Handbook for Current 
and 
Prospective Physics Majors 

August, 2017 

Department of Physics 
University of Massachusetts Amherst 

Contact List 

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www.physics.umass.edu 

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Department Head  
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head@physics.umass.edu 

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Prof. Anthony Dinsmore (413) 545-3786  
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Prof. Andrea Pocar, (413)-545-3786  
pocar@physics.umass.edu 

Honors College web page  
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201 Commonwealth Honors College  
(413) 545-2483 

This Handbook is available at http://www.physics.umass.edu/undergraduate
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Advising and Counseling Resources

Physics Department academic advisors meet with every physics major at least once every semester. Students are required to meet with an advisor prior to enrolling in the next semester’s classes. At other times, if questions arise about classes, careers, summer jobs or internships, research opportunities, personal stresses, or any other aspect of UMass life, please contact your advisor.

If you are....
- not currently a physics major but want to learn more about it, please contact the Chief Undergraduate Advisor.
- already a physics major (as a primary major), then one of these advisors should have been assigned to you on SPIRE. If not, please contact the appropriate advisor or the Chief Undergraduate Advisor
- a second major in physics (SM-PHYS), then you might not have a physics advisor appointed on SPIRE. However, we still recommend that you visit a physics advisor each semester. Please contact the appropriate advisor from the list below. If you are not in the standard course sequence, then contact the Chief Undergraduate advisor instead.

Who we are:
Chief Undergraduate Advisor: Prof. Anthony Dinsmore, Hasbrouck 404, upd@physics.umass.edu
Class of Fall 2017: Prof. Chris Santangelo, csantang@physics.umass.edu
Class of 2018:
  Prof. Lorenzo Sorbo, LGRT 417C, sorbo@physics.umass.edu [last names A-K]
  Prof. Mark Tuominen, Has402, tuominen@physics.umass.edu [last names L-Z]
Class of 2019:
  Prof. Ben Brau, LGRT 1040, bbrau@physics.umass.edu
  Prof. Andrea Pocar LGRT 418, pocar@physics.umass.edu
Class of 2020:
  Prof. Benny Davidovitch, Has 303, bdavidov@physics.umass.edu
  Prof. David Kawall, LGRT 417B/429, kawall@physics.umass.edu
Class of 2021:
  Prof. Lori Goldner, Has 407B, lgoldner@physics.umass.edu
  Prof. Nikolay Prokof’ev, Has 406, prokofev@physics.umass.edu
Honors coordinator: Prof. Andrea Pocar LGRT 418, pocar@physics.umass.edu

Other resources:
The College of Natural Sciences advising center. They can advise on GenEd and language requirements, courses added or dropped after the initial Add/Drop period, or a ‘credit overload’ (>19). They also offer career advice (in addition to your advisor).
(413) 545-1969, 220 Morrill II, https://www.cns.umass.edu/advising

Where to go when you are in distress:
- Dean of Students Office (DOSO).
  (413) 545-2684. 227 Whitmore. https://www.umass.edu/dean_students/
DOSO is a resource for you – not just a disciplinary office! Don’t hesitate to call them if you need help with personal, medical and other emergencies. They can communicate with your instructors, help with medical exceptions to academic rules, etc. They can
also refer you to other resources.

- The Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH), (413) 545-2337. CCPH is a go-to resource for students who struggle with anxiety, depression or any other kind of emotional stress. They are on-call 24/7. They can handle emergency and non-emergency/evaluation/advisory meetings. Calling them will not trigger a major response or commit a student to treatment.

Other Links and Contacts

SPS Society of Physics Students – An association for all students interested in physics. The group meets weekly, usually Mon or Wed evenings at 7pm in LGRT 1033, with pizza. Each year, SPS members elect their President, Vice President, and Treasurer. For information, please visit http://blogs.umass.edu/umasssps/ or https://umassamherst.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/sps or their Facebook page.

INTRODUCTION

Physics is the basic science that underlies all of the physical sciences and influences most of the biological sciences. Physics treats matter, energy, and interactions at the fundamental level. It is a perpetually changing science, with interdisciplinary aspects that shift as technology and study bring new fields and new possibilities to light. After physicists establish the fundamental principles within a field, the field is often "handed over" to another discipline for further exploration. Thus, much of the physics of yesterday is now regarded as part of chemistry or engineering.

