Physics

Degrees Offered

- Master of Science (Applied Physics)
- Master of Science Non-Thesis (Applied Physics)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Physics)
- Graduate Certificate (Optics for Engineering)

Program Description

The Physics Department at Mines offers a full program of instruction and research leading to the MS in Applied Physics or PhD in Physics. It also contributes to graduate interdisciplinary programs in Materials Science (MS and PhD), Nuclear Engineering (MS and PhD), and Quantum Engineering (MS). The research in these graduate programs is supported by external grants and contracts totaling $6.37M/year in research expenditures. Research in the Department is organized under three primary themes: subatomic physics, condensed matter physics, and applied optics. With 23 faculty, 66 graduate students, and 225 undergraduate physics majors, the Physics Department at Mines is a vibrant intellectual community providing high-quality education in state-of-the-art facilities.

Graduate students are given a solid background in the fundamentals of classical and modern physics at an advanced level and are encouraged early in their studies to learn about the research interests of the faculty so that a thesis topic can be identified.

Program Requirements

Students entering graduate programs in the Physics Department will select an initial program in consultation with the departmental graduate student advising committee until such time as a research field has been chosen and a thesis committee appointed.

Master of Science

Requirements:

MS-Thesis in Applied Physics: 18 credits of course work in an approved program, 2 credits of seminar, plus 10 credits of research credit, with a satisfactory thesis.

MS-non-Thesis in Applied Physics: 28 credits of course work and 2 credits of seminar. At least 21 of the required 30 credits of course work must be taken as a registered master’s degree student at Mines. The program will allow up to 7 credits of independent study coursework to count towards the non-thesis MS degree. Up to 9 credits of graduate courses may be transferred into the degree program, provided that those courses have not been used as credit toward a Bachelor’s degree. The student’s committee makes decisions on courses to be taken, transfer credit, and examines the student’s written report and oral presentation resulting from an independent study.

Mines’ Combined Undergraduate / Graduate Degree Program

Students enrolled in Mines’ combined undergraduate/graduate program may double count up to six credits of graduate coursework to fulfill requirements of both their undergraduate and graduate degree programs. These courses must have been passed with “B-” or better, not be substitutes for required coursework, and meet all other University, Department, and Program requirements for graduate credit.

Students are advised to consult with their undergraduate and graduate advisors for appropriate courses to double count upon admission to the combined program.

Doctor of Philosophy

Requirements: 32 credits of course work in an approved program, plus 40 credits of research credit, with a satisfactory thesis. 12 credits of course work will be in a specialty topic area defined in consultation with the thesis advisor. Possible specialty topic areas within the Physics Department exist in Optical Science and Engineering, Condensed Matter Physics, Theoretical Physics, Renewable Energy Physics, and Nuclear/Particle Physics and Astrophysics.

To demonstrate adequate preparation for the PhD degree in Physics, each student must achieve a grade point average of 3.0 or better in the core courses. Students not meeting this standard must pass oral examinations covering the relevant course content or retake the courses within one year. This process is part of the requirement for admission to candidacy, which full time PhD students must complete within two calendar years of admission, as described in the campus-wide graduate degree requirements section of this bulletin. Other degree requirements, time limits, and procedural details can be found in the Physics Department Graduate Student Advising Brochure.

Physics Colloquium

All full-time physics graduate students must attend the Physics Colloquium, which is represented in the curriculum by the Graduate Seminar courses. Students must take one of these courses every semester that they are enrolled at CSM. Those students who are in the MS Program, sign up for PHGN501 (fall) and PHGN502 (spring). Students in the PhD program sign up for PHGN601 (fall) and PHGN602 (spring). At the end of each semester students are assigned either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress grade, based on attendance, until the final semester of the student’s degree program, when a letter grade is assigned based on all prior semesters’ attendance grades. As a result, while these courses are taken each year, only 1 hour total of course credit is conferred for each of 501, 502, 601, or 602.

Students who have official part-time status and who have already taken at least one semester of 501 and 502 for the MS degree, or 601 and 602 for the PhD degree are not required to sign up for Graduate Seminar during subsequent semesters.

Prerequisites

The Graduate School of the Colorado School of Mines is open to graduates from four-year programs at accredited colleges or universities. Admission to the Physics Department MS and PhD programs is competitive and is based on an evaluation of undergraduate performance, standardized test scores, and references. The undergraduate course of study of each applicant is evaluated according to the requirements of the Physics Department.

