

PHYSICS (PHYS)

PHYS 101. Foundations of Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. For non-science majors. Introduction to the fundamental ideas of physics. The course covers selected topics in mechanics, heat, optics, electricity and magnetism, and modern physics. Not applicable toward the physics major. An optional laboratory may be taken with this course; see PHYZ 101.

PHYS 103. Elementary Astronomy. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A descriptive approach to astronomy dealing with basic features of our solar system, our galaxy and the universe. Not applicable toward physics major. An optional laboratory may be taken with this course; see PHYZ 103.

PHYS 107. Wonders of Technology. 4 Hours.

Semester course; 5 lecture/laboratory/recitation hours. 4 credits. Introduction to physics concepts involved in everyday technological applications. The course covers selected topics in mechanics, heat, optics, electricity and magnetism, and modern physics by depicting their role in common devices. The laboratory focuses on applications of physics principles to everyday real-life situations. Not applicable toward the physics major.

PHYS 201. General Physics I. 4 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture and 3 laboratory hours. 4 credits. Prerequisite: MATH 151. Designed primarily for life-science majors. Basic concepts of motion, waves and heat. Not applicable toward the physics major.

PHYS 202. General Physics II. 4 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture and 3 laboratory hours. 4 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 201 or PHYS 207. Designed primarily for life-science majors. Basic concepts of electricity, magnetism, light and modern physics. Not applicable toward the physics major.

PHYS 207. University Physics I. 5 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture, 3 laboratory and 1 recitation hour. 5 credits. Prerequisite: MATH 151. Concurrent prerequisite: MATH 200. A vector- and calculus-based introduction to the fundamental concepts of mechanics, heat and wave motion.

PHYS 208. University Physics II. 5 Hours.

Semester course; 0 or 3 lecture, 0 or 3 laboratory and 0 or 1 recitation hour. 0 or 5 credits. Prerequisites: MATH 200 and PHYS 207. Concurrent prerequisite: MATH 201. A vector- and calculus-based introduction to the fundamentals of electricity, magnetism and optics.

PHYS 211. Physical Analysis. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: MATH 201 and PHYS 208. Corequisite: MATH 307. Extends the discussion of physical phenomena introduced in prerequisite courses to introduce topics and skills needed for more advanced physics courses. Topics include applying complex analysis to wave motion and oscillations, methods to solve problems in mechanics and an introduction to classical thermodynamics using multivariate analysis.

PHYS 215. Science, Technology and Society. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examination of scientific breakthroughs that have led to transformational technologies that are continuing to impact society today. Topics include a historical perspective, an understanding of scientific principles and technologies and an examination of how such discoveries have changed society. Not applicable toward physics major.

PHYS 220. Introduction to Complexity Science in AI Era. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The course introduces students to key concepts in complexity science and entanglement. Key skills learning will include: critical thinking, systems-thinking, adaptive approach, scientific literacy.

PHYS 291. Topics in Physical Science. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture or laboratory hours. 1-3 credits per semester. A study of a selected topic in physics, astronomy, geology, meteorology or oceanography. Not applicable toward physics major. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites.

PHYS 301. Classical Mechanics I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 208 and MATH 201. Concurrent prerequisite: MATH 307. Review of vector calculus. Newtonian mechanics: single particle, oscillations, motion under central forces and dynamics of systems of particles.

PHYS 302. Classical Mechanics II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 301 and MATH 301. Motion in noninertial frames, dynamics of rigid bodies, coupled oscillators, continuous systems and wave equations in one dimension.

PHYS 307. The Physics of Sound and Music. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: A 100- or 200-level physics course or equivalent and the ability to read music or sing or play a musical instrument, or permission of instructor. Basics of the physics of waves and sound. Fourier synthesis, tone quality, human ear and voice, musical temperament and pitch, physics of musical instruments, electronic synthesizers, sound recording and reproduction, room and auditorium acoustics. Not applicable toward the physics major. Crosslisted as: MHIS 307.

