

GRAVITATIONAL LENSING

Gravitational lensing is a consequence of general relativity, where the gravitational force due to a massive object bends the paths of light originating from distant objects lying behind it. Using very little general relativity and no higher level mathematics, this text presents the basics of gravitational lensing, focusing on the equations needed to understand the phenomenon. It then applies them to a diverse set of topics, including multiply imaged objects, time delays, extrasolar planets, microlensing, cluster masses, galaxy shape measurements, cosmic shear, and lensing of the cosmic microwave background. This approach allows undergraduate students and others to get quickly up to speed on the basics and the important issues. The text will be especially relevant as large surveys such as LSST and Euclid begin to dominate the astronomical landscape. Designed for a one-semester course, it is accessible to anyone with two years of undergraduate physics background.

SCOTT DODELSON is a Distinguished Scientist at Fermilab and Professor in the Department of Astrophysics and Astronomy at the University of Chicago. He has written more than 180 research papers on the connections between physics and astronomy. He is the author of *Modern Cosmology*, a standard graduate textbook, and he has recently taken leadership roles in surveys that employ gravitational lensing as a tool to get at basic physics. Through these roles and by teaching courses devoted to lensing, he realized that learning enough about lensing to begin research is both simple and rewarding. This volume was written to help potential researchers at all levels learn this fascinating, rapidly emerging field.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-107-12976-4 — Gravitational Lensing
Scott Dodelson
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107129764

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First published 2017

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-12976-4 Hardback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/9781107129764

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Danielle Bessler,
who saw life through her own lens, thereby bringing joy to
her family and friends

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page xi</i>
1 Overview	1
1.1 Multiple Images	4
1.2 Time Delay	5
1.3 Magnification	6
1.4 Microlensing	6
1.5 Extended Lenses	8
1.6 Extended Sources	8
1.7 Diffuse Lenses	11
1.8 CMB Lensing	12
Exercises	15
2 Deflection of Light	17
2.1 Newtonian Deflection	17
2.2 Bridge	20
2.3 Deflection from a Point Mass in General Relativity	23
2.4 Shapiro Time Delay	25
2.5 Angular Vectors	28
2.6 Deflection by the Gravitational Potential	29
2.7 Thin Lens Approximation	32
2.8 Back to the Point Mass	35
Exercises	36
3 Multiple Images	38
3.1 Point Mass Lens	39
3.2 Spherically Symmetric Distribution	41
3.3 Isothermal Sphere	44
3.4 Caustics for the Cored Isothermal Sphere	50
3.5 Time Delays	53
Exercises	59
	vii

4	Magnification	62
4.1	Magnification in Terms of the Distortion Tensor	63
4.2	Point Mass	66
4.3	Isothermal Sphere	68
4.4	Parity	72
4.5	Detection of Magnification	74
4.6	Using Lenses to Find Distant Galaxies	77
4.7	Multiple Image Systems and Flux Anomalies	79
	Exercises	82
5	Microlensing	85
5.1	Dark Matter in the Galaxy	87
5.2	MACHO Microlensing	89
5.3	Exoplanets	95
5.4	Two Point Mass Lenses	97
5.5	Exoplanet Microlensing: Magnification	101
	Exercises	105
6	Weak Lensing: Galaxy Shapes	108
6.1	The Effect of Shear	108
6.2	Ideal Relation Between Shear and Ellipticity	109
6.3	Weighting	112
6.4	Ellipticity and Shear with Weighting and Intrinsic Ellipticity	114
6.5	Correcting for the Point Spread Function	119
6.6	Forward Modeling	123
6.7	GREAT	126
	Exercises	128
7	Mass from Shapes	132
7.1	Shear from a Spherical Distribution	132
7.2	Signal-to-Noise	135
7.3	Galaxy–Galaxy Lensing	137
7.4	Implications for Dark Matter	140
7.5	Distances in Cosmology	142
7.6	Galaxy Clusters	145
7.7	Cluster Lensing	149
7.8	Mass Maps	153
	Exercises	159
8	Cosmic Shear	162
8.1	Standard Cosmological Model	164

<i>Contents</i>	ix
8.2 Statistics of the Density Field	166
8.3 Cosmic Shear Decomposition	172
8.4 Statistics of Convergence	175
8.5 Errors on the Convergence Power Spectrum	180
8.6 Intrinsic Alignment	184
8.7 Tomography and Cosmological Parameters	188
Exercises	192
9 Lensing of the Cosmic Microwave Background	196
9.1 The Cosmic Microwave Background	196
9.2 Order of Magnitude Estimate	199
9.3 Impact of Convergence on the Acoustic Peaks	200
9.4 Inferring the Lensing Potential	202
9.5 Smoothing the Peaks and Troughs	205
Exercises	208
Appendix A Numbers	210
Appendix B Lensing Formulae	211
<i>References</i>	213
<i>Index</i>	220
<i>Color plates section can be found between pages 116 and 117</i>	

Preface

There are three reasons why I wanted to write this book. First, gravitational lensing is emerging as a powerful tool in many areas of astronomy, from exoplanets to cosmology. This breadth of applications emerging from a single phenomenon – the bending of light by curved space-time – is the second reason, for it is yet another example of why physics is so interesting: we can explain many things with a few simple laws.

The final reason for this book is that, while important for many different applications, lensing is not that hard. There have been elegant, beautiful papers and books exploring the foundations of lensing and many of its formal aspects. But most of the applications simply do not require all that much formalism. General relativity makes several appearances here, but even if you skip those few sections, you will still learn essentially everything that's here: multiple images, magnification, micro-lensing, shear, etc. And armed with that information, I hope you will be able to begin research on real problems that are opening up in so many areas of astronomy and be prepared to analyze the ever-improving datasets that are coming our way.

The goal then is that this book can serve as the text for an undergraduate or graduate course on gravitational lensing or be used for independent study by someone interested in jumping into research.

Thanks are due to colleagues who generously gave of their time to answer questions: Gary Bernstein, Daniel Fabrycky, Bhuvnesh Jain, Rachel Mandelbaum, and Ben Wandelt. I am very grateful to the students who took this course, especially in 2015, as they helped immensely by providing feedback on an early draft of this book. So thank you to these rising stars: Adam Anderson, Gourav Khullar, Meng-Xiang Lin, Monica Mocanu, Pavel Motloch, Andrew Neil, Zhaodi Pan, Jason Poh, Amy Tang, Rito Thakur, and Alexander Tolish.

I am extraordinarily grateful to the people who fund my research, especially Fermilab, the Office of High Energy Physics at the Department of Energy and, by extension, the citizens of the United States. I am so fortunate to live in a society that values basic research. Some of this work was carried out at the Aspen Center for Physics, which is supported by National Science Foundation grant PHY-1066293.