Required Curriculum

Master of Science (with Thesis) in Applied Physics

Core Courses

PHGN511 MATHMATICAL PHYSICS 3.0
**Master of Science (non-Thesis) in Applied Physics**

**Core Courses**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHGN511</td>
<td>MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN515</td>
<td>GRADUATE LABORATORY</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>PH ELECT</td>
<td>Electives **</td>
<td>22.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN501</td>
<td>GRADUATE SEMINAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>&amp; PHGN502</td>
<td>and GRADUATE SEMINAR *</td>
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**Total Semester Hrs** 30.0

* Graduate Seminar: Each full-time MS graduate student will register for Graduate Seminar each semester for a total of 2 cumulative credits over the degree.

**Electives may be chosen from classes taught in physics or relevant disciplines taught in other departments, as approved by the graduate advisor and thesis committee.

**Fields of Research**

**Applied Optics and Biophysics:** lasers, ultrafast optics, nonlinear optics, laser-produced plasmas, micromachining, multiphoton microscopy, single-molecule microscopy, total internal reflection microscopy, biophysical mechanisms of collagen fibril degradation, novel imaging techniques.

**Subatomic:** low energy nuclear structure and astrophysics, applied nuclear physics, high-energy cosmic-ray and neutrino physics, neutrinoless double beta decay.


**Quantum Physics:** quantum chaos, strongly-correlated states, quantum computing, quantum information, quantum simulation, quantum many body theory, quantum error correction, disorder in quantum materials, applied superconductivity, low-temperature physics, spintronics.

**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN OPTICS FOR ENGINEERING**

**Program Requirements**

The graduate certificate program in Optics for Engineering is targeted to train recent graduates or mid-career professionals with a Bachelor of Science degree in physics, chemistry, materials science, electrical or mechanical engineering, or other related fields. The program will provide them with a basic knowledge of optics and lasers so they can apply it to the challenges and demands of advanced technologies that use optical systems. the program offers students a number of electives to choose from and to tailor their education to their interest.

**Graduate Certificate Curriculum Requirements:**

The certificate option consists of one core class, plus two additional electives, for a total of 9 credit hours. Only one course is allowed at the undergraduate level and all other courses must be at the 500 level or higher. PHGN461 is considered a prerequisite for this certificate but is offered online in the summer, allowing students to easily fulfill this requirement. Students who have taken the equivalent of PHGN461 at a different institution can request to have this prerequisite waived.
Graduate Certificate

PHGN480 LASER PHYSICS 3.0
or PHGN581 LASER PHYSICS

Electives See Elective Listing 6.0

Coursework Details:

Students will need PHGN461 (or its equivalent) as a prerequisite for the Certificate. This course is offered in the summer (online). PHGN 480/581 is offered in the fall (in-person). Students will select two electives from the approved list below.

Approved Electives (select two):

PHGN570 FOURIER AND PHYSICAL OPTICS 3.0
PHGN566 MODERN OPTICAL ENGINEERING 3.0
PHGN585 NONLINEAR OPTICS 3.0
EENG528 COMPUTATIONAL ELECTROMAGNETICS 3.0
MEGN671 RADIATION HEAT TRANSFER 3.0
GPGN470 APPLICATIONS OF SATELLITE REMOTE SENSING 3.0
EENG507 INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER VISION 3.0
EENG508 ADVANCED TOPICS IN PERCEPTION AND COMPUTER VISION 3.0
EENG509 SPARSE SIGNAL PROCESSING 3.0
EENG515 MATHEMATICAL METHODS FOR SIGNALS AND SYSTEMS 3.0

Courses

PHGN501. GRADUATE SEMINAR. 1.0 Semester Hr.
(I) M.S. students will attend the weekly Physics Colloquium. Students will be responsible for presentations during this weekly seminar. See additional course registration instructions under Program Requirements above. 1 hour seminar; 1 semester hour.

PHGN502. GRADUATE SEMINAR. 1.0 Semester Hr.
(II) M.S. students will attend the weekly Physics Colloquium. Students will be responsible for presentations during this weekly seminar. See additional course registration instructions under Program Requirements above. 1 hour seminar; 1 semester hour.

PHGN503. RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH. 1.0 Semester Hr.
(II) This course introduces students to the various components of responsible research practices. Subjects covered move from issues related to professional rights and obligations through those related to collaboration, communication and the management of grants, to issues dealing with intellectual property. The course culminates with students writing an ethics essay based on a series of topics proposed by the course instructor. 1 hour lecture; 1 semester hour.