PHYS 315. Energy and the Environment. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment restricted to non-physics majors with junior or senior standing; not applicable to the physics major. A study of society's demands for energy, how it is currently being met, the environmental consequences thereof and some discussion of alternatives. Crosslisted as: ENVS 315.

PHYS 317. Preparing for the MCAT and Medical Sciences. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: BIOL 152, CHEM 102, PHYS 202 or PHYS 208. This course introduces physics majors to areas of medical practice where physical sciences play a key role. These include but are not limited to radiology and radiation oncology, orthopedics, pulmonology, and electrophysiology. Students will also review key topics in physics and life sciences that are tested on the Medical College Admissions Test. Broadly, these include chemical and physical foundations of biological systems as well as biological and biochemical foundations of living systems.

PHYS 320. Modern Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 208 and MATH 201. Concurrent prerequisite: MATH 307. Foundations of modern physics including special relativity, thermal radiation and quantization, wave-particle duality of radiation and matter, Schrödinger equation, atomic, nuclear and particle physics, and molecular structure and spectra. A continuation of PHYS 208.

PHYS 325. Visualization of Physics Using Mathematica. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 208 and MATH 307. Corequisite: PHYS 301 or PHYS 320. Visualization of various areas of physics using the Mathematica language for performing numerical calculations and producing graphics and animations. Examples will be taken from classical mechanics, classical electromagnetism, modern physics, statistical mechanics and condensed matter physics.

PHYS 335. Experimental Skills for Physicists. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 320 and PHYZ 320. Practical skills in experimental physics, including understanding and use of circuit-based electronics, critical-thinking, error analysis and writing research papers. Skills will be used to address engaging and current real-world challenges.

PHYS 340. Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 301. Concurrent prerequisite: MATH 301. Microscopic theory of temperature, heat and entropy, kinetic theory, multicomponent systems and quantum statistics. Mathematical relationships of thermodynamics.

PHYS 351. Guided Inquiry for University Physics I. 1.5 Hour.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 1 recitation hour. 1.5 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 207 and permission of instructor. Student learning assistants aid in recitation sections of PHYS 207 University Physics I using guided inquiry and group-based activities. Further develops the core skills of PHYS 207. Introduces students to the principles of active and collaborative learning in physics through practical, hands-on problem-solving, class discussions and demonstrations.

PHYS 352. Guided Inquiry for University Physics II. 1.5 Hour.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 1 recitation hour. 1.5 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 208 and permission of instructor. Student learning assistants aid in recitation sections of PHYS 208 University Physics II using guided inquiry and group-based activities. Further develops the core skills of PHYS 208. Introduces students to the principles of active and collaborative learning in physics through practical, hands-on problem-solving, class discussions and demonstrations.

PHYS 376. Electromagnetism I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 301. Concurrent prerequisite: MATH 301. Electrostatics, magnetism and electromagnetic properties of matter, Maxwell's equations, electromagnetic waves, boundary conditions and polarization.

PHYS 377. Electromagnetism II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 376. Advanced topics in electromagnetism, such as the microscopic theory of magnetism, slowly varying currents, physics of plasmas, electromagnetic properties of superconductors, Maxwell's equations and propagation of electromagnetic waves in bounded media, dispersive media, electromagnetic radiation, electrodynamics of moving charges, and the relativistic formulation of electrodynamics.

PHYS 380. Quantum Physics I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 301, PHYS 320 and MATH 301, or permission of instructor. Brief introduction to the correspondence between classical and quantum mechanics, Schrodinger wave equation, operator methods in quantum mechanics, angular momentum and conservation laws, solution to harmonic oscillator and the hydrogen atom, magnetic dipole momentum and spin.

PHYS 381. Life in the Universe. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 202 or PHYS 208. Surveys the scientific topics that comprise the key elements of a new field of astrobiology. These include the historic foundations of astrobiology as a science, cosmological origins of life's chemical building blocks and habitable environments, chemistry and biology of life on Earth, the history and evolution of life on Earth, the role of mass extinctions, feasibility of space travel and the search for life in the solar system and beyond.