Physics provides an excellent background for a variety of careers in science, technology, teaching, and beyond. Physicists entering research generally need to choose among multiple possible branches. Physicists can work in either basic or applied research. The scientist engaged in the former typically works in a university or a national laboratory, delving into the fundamental processes of nature. Applied research concerns itself with applications of our knowledge by way of technological advances, in an industrial or commercial setting.

There is also a choice between working in theory or experiment. Experimentalists create and use a given apparatus to test hypotheses and theories, to make unexpected discoveries of new phenomena, or to develop new applications of ideas. Theorists either use that data, or operate independently of data, to develop new explanations, hypotheses, or theories. Particularly broad scientists can act as both, often using computer simulations to gain insight into both the theoretical and experimental aspects of a given problem. Research physicists choose to work in some specific area, such as nuclear, condensed matter, or high-energy particle physics.

The Department of Physics offers a variety of courses and a variety of possibilities for majors. Since physics is an ever-changing field, the focus of the department is to impart a set of skills that can be applied over a wide range of disciplines. The Applied and General Tracks for majors exist to address the needs of students moving into the job market, or graduate school in another field, after graduation. The Professional Track exists for those students who plan on post-bachelor's education in physics or closely related fields, or for those students who want to pursue a rigorous BS degree in physics.

You can also join our faculty in research (see p. 17). Most faculty members are engaged in basic experimental or theoretical research in the following areas: biophysics, hard and soft condensed-matter physics, experimental and theoretical particle physics, experimental and theoretical gravity, low-temperature physics, nano-science, nuclear physics, and polymer
research. Excellent facilities and federal research funds make undergraduate research opportunities widely available through independent study, honors research, or summer employment.

University and College Requirements

To receive a bachelor's degree in physics a student must meet graduation requirements set by (i) the University, (ii) the College of Natural Sciences, and (iii) the Physics Department. The University requirements (total number of credits, number of credits in residence, GPA, general education requirements) are explained in the 2011/2012 Guide to Undergraduate Programs, available at www.umass.edu/ug_programguide/. The College of Natural Sciences degree requirements are available at http://www.cns.umass.edu/academics/cns-degree-requirements.

Physics Department Requirements

The Physics Department offers three different degree tracks for study. These degree tracks are the Professional, the Applied, and the General tracks. A minimum GPA of 2.0 is required for courses counted toward the Physics major for all three degree tracks.

Physics Curriculum: Professional Track

The Professional Track provides a broad background in physics. It is intended for majors who plan to attend graduate school in physics or in related fields, or for students who want to pursue a rigorous and traditional physics curriculum. P-track majors might take on jobs after graduation or go to graduate school. The track concentrates heavily on the operational material needed for introductory-level graduate courses, and requires no outside concentration in another field. This option results in the earning of a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree.

1. Introductory Sequence

   Fall
   PHYSICS 181 Physics I – Mechanics + Lab 4 credits
   PHYSICS 185 Freshman Colloquium 1 credit

   Spring
   PHYSICS 182 Physics II – Electricity and Magnetism + Lab 4 credits
   PHYSICS 186 Freshman Colloquium 1 credit

For special circumstances, your advisor can authorize an alternate introductory sequence.

2. Sophomore Sequence

   Fall
   PHYSICS 281 Computational Physics 3 credits
   PHYSICS 287 Physics III - Thermodynamics, Waves, Optics 3 credits
   PHYSICS 289 Physics III Lab 1 credit

   Spring
   PHYSICS 282 Techniques of Theoretical Physics 3 credits
   PHYSICS 284 Modern Physics I 3 credits
   PHYSICS 286 Modern Physics Lab 2 credits
3. **Intermediate Series**
   - PHYSICS 440 Intermediate Lab (Fall and Spring) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 421 Mechanics (Fall) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 422 Intermediate Electricity & Magnetism (Spring) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 423 Statistical Physics & Thermodynamics (Spring) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 424 Quantum Mechanics (Fall) 3 credits