PHGN504. RADIATION DETECTION AND MEASUREMENT. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
Physical principles and methodology of the instrumentation used in the detection and measurement of ionizing radiation. Prerequisite: none. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN505. CLASSICAL MECHANICS I. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(I) Review of Lagrangian and Hamiltonian formulations in the dynamics of particles and rigid bodies; kinetic theory; coupled oscillations and continuum mechanics; fluid mechanics. Prerequisite: PHGN350 or equivalent. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN507. ELECTROMAGNETIC THEORY I. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(II) To provide a strong background in electromagnetic theory. Electrostatics, magnetostatics, dynamical Maxwell equations, wave phenomena. Prerequisite: PHGN462 or equivalent and PHGN511. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN511. MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(I) Review of complex variable and finite and infinite-dimensional linear vector spaces. Sturm-Liouville problem, integral equations, computer algebra. Prerequisite: PHGN311 or equivalent. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN515. GRADUATE LABORATORY. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
Hands-on, laboratory skills are fundamental to all career pathways for physics graduates. This course is designed to provide first year graduate students with introductory skills necessary to carry out research in discipline specific laboratories? both in the physics department and post-graduate career settings. The course covers laboratory safety and current experiment best practices. Instruments common in academia, industry, and national labs are reviewed in their function and properties. Students will review experimental data analysis, error analysis, and error propagation concepts before applying them to experiments. Two weeks are dedicated to a student-facilitator shared experiment focusing on lock-in detection where students will learn the structure of note taking and grading. Students will then use what they learned in the lectures and tutorials to perform three experiments they help design. Although experimental results are expected and required, the course will emphasize scientific note taking and thought process over results. The experiments are intentionally open ended so students will have to think critically about their experimental methods, take detailed notes, and use trial-and-error. Thought process will be operationally defined through tinkering, resilience, teamwork, and communication.

PHGN519. FUNDAMENTALS OF QUANTUM INFORMATION. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
This course serves as a broad introduction to quantum information science, open to students from many backgrounds. The basic structure of quantum mechanics (Hilbert spaces, operators, wavefunctions, entanglement, superposition, time evolution) is presented, as well as a number of important topics relevant to current quantum hardware (including oscillating fields, quantum noise, and more). Finally, we will survey the gate model of quantum computing, and study the critical subroutines which provide the promise of a quantum speedup in future quantum computers. Prerequisite: MATH332 (linear algebra) or an equivalent linear algebra course.

PHGN520. QUANTUM MECHANICS I. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(II) Schroedinger equation, uncertainty, change of representation, one-dimensional problems, axioms for state vectors and operators, matrix mechanics, uncertainty relations, time-independent perturbation theory, time-dependent perturbations, harmonic oscillator, angular momentum; semiclassical methods, variational methods, two-level system, sudden and adiabatic changes, applications. Prerequisite: PHGN511 and PHGN320 or equivalent. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN521. QUANTUM MECHANICS II. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
PHGN530. STATISTICAL MECHANICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
(I) Review of thermodynamics; equilibrium and stability; statistical operator and ensembles ideal systems; phase transitions; non-equilibrium systems. Prerequisite: PHGN341 or equivalent and PHGN520. Co-requisite: PHGN521. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN532. LOW TEMPERATURE MICROWAVE MEASUREMENTS FOR QUANTUM ENGINEERING. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
The goal of the course is to provide hands on training in high-frequency, low-temperature measurements which are requisite for quantum information applications. This course introduces the fundamentals of high-frequency measurements, the latest techniques for accuracy-enhanced automated microwave measurements, low-temperature measurement techniques, low noise measurements, and common devices used in quantum information. The course will have three modules. The first module, basics of electronic measurements, will include chip layout, power measurements, ground loop testing, impedance measurements, noise fundamentals, cable and device fabrication and care. The second module, high frequency measurements, will include measurements of basic scattering parameters, accuracy enhancement and calibration, transmission line, amplifier, and oscillator characterization including noise measurements. The third module, low-temperature measurements, will cover critical parameters for superconductors and Josephson junctions, measurements of superconducting resonators, characterization of low-temperature electronic elements including amplifiers. At the end of this course the students will know how to use network analyzers, spectrum analyzers, cryostats, the software Eagle for chip design, amplifiers, and filters.

PHGN535. INTERDISCIPLINARY SILICON PROCESSING LABORATORY. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
Equivalent with CBEN435,CBEN535,CHEN435,CHEN535,MLGN535,PHGN435, 
(II) Explores the application of science and engineering principles to the fabrication and testing of microelectronic devices with emphasis on specific unit operations and interrelation among processing steps. Teams work together to fabricate, test, and optimize simple devices. Prerequisite: none. 1 hour lecture, 4 hours lab; 3 semester hours.