PHYS 391. Topics in Physics. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours. 1-3 credits per semester. Maximum total of 6 credits. In-depth study of a selected topic in physics or physics-related technology, usually at a level requiring only elementary algebra. Not applicable toward physics major. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites.

PHYS 397. Directed Study. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits per semester. Maximum of 3 credits applicable toward physics major requirement; maximum total of 4 credits. Open to nonmajors. Determination of amount of credit and permission of instructor must be obtained before registration of course. Intended to allow nonmajors and majors to examine in detail an area of physics or physics-related technology not otherwise available in upper-level courses. May involve either directed readings or directed laboratory work.

PHYS 417. Topics in Biophysics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 208, CHEM 102 and BIOL 152. An introduction to biophysics examining many topics in life sciences. The course will introduce how to understand phenomena in life sciences from a quantitative perspective and use physical models for complex systems. Topics include Brownian motion, mechanical and chemical equilibrium, electrostatics, molecular machines, pattern formation and physical tools in biology.

PHYS 420. Quantum Physics II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 380 or permission of instructor. Transition rates, addition of angular momentum, multi-electron atoms-ground state, X-ray and optical excitations, time independent perturbation theory, relativistic hydrogen atom and the structure of atoms, collision theory, nuclear structure, elementary particles and their symmetries.

PHYS 422. Optics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 376 or permission of instructor. Comprehensive study of propagation of light, including geometrical optics, polarization, interference, diffraction, Fourier optics and quantum optics.

PHYS 425. Computational Physics and Data Analysis. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 340. Introduces students to topics in computational physics and computational tools used for data analysis. This course teaches basic skills in programming in the context of applying them to biophysics-related problems. It is assumed that students have no computer programming experience, but have a modest understanding of physical systems.

PHYS 440. Introduction to Condensed Matter Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 340 and 380. Corequisite: PHYS 376. Structure and bonding in solids, phonons, free electron Fermi gas, energy bands, semiconductors, Fermi surface, optical properties and magnetism.

PHYS 450. Senior Physics Laboratory. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 301 and 320, and PHYZ 320. Experiments in condensed matter physics with an introduction to the instrumentation and data analysis used in the research laboratory.

PHYS 470. Introduction to Nanoscience. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 320. An overview and introduction to a wide range of topics in nanoscience and nanotechnology from the point of view of physics, chemistry, engineering and biology. Takes a systems-based approach to demonstrate how different nano-concepts come together to create systems with unique functions and characteristics.

PHYS 480. Particle Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 340, PHYS 376 and PHYS 420. Basic concepts of particle physics, including the Dirac equation, lowest-order quantum electrodynamics calculations, scattering amplitudes and cross sections, the weak interaction, processes involving quarks and their symmetries, and quantum chromodynamics.

PHYS 483. Introduction to Astrophysics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 320. Basic concepts of star formation and evolution, galactic structures, and cosmology. Includes stellar atmospheres and interiors, the sun, the Milky Way and other galaxies, and black holes.

PHYS 490. Seminar in Conceptual Physics. 1 Hour.

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Prerequisites: PHYS 340, PHYS 376, PHYS 380 and PHYZ 320. Restricted to seniors in physics with at least 85 credit hours taken toward the degree. A senior capstone course in physics designed to help students formulate physics-related questions in such a way that they can obtain quantitative answers. Students will describe their results in a senior paper and in an oral presentation.

PHYS 491. Topics in Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Maximum of 3 credits applicable toward physics major requirement; maximum total of 6 credits. An in-depth study of a selected topic in physics. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites.

PHYS 492. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits per semester. Maximum of 3 credits applicable toward physics major requirement; maximum total of 8 credits. Open generally to students of only junior or senior standing who have acquired at least 12 credits in the departmental discipline. Determination of the amount of credit and permission of instructor and department chair must be procured prior to registration of the course. Independent projects in experimental or theoretical physics.