4. **Writing Requirement**
   - PHYSICS 381 Writing in Physics (Fall) 3 credits
   - *Students with double majors should take the writing course offered by their primary major department*

5. **Advanced Courses and Labs**
   - *One advanced course must be selected from the following:*
   - PHYSICS 531 Electronics for Scientists I (Fall) 4 credits
   - PHYSICS 553 Optics with Lab (Spring) 4 credits
   - PHYSICS 556 Nuclei and Elementary Particles (Fall) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 558 Solid State Physics (Fall) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 562 Advanced Electricity and Magnetism (Spring) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 564 Advanced Introductory QM (Fall) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 568 General Relativity (Fall) 3 credits
   - PHYSICS 590M Medical Physics (Spring) 3 credits
   - ASTRON 337 Optical and Infrared Astronomy 4 credits
   - ASTRON 338 Techniques of Radio Astronomy 4 credits
   - ASTRON 451 Astrophysics I 4 credits
   - ASTRON 452 Astrophysics II 4 credits

   *Some of the courses listed here are not offered every year. Typically, these classes are held based on student interest and pre-enrollment. Students should contact their advisors for information on planned course offerings.*

6. **Math Requirements**
   - MATH 131 Calculus I (co-requisite for P181) (Fall and Spring) 4 credits
   - MATH 132 Calculus II (co-requisite for P182) (Fall and Spring) 4 credits
   - MATH 233 Multivariate Calculus (Fall and Spring) 3 credits
   - MATH 331 Ordinary Differential Equations (Fall and Spring) 3 credits

   *A course in linear algebra, Math 235, is also recommended.*
Physics Curriculum: Applied Track

The Applied Track is intended for students with an interest in a technical subject that is not within the standard canon of physics. Applied track students might plan to enter the job market immediately after graduation, or may plan to attend graduate school in a topic outside physics. Although the Applied Track requires less physics courses than the Professional Track, this is balanced by the requirement of an 18-credit concentration in a coherent scientific or technical sub-field. Courses in the 18-credit concentration cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements for another major or minor. This option results in the a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree.

1. Introductory Sequence
   Fall
   PHYSICS 181 Physics I – Mechanics + Lab 4 credits
   PHYSICS 185 Freshman Colloquium 1 credit
   Spring
   PHYSICS 182 Physics II – Electricity and Magnetism + Lab 4 credits
   PHYSICS 186 Freshman Colloquium 1 credit

For special circumstances, your advisor can authorize an alternate introductory sequence.

2. Sophomore Sequence
   Fall
   PHYSICS 287 Thermodynamics, Waves, Optics 3 credits
   PHYSICS 289 Thermodynamics, Waves, Optics Lab 1 credit
   PHYSICS 281 Computational Physics 3 credits
   Spring
   PHYSICS 284 Modern Physics I 3 credits
   PHYSICS 286 Modern Physics Lab 2 credits

Physics 282, Techniques of Theoretical Physics, is strongly recommended, as it is needed for the upper-level classes especially 422 and 424.

3. Intermediate Series
   PHYSICS 440 Intermediate Lab (Fall and Spring) 3 credits
   and students must also take at least two of the following:
   PHYSICS 421 Intermediate Mechanics (Fall) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 422 Intermediate Electricity & Magnetism (Spring) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 423 Statistical Physics & Thermodynamics (Spring) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 424 Quantum Mechanics (Fall) 3 credits

4. Writing Requirement
   PHYSICS 381 Writing in Physics 3 credits

Students with double majors normally take the writing course offered by their primary major department.
5. Advanced Courses and Labs

One advanced course must be selected from the following:

- PHYSICS 531 Electronics for Scientists I (Fall) 4 credits
- PHYSICS 553 Optics with Lab (Spring) 4 credits
- PHYSICS 556 Nuclei and Elementary Particles (Fall) 3 credits
- PHYSICS 558 Solid State Physics (Fall) 3 credits
- PHYSICS 562 Advanced Electricity and Magnetism (Spring) 3 credits
- PHYSICS 564 Advanced Introductory QM (Fall) 3 credits
- PHYSICS 568 General Relativity (Fall) 3 credits
- PHYSICS 590M Medical Physics (Spring) 3 credits
- ASTRON 337 Optical and Infrared Astronomy 4 credits
- ASTRON 338 Techniques of Radio Astronomy 4 credits
- ASTRON 451 Astrophysics I 4 credits
- ASTRON 452 Astrophysics II 4 credits

Some of the courses listed here are not offered every year. Typically, these classes are held based on student interest and pre-enrollment. Students should contact their advisors for information on planned course offerings.

