

A few thoughts/questions to keep in mind while reading the material for the week of March 28

This week the reading takes us into cosmology – the origin and evolution of our universe. As you read, consider the evidence for the “hot big bang”. What is the cosmic microwave background (CMB)? What are the characteristics of the CMB that make physicists believe it provides evidence for the hot big bang? What is big bang nucleosynthesis? What type of matter/nuclei were present in the universe after the big bang? Where did the other stuff come from? What is the evidence for “dark matter”? What is the evidence for “dark energy”? How does the CMB show us that the space in the universe is flat?

Things to come that may be touched on in your reading – There are major problems with the big bang idea. What are they? These problems are avoided by something called “inflation” which we will read about next week.