PHYS 508. The Physical Science of Space for Teachers. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Prerequisites: B.S. or B.A. degree with at least two mathematics and two science courses or permission of instructor. The course is designed for the secondary physical science and physics teachers. The physical science phenomena of the solar system and the universe: mechanics, electromagnetism, optics and energy are presented for the teacher. The course curriculum closely follows the Virginia Science Standards of Learning for Physics and Physical Science. The course makes use of the Virginia Science Museum's interactive physical science exhibit galleries (aerospace, force and motion, waves and patterns, light and vision matter, crystals and electromagnetism as well as the Digistar planetarium and telescopes).

PHYS 509. Experiencing Science for Teachers. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: B.S. or B.A. degree with at least two mathematics and two science courses or permission of instructor. Designed to give physical science and physics teachers an understanding of the methods and processes actually used by scientists in different disciplines. Students repeat classic experiments, read from original works, keep detailed research journals, participate in laboratory experiments, engage in the peer review process and present results of projects in colloquium format. The course meets at the Science Museum of Virginia and uses the interactive science exhibits; visits to science sites in the area.

PHYS 510. Physical Science Demonstrations. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 509 or permission of instructor. The course is designed to give the working secondary physical science and physics teacher a depth of experience in designing and effectively using experiments to interpret phenomena for students. Participants learn the essentials of developing effective apparatus for investigations, interactive exhibits and demonstrations in the physical sciences. Students will undertake and present a major project as part of the course.

PHYS 514. Modeling Biocomplexity. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2.5 lecture and .5 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: one year of calculus. Introduction to the modeling and simulation of the behavior of complex biological systems, including models in both continuous and discrete time. Numerical methods using mathematica, analytical methods using calculus and laboratory experiments using computer interfaces will be used to study population dynamics and the behavior of physiological systems exhibiting such properties as oscillations and chaotic biological dynamics. Crosslisted as: BNFO 514.

PHYS 522. Optics and Laser Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 376 or permission of instructor. The purpose of this course is to introduce a range of topics from optics and the principles of laser operation. Topics include waves, physical optics, geometric optics, superposition, interference, polarization, diffraction, Fourier optics, coherence, lasers, second quantization.

PHYS 550. Techniques in Material Research. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 4 laboratory and 2 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 450 or graduate standing. This course focuses on the application of modern characterization techniques in materials research. Techniques to be studied include high-resolution X-ray diffraction, low-energy electron diffraction, light-energy electron diffraction, scanning-tunneling microscopy, molecular beam epitaxy, Auger electron spectroscopy and X-ray photoemission spectroscopy.

PHYS 560. Fundamentals of Semiconductor Nanostructures. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course provides an introduction to the fundamentals in physics of semiconductors with emphasis on low-dimensional structures such as quantum wells, quantum dots, nanorods, etc. Particular attention is placed on the effects of the surface and small sizes on electrical and optical properties of semiconductor materials and devices.

PHYS 571. Theoretical Mechanics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 376 and PHYS 380, or graduate standing. An introduction to advanced dynamics involving the Lagrangian and Hamiltonian formalisms.

PHYS 573. Analytical Methods in Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 376 and PHYS 380, or graduate standing. Theoretical and numerical techniques in solving differential equations in condensed matter. Classification of electronic states in solids and clusters using groups, infinite series approximations, calculus of residues and causality.

PHYS 576. Electromagnetic Theory. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 571. Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism, vector and scalar potentials, electromagnetic waves and radiation theory.

PHYS 580. Quantum Mechanics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 571. Theoretical quantum descriptions with emphasis upon mathematical techniques. Schrodinger equation, hydrogen atom, eigenfunctions and eigenvalues, angular momentum and spin and perturbation theory.

PHYS 583. Geometrical Methods of Physics and Gravitation. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 571 and PHYS 573 or permission of instructor. Introduction to the language of differential geometry that is needed for research in gravitation and cosmology. Topics include tensors, connections on manifolds, gauge-invariant field theories and Einstein's theory of general relativity. Examples include black holes and cosmological solutions of Einstein's field equations.