6. Math Requirements

- MATH 131 Calculus I (co-requisite for P181) (Fall and Spring) 4 credits
- MATH 132 Calculus II (co-requisite for P182) (Fall and Spring) 4 credits
- MATH 233 Multivariate Calculus (Fall and Spring) 3 credits

A course in linear algebra, Math 235, is also recommended.

7. Concentration in Technical Electives

For this requirement, the student must take a minimum of 18 credits with a specific scientific or technical focus. The purpose of the concentration is to develop coherent, expert competency in a scientific or technical subfield. Therefore, a broadly defined concentration such as "Astronomy" or "Computer Science" would not be suitable, nor would Gen-Ed or independent study courses.

Courses used to fulfill the Applied-track concentration cannot also be used to fulfill the requirements of another major or minor. The student's advisor must approve the coursework for a given concentration, preferably within the sophomore or junior years. Sample concentrations will be found in the section "Sample Plans of Study". At the end of this Handbook, there is a one-page "Applied-Track Checklist". A student intending to follow the Applied Track should fill out this checklist with the courses intended to fulfill the 18-credit concentration requirement, and have the list approved by their academic advisor.
Physics Curriculum: General Track

The General Track allows a student to concentrate in a non-technical area, such as teaching or science writing. This option results in the earning of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree and requires foreign-language classes (see below).

1. Introductory Sequence
   Fall
   PHYSICS 181 Physics I – Mechanics + lab 4 credits
   PHYSICS 185 Freshman Colloquium 1 credit
   Spring
   PHYSICS 182 Physics II – Electricity and Magnetism + lab 4 credits
   PHYSICS 186 Freshman Colloquium 1 credit

For special circumstances, your advisor can authorize an alternate introductory sequence.

2. Sophomore Sequence
   Fall
   PHYSICS 287 Thermodynamics, Waves, Optics 3 credits
   PHYSICS 289 Thermodynamics, Waves, Optics Lab 1 credit
   PHYSICS 281 Computational Physics 3 credits
   Spring
   PHYSICS 284 Modern Physics I 3 credits
   PHYSICS 286 Modern Physics Lab 2 credits

Physics 282, Techniques of Theoretical Physics, is also recommended, as it is needed for the upper-level classes especially 422 and 424.

3. Intermediate Series
   PHYSICS 440 Intermediate Lab (Fall and Spring) 3 credits

4. Writing Requirement
   PHYSICS 381 Writing in Physics 3 credits

Students with double majors normally take the writing course offered by their primary major department.

5. Advanced Courses and Labs
   One advanced course must be selected from the following:
   PHYSICS 421 Intermediate Mechanics (Fall) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 422 Intermediate Electricity & Magnetism (Spring) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 423 Statistical Physics & Thermodynamics (Spring) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 424 Quantum Mechanics (Fall) 3 credits
   PHYSICS 531 Electronics for Scientists I (Fall) 4 credits
   PHYSICS 553 Optics with Lab (Spring) 4 credits
   PHYSICS 590M Medical Physics (Spring) 3 credits
Some of the courses listed above are not offered every year. Typically, these classes are held based on student interest and pre-enrollment. Students should contact their advisors for information on planned course offerings.

6. Math Requirements

MATH 131 Calculus I (co-requisite for P181) (Fall and Spring) 4 credits
MATH 132 Calculus II (co-requisite for P182) (Fall and Spring) 4 credits
MATH 233 Multivariate Calculus (Fall and Spring) 3 credits

A math course in linear algebra, Math 235, is also recommended.