PHGN542. SOLID STATE DEVICES AND PHOTOVOLTAIC APPLICATIONS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
(II) An overview of the physical principles involved in the characterization, and operation of solid state devices. Topics will include: semiconductor physics, electronic transport, recombination and generation, intrinsic and extrinsic semiconductors, electrical contacts, p-n junction devices (e.g., LEDs, solar cells, lasers, particle detectors); other semiconductor devices (e.g., bipolar junction transistors and field effect transistors and capacitors). There will be emphasis on optical interactions and application to photovoltaic devices. Prerequisite: PHGN440 or equivalent. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN545. QUANTUM MANY-BODY PHYSICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
This course offers an introduction to quantum many-body physics in a modern approach from the perspectives of quantum information science. Starting from the difference between classical and quantum correlations, this course introduces composite quantum systems and the concept of entanglement as the central theme in quantum many-body physics. A system of many spin-1/2s is then presented as the paradigmatic quantum many-body system, opening the realm of quantum phase transitions and quantum simulation experiments. Next, systems of non-interacting bosons or fermions are examined using the powerful canonical transformation. To understand what happens when particles interact, the well-known Hubbard model is brought in, together with its importance in quantum materials. Finally, topological ordered quantum matter is introduced and explained via the structure of quantum entanglement. The application of topological order to quantum computing will also be mentioned.

PHGN550. NANOSCALE PHYSICS AND TECHNOLOGY. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
An introduction to the basic physics concepts involved in nanoscale phenomena, processing methods resulting in engineered nanostructures, and the design and operation of novel structures and devices which take advantage of nanoscale effects. Students will become familiar with interdisciplinary aspects of nanotechnology, as well as with current nanoscience developments described in the literature. Prerequisites: PHGN320, PHGN341, co-requisite: PHGN462. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN556. MODERN OPTICAL ENGINEERING. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
Provides students with a comprehensive working knowledge of optical system design that is sufficient to address optical problems found in their respective disciplines. Topics include paraxial optics, imaging, aberration analysis, use of commercial ray tracing and optimization, diffraction, linear systems and optical transfer functions, detectors, and optical system examples. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN570. FOURIER AND PHYSICAL OPTICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
This course addresses the propagation of light through optical systems. Diffraction theory is developed to show how 2D Fourier transforms and linear systems theory can be applied to imaging systems. Analytic and numerical Fourier and microscopes, spectrometers and holographic imaging. They are also applied to temporal propagation in ultrafast optics. Prerequisite: PHGN462 or equivalent. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN581. LASER PHYSICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
Theory, modeling, and experimental work with: absorption and emission of light from atoms, Gaussian beams, optical resonator theory and design, laser oscillation and pulsed dynamics, introduction to nonlinear optics and ultrafast pulses. Full scope of PHGN480 with more advanced homework, experimental analysis/modeling, and final project.

PHGN585. NONLINEAR OPTICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.  
An exploration of the nonlinear response of a medium (semiclassical and quantum descriptions) and nonlinear wave mixing and propagation. Analytic and numeric techniques to treat nonlinear dynamics are developed. Applications to devices and modern research areas are discussed, including harmonic and parametric wave modulation, phase conjugation, electro-optic modulation. Prerequisite: PHGN462 or equivalent, PHGN520. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.
PHGN590. NUCLEAR REACTOR PHYSICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
Bridges the gap between courses in fundamental nuclear physics and the practice of electrical power production using nuclear reactors. Review of nuclear constituents, forces, structure, energetics, decay and reactions; interaction of radiation with matter, detection of radiation; nuclear cross sections, neutron induced reactions including scattering, absorption, and fission; neutron diffusion, multiplication, criticality; simple reactor geometries and compositions; nuclear reactor kinetics and control; modeling and simulation of reactors. Prerequisite: PHGN422.

PHGN598. SPECIAL TOPICS. 6.0 Semester Hrs.
(I, II, S) Pilot course or special topics course. Topics chosen from special interests of instructor(s) and student(s). Usually the course is offered only once, but no more than twice for the same course content. Prerequisite: none. Variable credit: 0 to 6 credit hours. Repeatable for credit under different titles.

PHGN599. INDEPENDENT STUDY. 0.5-6 Semester Hr.
(I, II, S) Individual research or special problem projects supervised by a faculty member, also, when a student and instructor agree on a subject matter, content, and credit hours. Prerequisite: Independent Study form must be completed and submitted to the Registrar. Variable credit: 0.5 to 6 credit hours. Repeatable for credit under different topics/experience and maximums vary by department. Contact the Department for credit limits toward the degree.