PHYS 591. Topics in Physics. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours. 1-3 credits. Open to graduate students and to undergraduate students with advanced standing. An in-depth study of a selected topic in advanced physics. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites. Applicable toward physics major requirements.

PHYS 640. Equilibrium Statistical Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 571 and PHYS 580. Fundamentals of equilibrium statistical physics. Topics include review of thermodynamics, canonical and grand canonical partition functions, mean-field theories, Ising and Bragg-Williams models, Landau theory, fluctuations about the mean field, critical phenomena, exact solution to the one-dimensional Ising model, two-dimensional Ising model and the renormalization group.

PHYS 641. Solid State Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 571 and PHYS 580. Study of structure and electronic properties of materials in the solid phase.

PHYS 650. Subatomic Physics I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 576, PHYS 580 and CHEM 510. Studies of nuclei and elementary particles, reaction dynamics, particle accelerators, detection devices, particle classification, symmetries and conservation laws, quantum electrodynamics, the weak interaction, quantum chromodynamics, unified theories, the nuclear shell model and collective model, and nuclear reactions. Offered in cooperation with Virginia State University.

PHYS 651. Subatomic Physics II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 650. A continuation of PHYS 650. Offered in cooperation with Virginia State University.

PHYS 661. Surface and Materials Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 641, CHEM 510 or permission of instructor. This course will focus on the physics of surface, interfacial and other nanostructured material systems, and the experimental techniques used to assay their geometric and electronic properties. Topics include ultra-high vacuum techniques and design, surface geometric and electronic structure, adsorbates on surfaces and interface formation, thin film growth, and layered systems. Characterization techniques to be discussed include geometric probes (STM, AFM, RHEED, LEED, AFM, XRD) and synchrotron radiation-based electronic structure probes (PES, SXF, NEXAFS).

PHYS 663. Studies in Nuclear Physics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Credits for only two televised courses will count toward degree requirements. Courses televised by the Virginia Cooperative Graduate Engineering Program. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered each semester and prerequisites.

PHYS 670. Conceptual Physics for Teachers I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 4 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHYS 508, PHYS 509 and PHYS 510, or permission of instructor. First of the sequence 670-672. Development of the methodology for the experimental design at middle and high school level, concentrating on the science of measurement, materials structure and characterization, and light and optical properties of matter. The 670-672 sequence uses and develops computer-based experiments and interactive multimedia materials for use in the classroom. The course contains examples of vertical integration of technological applications of physical principles across disciplines.

PHYS 671. Conceptual Physics for Teachers II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 4 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 670 or permission of instructor. Second of the sequence PHYS 670-672. Development of the methodology for experimental design at middle and high school level, concentrating on sound and acoustics, electromagnetism and classical mechanics.

PHYS 672. Conceptual Physics for Teachers III. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 4 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHYS 671 or permission of instructor. Third of the sequence PHYS 670-672. Development of the methodology for the experimental design at middle and high school level, concentrating on heat, thermodynamics and modern physics.

PHYS 680. High Bandwidth Nanoscale Control, Positioning and Dynamics. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 2 credits. This course introduces students to key concepts for nanoscale measurement and guides them through the process of developing instrumentation for the measurement, fabrication and characterization of nanoscale features and structures. Key skills learning will include programming, data analysis, instrument control and automation.

PHYS 690. Research Seminar. 1 Hour.

Semester course; 1 credit. May be repeated for a maximum of 4 credits. Examines current problems and developments in physics.

PHYS 691. Special Topics. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 credits. Prerequisites: at least one graduate-level physics course and permission of instructor. Selected topics in physics from such areas as statistical physics, quantum field theory, semiconductor device physics, general relativity, electronic structure of solids, thin-film fabrication techniques, superconductivity, nuclear magnetic resonance techniques, crystallography and nuclear physics.

PHYS 697. Directed Research. 1-15 Hours.

Semester course; 1-15 credits. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisites: at least one graduate-level physics course and permission of instructor. Research leading to the M.S. or Ph.D. degree.