7. Concentration Electives

For this requirement, the student must take a minimum of 18 credits within a specific concentration. This need not be a technical area, and those seeking a focus in a technical area should consider the Applied Track instead. The student's advisor must approve the coursework for a given concentration, preferably within the sophomore or early junior years. Sample concentrations will be found in the section "Sample Four-Year Plans." Courses used to fulfill the G-track concentration cannot also be used to fulfill the requirements of another major or minor. At the end of this Handbook, there is a one-page "General-Track Checklist". A student intending to follow the General Track should fill out this checklist with the courses intended to fulfill the 18-credit concentration requirement, and have the list approved by their academic advisor.

8. College of Natural Science Requirements for the B.A. Degree

Students pursuing the B.A. degree must also satisfy the foreign language requirement in the College of Natural Science. For details go to:
http://www.cns.umass.edu/academics/cns-degree-requirements
Sample Plans of Study

The following plans of study give possible arrangements of courses by semester and year. Real schedules should be adjusted, of course, to suit each student's particular needs.

All freshmen, sophomore, and transfer physics majors take the same set of introductory courses. Most physics courses are only offered once per year (Fall or Spring), plan your schedule accordingly! The Freshman Colloquium, P185/186, is not a required course but it is recommended for all physics majors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Semester</th>
<th>Second Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics 181  Mechanics + Lab</td>
<td>Physics 182  E&amp;M + Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 131  Calculus I</td>
<td>Math 132  Calculus II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 185  Freshman Colloquium</td>
<td>Physics 186 Freshmen Colloquium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLWP 112 College Writing</td>
<td>Gen Ed Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Semester</th>
<th>Fourth Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics 287  Thermo., optics and waves</td>
<td>Physics 284  Modern Physics I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 289  Lab for P287</td>
<td>Physics 286  Lab for P284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 281  Computational Physics</td>
<td>Physics 282  Theoretical Techniques*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 233  Multivariate Calculus</td>
<td>Math 331  Differential Equations†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed Course</td>
<td>Gen Ed Course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Physics 282 is not required for the Applied and General tracks, but is recommended.
† Math 331 is not required for the Applied and General tracks.

After this common introductory sequence, your plan of study will depend upon which track you choose (Professional, Applied, or General).

General Education requirements for students starting Fall 2010 and later:
General Education requires six GenEd courses, plus two courses that carry Social and Cultural Diversity; diversity courses are allowed to count towards the GenEd requirement. Physics students satisfy the PS GenEd requirement by taking Physics 181, and the R1/R2 requirement by taking Math 131. Physics students will in general need to take one BS GenEd and four Social World GenEd’s + diversity. The University Integrative Experience requirement is satisfied by taking Physics 440 Intermediate Lab in the third or fourth year.
Sample Plan of Study - Professional Track

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 381 Writing in Physics</td>
<td>Physics 422 Electricity and Magnetism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 421 Mechanics</td>
<td>Physics 423 Statistical Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 424 Quantum Mechanics</td>
<td>Physics 440 Intermediate Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math elective (235 is recommended)</td>
<td>Physics Electives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-Level Physics Course</td>
<td>Physics Electives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics Electives</td>
<td>Physics 496 Indep. Study/Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 496 Indep. Study/Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This particular plan will prepare the student to take the Physics GRE exam in the fall of the fourth year, and leaves the majority of the senior year available for honors thesis or special projects. Your physics advisor can recommend other options for the sequence of taking courses.
### Sample Plan of Study - Applied Track

#### Third Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics 381  Writing in Physics</td>
<td>Physics 422 or 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 421 or 424</td>
<td>500-Level Physics Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math elective (235 is recommended)</td>
<td>Physics 440  Intermediate Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Option</td>
<td>Technical Option</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Fourth Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics Electives</td>
<td>Technical Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A wide variety of concentrations can be created within the Applied Track. As stated in the Applied Track requirements, the purpose of the concentration is to develop coherent, expert competency in a scientific or technical subfield. Therefore, a broadly defined concentration such as "Astronomy" or "Computer Science" would not be suitable, nor would Gen-Ed introductory level, or independent study courses. In particular, the Applied Track is **not** intended as a mechanism for students in another major that requires physics courses, such as Astronomy, to meet the requirements for a dual major.