PHGN601. ADVANCED GRADUATE SEMINAR. 1.0 Semester Hr.
(I) Ph.D. students will attend the weekly Physics Colloquium. Students will be responsible for presentations during this weekly seminar. See additional course registration instructions under Program Requirements above. 1 hour seminar; 1 semester hour.

PHGN602. ADVANCED GRADUATE SEMINAR. 1.0 Semester Hr.
(II) Ph.D. students will attend the weekly Physics Colloquium. Students will be responsible for presentations during this weekly seminar. See additional course registration instructions under Program Requirements above. 1 hour seminar; 1 semester hour.

PHGN608. ELECTROMAGNETIC THEORY II. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
Spherical, cylindrical, and guided waves; relativistic 4-dimensional formulation of electromagnetic theory. Prerequisite: PHGN507. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours. Offered on demand.

PHGN612. MATHEMATICAL PHYSICS II. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
Continuation of PHGN511. Prerequisite: none. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours. Offered on demand.

PHGN623. NUCLEAR STRUCTURE AND REACTIONS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
The fundamental physics principles and quantum mechanical models and methods underlying nuclear structure, transitions, and scattering reactions. Prerequisite: PHGN521. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours. Offered on demand.

PHGN624. NUCLEAR ASTROPHYSICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
The physical principles and research methods used to understand nucleosynthesis and energy generation in the universe. Prerequisite: none. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours. Offered on demand.

PHGN641. ADVANCED CONDENSED MATTER PHYSICS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
Provides working graduate-level knowledge of applications of solid state physics and important models to crystalline and non-crystalline systems in two and three dimensions. Review of transport by Bloch electrons; computation, interpretation of band structures. Interacting electron gas and overview of density functional theory. Quantum theory of optical properties of condensed systems; Kramers-Kronig analysis, sum rules, spectroscopies. Response and correlation functions. Theoretical models for metal-insulator and localization transitions in 1, 2, 3 dimensions (e.g., Mott, Hubbard, Anderson, Peierls distortion). Boltzmann equation. Introduction to magnetism; spin waves. Phenomenology of soft condensed matter: order parameters, free energies. Conventional superconductivity. Prerequisites: PHGN440 or equivalent, PHGN520, PHGN530. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN698. SPECIAL TOPICS. 6.0 Semester Hrs.
(I, II, S) Pilot course or special topics course. Topics chosen from special interests of instructor(s) and student(s). Usually the course is offered only once, but no more than twice for the same course content. Prerequisite: none. Variable credit: 0 to 6 credit hours. Repeatable for credit under different titles.

PHGN699. INDEPENDENT STUDY. 0.5-6 Semester Hr.
(I, II, S) Individual research or special problem projects supervised by a faculty member, also, when a student and instructor agree on a subject matter, content, and credit hours. Prerequisite: Independent Study form must be completed and submitted to the Registrar. Variable credit: 0.5 to 6 credit hours. Repeatable for credit under different topics/experience and maximums vary by department. Contact the Department for credit limits toward the degree.

PHGN707. GRADUATE THESIS / DISSERTATION RESEARCH CREDIT. 1-15 Semester Hr.
(I, II, S) Research credit hours required for completion of a Masters-level thesis or Doctoral dissertation. Research must be carried out under the direct supervision of the student's faculty advisor. Variable class and semester hours. Repeatable for credit.

Professors Emeriti

F. Edward Cecil
Reuben T. Collins
Thomas E. Furtak
Frank V. Kowalski
John Scales
P. Craig Taylor
John Trefny, President Emeritus
Don L. Williamson

Associate Professors Emeriti

David M. Wood

Professors

Lincoln D. Carr
Patrice Genevet
Charles G. Durfee III
Uwe Greife
Mark T. Lusk
Frederic Sarazin, Department Head
Jeff A. Squier
Eric S. Toberer, Director of Materials Science
Lawrence R. Wiencke

Associate Professors
Eliot Kapit
Kyle G. Leach
Timothy R. Ohno
Jeramy D. Zimmerman

Assistant Professors
Daniel Adams
Zhexuan Gong
Susanta K. Sarkar
Meenakshi Singh

Teaching Professors
Kristine E. Callan
Alex T. Flournoy
Patrick B. Kohl
H. Vincent Kuo, Assistant Department Head
Todd G. Ruskell
Charles A. Stone

Teaching Assistant Professors
Laith Haddad
Alysa (Ly) Malespina
Emily M. Smith

Research Professor
Wendy Adams Spencer

Research Associate Professor
K. Xerxes Steirer

Research Assistant Professors
Serena M. Eley
P. David Flammer