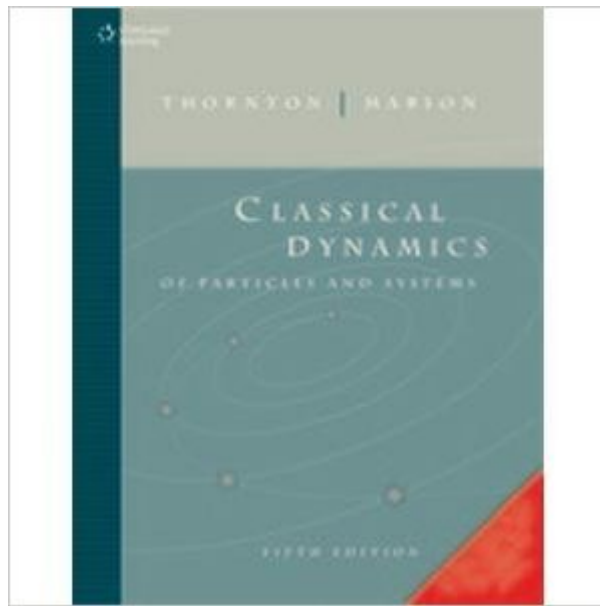
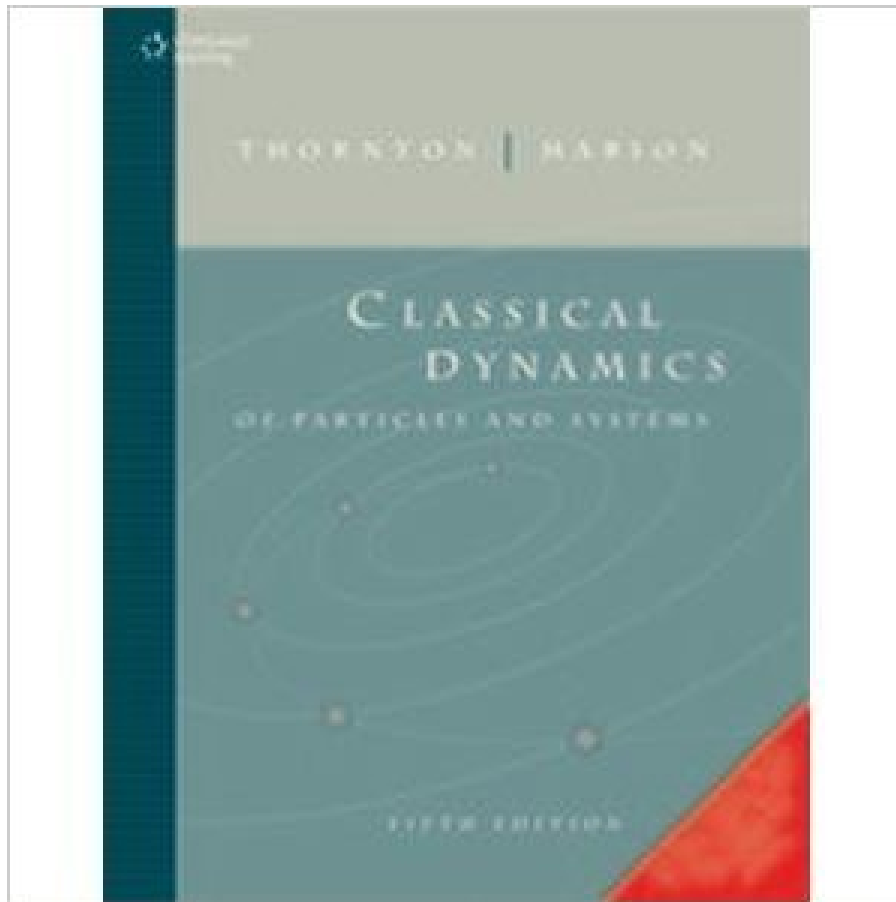


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Review

"An excellent balance of basic and advanced level classical mechanics, ideal for a junior level Physics courses."

"I like the order of topics: the early discussion of linear and non-linear oscillations and the early presentation of Lagrangian/Hamiltonian dynamics. I also like the problems at the end of the chapters."

"Good discussion of classical subjects."

