Physics

Degrees Offered

- Master of Science (Applied Physics)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Physics)

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 and is part of interdisciplinary programs in Materials Science and in Nuclear Engineering, through which students can obtain both the MS and the PhD degrees. The research in these graduate programs is supported by external grants and contracts totaling $6M/year. 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: 20 semester hours of course work in an approved program, plus 16 semester hours of research credit, with a satisfactory thesis.

Mines’ Combined Undergraduate / Graduate Degree Program

Students enrolled in Mines’ combined undergraduate/graduate program (meaning uninterrupted registration from the time the student earns a Mines undergraduate degree to the time the student begins a Mines graduate degree) may double count up to six hours of credits which were used in fulfilling the requirements of their undergraduate degree at Mines, towards their graduate program. Any 400+ level courses that count towards the undergraduate degree requirements as “Elective Coursework” or any 500+ level course, may be used for the purposes of double counting at the discretion of the graduate advisor. These courses must have been passed with a “B-” or better, not be substitutes for required coursework, and meet all other University, Department, Division, and Program requirements for graduate credit.

Doctor of Philosophy

Requirements: 32 semester hours of course work in an approved program, plus 40 semester hours of research credit, with a satisfactory thesis. 12 semester hours 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 Ph.D. degree in Physics, each student must achieve a grade of 3.0 or better in each core course. Students not meeting this standard must pass oral examinations covering the relevant core courses or retake the courses with a grade of 3.0 or better within one year. This process is part of the requirement for admission to candidacy, which full time Ph.D. students must complete within two calendar years of admission, as described in the campus-wide graduate degree requirements (catalog.mines.edu/graduate/programs) 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 M.S. Program, sign up for PHGN501 (fall) and PHGN502 (spring). Students in the Ph.D. 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 M.S. degree, or 601 and 602 for the Ph.D. 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 M.S. and Ph.D. 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 in Applied Physics

Core Courses

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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course 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>PHGN520</td>
<td>QUANTUM MECHANICS I</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN505</td>
<td>CLASSICAL MECHANICS I</td>
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<td>PHGN507</td>
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<td>PHGN530</td>
<td>STATISTICAL MECHANICS</td>
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<tr>
<td>PH ELECT</td>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>9.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN501</td>
<td>GRADUATE SEMINAR</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN502</td>
<td>and GRADUATE SEMINAR *</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN707</td>
<td>Master's Thesis</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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Total Semester Hrs 36.0
* Graduate Seminar: Each full-time M.S. graduate student will register for Graduate Seminar each semester for a total of 2 semester hours of credit cumulative over the degree.

**Doctor of Philosophy in Physics**

**Core Courses**

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<tr>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<td>PHGN521</td>
<td>QUANTUM MECHANICS II</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHGN530</td>
<td>STATISTICAL MECHANICS</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHGN601</td>
<td>ADVANCED GRADUATE SEMINAR &amp; PHGN602</td>
<td>2.0 &amp; 2.0</td>
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**PH ELECT** Special topic area electives

PHGN707  Doctoral Thesis  40.0

Total Semester Hrs  72.0

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

**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.

**Professors**

Lincoln D. Carr
Reuben T. Collins
Charles G. Durfee III
Uwe Greife, Department Head
Mark T. Lusk
Frederic Sarazin
Jeff A. Squier
Lawrence R. Wiencke

**Associate Professors**

Eliot Kapit
Timothy R. Ohno
Eric S. Toberer

**Assistant Professors**

Serena M. Eley
Zhexuan Gong
Kyle G. Leach
Susanta K. Sarkar
Meenakshi Singh
Jeramy D. Zimmerman

**Teaching Professors**

Kristine E. Callan
Alex T. Flournoy
Patrick B. Kohl
H. Vincent Kuo
Todd G. Ruskell
Charles A. Stone

**Teaching Assistant Professor**

Emily M. Smith

**Research Professor**

Mark W. Coffey

**Research Associate Professor**

Wendy Adams Spencer

**Research Assistant Professors**

Daniel Adams
P. David Flammer
Prashun Gorai
Laith Haddad
Lakshmi Krishna
Lokender Kumar
Nitin Kumar
Gavriil Shchedrin
K. Xerxes Steirer
Courses

ENGY691. NREL ROTATION: ANALYSIS OF INTEGRATED ENERGY SYSTEMS. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(I) This course introduces graduate students enrolled in the Advanced Energy Systems Program to research opportunities, culture, and expectations in energy science and technology with a particular emphasis on systems and/or policy analysis. Students will work within directorates at NREL with an emphasis on systems modeling, analysis, and/or integration. This class will engage students in a semester-long research project in energy system analysis and prepare students for best practices with respect to research project and data management, literature reading, report writing, and presentation. 1 hour lecture; 6 hours lab; 3 semester hours.

ENGY692. NREL ROTATION: ENERGY SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGIES. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(I) This course prepares graduate students enrolled in the Advanced Energy Systems Program in research practices, culture, and expectations in energy science and technology with a particular emphasis on science and engineering related to energy materials, processes, and/or systems. Students will work within directorates at NREL with an emphasis on science and/or technology. This class will engage students in a semester-long research project in energy science and/or technology. Students will also learn and practice journal publication and research poster best practices, research career path planning, and proposal funding strategies. 1 hour lecture; 6 hours lab; 3 semester hours.

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.

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 ensemble ideal systems; phase transitions; nonequilibrium systems. Prerequisite: PHGN341 or equivalent and PHGN520. Co-requisite: PHGN521. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

PHGN535. INTERDISCIPLINARY SILICON PROCESSING LABORATORY. 3.0 Semester Hrs.
(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.
(I, 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.

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.

PHGN566. 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. Prerequisite: PHGN462. 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 ultrastar optics. Prerequisite: PHGN462 or equivalent. 3 hours lecture; 3 semester hours.

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.

PHGN659. 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.