to form hypotheses and then to conduct experiments.

Between the seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, knowledge of basic physics increased, but mathematics and physics were still not used rigorously to explain atmospheric behavior. In 1860, William Ferrel published a collection of papers that were the first to apply mathematical theory to fluid motions on a rotating earth. This work was the impetus behind the modern-day field of **dynamical meteorology**, which uses physics and mathematics to explain atmospheric motion.

Between 1860 and the early 1900s weather forecasting and theory advanced along separate paths. In 1903, Vilhelm Bjerknes of Norway (1862–1951) promulgated the idea that weather forecasting should be based on the laws of physics. This idea was not new, but Bjerknes advanced it further than others (Nebeker 1995). Bjerknes thought that weather could be described by seven primary variables – pressure, temperature, air density, air water content, and the three components of wind velocity. He also realized that many of the equations describing the change in these variables were physical laws already discovered. Such laws included the continuity equation for air, Newton’s law of motion, the ideal-gas law, the hydrostatic equation, and the thermodynamic energy equation.

Bjerknes did not believe that prognostic meteorological equations could be solved analytically. He advocated the use of physical principles to operate on graphical observations to forecast the weather. This technique was called **graphical calculus**. Between 1913 and 1919, Lewis Fry Richardson (1881–1953), developed a different method of analyzing the equations describing the weather (Richardson 1922). The method involved simplifying the equations before solving them numerically by hand. Richardson was not satisfied, because data available to test his method were sparse, and predictions from his method were not accurate. Nevertheless, his was the first attempt to numerically predict the weather in detail (*ibid.*).

Until the 1940s, much of Richardson’s work was ignored because of the lack of a means to carry out the large number of calculations required to implement his method. In 1946, John von Neumann (1903–1957), who was associated with work to build the first electronic computer, proposed a project to make weather forecasting its main application. The project was approved, and the first computer model of the atmosphere was planned. Among the workers on von Neumann’s project was Jule Charney, who became director of the project in 1948. Charney made the first numerical forecast on the computer, ENIAC, with a one-dimensional model. Since that time, numerical models of weather prediction have become more elaborate, and computers have become faster.

Preface

BRIEF HISTORY OF AIR-POLLUTION SCIENCES

Meteorological science is an old and established field; air-pollution science has a shorter history. Natural air pollution has occurred on earth since the planet's formation. Fires, volcanic eruptions, meteorite impacts, and high winds all cause natural air-pollution. Human-made air-pollution problems have existed on urban scales for centuries and have resulted from burning of wood, vegetation, coal, oil, natural gas, waste, and chemicals.

Before the twentieth century, air pollution was not treated as a science but as a regulatory problem (Boubel et al. 1994). In Great Britain, emissions from furnaces and steam engines led to the Public Health Act of 1848. Emissions of hydrogen chloride from soap making led to the Alkali Act of 1863. In both cases, pollution abatement was controlled by agencies. In the nineteenth century, pollution abatement in the United States was delegated to municipalities. Regulations did not reduce pollution much, but they led to pollution control technologies, such as the scrubber for removing effluent gases from smokestacks and, later, the electrostatic precipitator for reducing particulate emissions from them.

Inventions unrelated to air-pollution regulation reduced some pollution problems. In the early twentieth century, the advent of the electric motor centralized sources of combustion at electric utilities, reducing local air pollution caused by the steam engine.

At the same time, widespread use of automobiles and other combustion processes increased pollution, especially in urban regions. Most noticeable was a layer of pollution that formed almost daily in Los Angeles, California. This pollution became so serious that an Air Pollution Control District was formed in Los Angeles in 1947. In 1949, the first National Air Pollution Symposium was held in Los Angeles. In 1951, Arie Haagen-Smit produced ozone in a laboratory from oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic gases, in the presence of solar radiation, and he suggested that these gases were the main constituents of Los Angeles air pollution. Such pollution became known as **photochemical smog**. Photochemical smog, due primarily to automobile emissions, has since been observed in most cities of the world.

The term **smog** was first coined in 1905 by Harold Antoine Des Voeux, who described the combination of smoke and fog he observed in cities in Great Britain. The smoke was due to chimney and stack emissions of coal combustion products. In December 1952, such smog resulted in over 4000 deaths in London. This fatal episode was not the first in London. Pollution resulting from coal combustion in the presence of fog is commonly referred to as **London-type smog**.

THE MERGING OF AIR-POLLUTION AND METEOROLOGICAL SCIENCES

In the 1950s, laboratory work was undertaken to better understand the formation of photochemical and London-type smog. Since the computer was already available, box models simulating atmospheric chemical reactions were immediately

Preface

implemented. Between the 1950s and 1970s, air-pollution models, termed **air-quality models**, were expanded to three dimensions. Such models included treatment of transport, deposition, emissions, and gas chemistry. Most of these models used observed meteorological data as inputs. More recently, air quality models have used meteorological fields, either precalculated or calculated in real time, as inputs.

In the 1970s, atmospheric pollution problems, aside from urban air pollution, were increasingly recognized. Such problems included regional acid deposition, global ozone reduction, Antarctic ozone depletion, and global climate change. Initially, ozone depletion and climate change problems were treated separately by dynamical meteorologists and atmospheric chemists. More recently, computer models that incorporate atmospheric chemistry and dynamical meteorology have been used to study these problems.

The purposes of this book are to provide (1) a physical understanding of dynamical meteorology, gas chemistry, aerosol microphysics and chemistry, radiation, and cloud processes in the atmosphere, (2) a description of numerical methods and computational techniques used to simulate these processes, and (3) a catalog of steps required to construct, apply, and test a numerical model.

After the overview in the first chapter, atmospheric structure, composition, and thermodynamics are described in Chapter 2. In Chapters 3–5, basic equations describing dynamical meteorology are derived. In Chapter 6, numerical methods of solving partial differential equations are discussed. A finite-difference technique of solving dynamical meteorological equations is provided in Chapter 7. In Chapters 8 and 9, boundary-layer and cloud processes, respectively, are described. Chapter 10 introduces radiation. Chapters 11–13 focus on photochemistry and numerical methods of solving chemical equations. Chapters 14–19 describe aerosol physical and chemical processes. Chapter 20 describes sedimentation and dry deposition. Chapter 21 outlines computer model development, application, and testing.

The book is designed as a graduate, upper-level undergraduate, and research text. The text assumes students have a basic physical science, mathematical, and computational background. Both *Système Internationale* (SI) and centimeter-gram-second (CGS) units are used. Dynamical meteorologists often use SI units, and atmospheric chemists often use CGS units. Some chemical variables, such as gas concentrations, absorption cross sections, and rate coefficients, are most conveniently written in CGS units. Some meteorological variables, such as wind speed, geopotential, and energy, are most conveniently written in SI units. Thus, both unit systems are retained. Unit and variable conversions are given in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank several colleagues who reviewed different sections of this text. In particular, I am indebted to (in alphabetical order) Akio Arakawa, Bob Chatfield, Frank Freedman, Ann Fridlind, James Holton, Daniel Jacob, Jinyou Liang, Jin-Sheng Lin, Gerard Ketefian, Doug Rotman, Roberto San Jose, Hanwant Singh, Amy Stuart, Azadeh Tabazadeh, Roland von Glasow, and Don Wuebbles, who all provided significant comments, suggestions, and/or corrections relating to the text.