About the Author

Stephen Thornton is Professor of Physics at the University of Virginia. He has over 130 research publications in experimental nuclear physics and has done research at several accelerator facilities in the United States and Europe. He has directed the research for 25 graduate students. He has held two U.S. Senior Fulbright-Hays Fellowships and a Max-Planck Fellowship to do research at the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in Heidelberg, Germany on two occasions. He was the founding Director of the University of Virginia Institute of Nuclear and Particle Physics. He has published three college textbooks for physics. He is currently Director of the Master of Arts in Physics Education program at the University of Virginia, which has graduated more than 70 high school physics teachers. He is a Fellow of the American Physical Society and a member of several organizations including American Association of Physics Teachers, American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Science Teachers Association, Virginia Association of Science Teachers (past President), and the Virginia Math and Science Coalition. He has developed multiple courses for undergraduate students and high school physics teachers.

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This best-selling classical mechanics text, written for the advanced undergraduate one- or two-semester course, provides a complete account of the classical mechanics of particles, systems of particles, and rigid bodies. Vector calculus is used extensively to explore topics. The Lagrangian formulation of mechanics is introduced early to show its powerful problem solving ability. Modern notation and terminology are used throughout in support of the text's objective: to facilitate students' transition to advanced physics and the mathematical formalism needed for the quantum theory of physics. CLASSICAL DYNAMICS OF PARTICLES AND SYSTEMS can easily be used for a one- or two-semester course, depending on the instructor's choice of topics.

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Good mechanics book, but not recommended for a first-time student

By S. Hedges

I am using this book to study for a graduate-level physics assessment exam, so I am not going through it in the natural order of the chapters. I will update this review once I have finished going through the book.

From what I've read so far, this is my new favorite mechanics book. In general, I have not been satisfied with any of the mechanics textbooks I've read so far, with my previous favorite being the Landau/Lifshitz mechanics text.

As an undergraduate, I used lecture notes my professor wrote supplemented with Taylor's Classical Mechanics. I thought Taylor's book was very accessible, but was disappointed that it did not cover the material on a deeper level. However, the worked out examples were very helpful.

In my Master's program, I used Goldstein's Classical Mechanics, and supplemented it with the Landau/Lifshitz book. Goldstein covered the material in more depth, but I felt like I was understanding the mathematics and missing out on some of the bigger connections between the mathematics and the physics. I also felt like I understood the material in the narrow context it was used, but that was about it. Goldstein also does not have very many worked out examples throughout the text, and that made learning some of the topics difficult. Landau/Lifshitz book provided me with much more insight into what was physically going on in these systems, and the repercussions of the math behind the systems. The L/L book is very terse, which can be both an advantage and disadvantage at times. The worked out problems usually do not include all of the steps, but enough is provided such that a student could write out the complete derivation on their own.

So far I have really enjoyed Thorton & Marion. Here are the things I like about the book:

- The authors are fairly thorough when it comes to these concepts. I think they even go into more depth than Goldstein on many of them. From reading these sections I feel like I have a much stronger understanding of the material than I did while reading any of the other books.
- The use of language is very precise, and they are careful to say when and how the concepts they discuss are applicable. One of the biggest pet peeves of mine is when an author makes a vague or general statement than has room for interpretation.
- I feel like I have a broader understanding of how these concepts are relevant both to other mechanical systems as well as outside of what is typically considered Classical Mechanics. There are plenty of references to how these concepts do or don't apply to e&m systems, atomic systems, etc.

The books is not perfect. Here are what I think are the drawbacks:

- I think that if this were my first exposure to the material, I would not find this book as helpful. I would not recommend it as an introductory text. Covering the material in this much detail on my first exposure would probably have made it difficult to keep track of the context as to why the author was covering this material, as well as where the authors were heading.
- While many of the solved problems are helpful, I did not think the computational solved problems were helpful. Providing the code used would have been nice, as the author really doesn't provide that much on how the computational results were obtained. However, I do a lot of programming so maybe this would be helpful to me but not to most of the students reading this book.
- Sometimes steps are skipped or choices are taken in the solved problems without a clear explanation of why the authors are solving the problems in this way. In one of the earlier problems I did not understand why the authors arbitrarily multiplied both sides by velocity to solve a differential equation, when I saw a much

easier way of doing it.

In summary: This is a very good textbook for an advanced undergraduate or early graduate physics student. If you are using for your first Classical Mechanics course, you may find it to be as helpful as I did. I can't speak about the appropriateness of the end-of-chapter problems, but for the most part the worked out problems are useful. As a reference or a review, I would definitely recommend this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Not super helpful.

By Shane Gumm

A very difficult class... with a book that isn't too terribly helpful.

Of course, it is a textbook written by some genius. What do you expect?

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Edward Perez

love this textbook!

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