The following are samples of concentrations for given fields. *In creating concentration programs, students should get advice from an advisor in the concentration program. Some classes may not be open to non-major students (i.e. physics majors); this is generally the case for courses in the engineering college.*

#### Sample Concentration in Mechanical Engineering

PHYSICS 423 Statistical Physics and Thermodynamics should be one of the two 400-level courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics 531  Electronics as an elective</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE 330  Thermodynamics II</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE 340  Fluid Mechanics I</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE 354  Heat Transfer</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE 440  Fluid Mechanics II</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE 570  Solar Energy Conversion</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE 573  Engineering of Wind Power Systems</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** PHYSICS 531 must be taken as a part of this technical elective rather than as one of the courses completing advanced physics lab requirements (see Applied Track requirements) otherwise the student would be short three credits for the technical elective (fifteen instead of the requisite eighteen).
**Sample Concentration in Pre-Medicine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 111 General Chemistry for Science and Engineering Majors w/lab</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 112 General Chemistry for Science and Engineering Majors w/lab</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 261 Organic Chemistry I</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 262 Organic Chemistry II</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 290A Organic Lab</td>
<td>2 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 100 Introductory Biology I w/lab</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 101 Introductory Biology II w/lab</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Although the 18-credit limit would be satisfied without taking all of these courses, it would be insufficient to satisfy the pre-medical requirements.

**Sample Concentration in Biochemistry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 100 Introductory Biology I</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 101 Introductory Biology II</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 121 General Chemistry w/lab</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEM 122 General Chemistry w/lab</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 285 Cell and Molecular Biology</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 523 General Biochemistry</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 524 General Biochemistry</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Plan of Study - General Track

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 381</td>
<td>400 or 500 level physics course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in Physics</td>
<td>Concentration Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration Option</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fourth Year</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration Option</td>
<td>Concentration Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course in HFA or SBS</td>
<td>Course in HFA or SBS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are sample concentrations for given fields. *In creating concentration programs, students should get advice from an advisor in the concentration program. This is especially important for teacher certification.*

**Sample Concentration in Science Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGL 379 Technical Writing</th>
<th>3 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 380 Professional Writing and Technical Communication I</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 381 Professional Writing and Technical Communication II</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 382 Professional Writing and Technical Communication III</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOURN 300 News writing and Reporting</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOURN 392M Introduction to Nonfiction Writing</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Concentration in Teacher Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUC 524 Work of the Middle and High School Teacher</th>
<th>3 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUC 592S Microteaching Lab</td>
<td>1 credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUC 510 Teacher in the Middle and High School Classroom</td>
<td>2 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUC 534 Instructional Planning and Assessment</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUC 512 Teaching Science in the Middle and High School</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUC 500S Student Teaching</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Departmental Honors in Physics

Students who are members in good standing in the Honors College can participate in the Departmental Honors program in the Physics Department. The Physics Department requires,

i. two physics honors courses, with one course taken at any level, and the other course at the 300 level or higher. This requirement can be satisfied by taking a physics honors colloquium, or by enrolling in honors independent study associated with a physics course. These courses satisfy the two honors electives requirement of Honors College.

ii. an honors thesis or honors project completed under the supervision of a faculty advisor. The thesis or project satisfies the Honors College capstone experience requirement.

iii. all Honors College requirements are satisfied.

Many physics students find the prospect of doing a thesis in their declared major a more attractive option than taking one of the 6-credit capstone courses offered in the Honors College. All honors students in the department are strongly encouraged to speak with the Department Honors Coordinator to discuss the possibility of declaring Departmental Honors.

Students graduating with Departmental Honors in Physics have this academic distinction printed on their diplomas.

A check-list for doing departmental honors is attached near the end of this document.

Requirements for the Minor in Physics

Fifteen credits of courses in the Physics Department at the 200 level and above must be completed. The prerequisites to those courses must be satisfied, generally meaning:

• An introductory physics sequence (PHYSIC 131-134, 151-154, or 181-184)
• A math sequence including MATH 131, 132, and 233.
• No courses may be taken with a Pass/Fail option.
• Only three credits of Independent Study will count toward the 15-credit requirement.
• Only one of the two courses Physics 261, Physics 284 can be counted towards the 15-credit requirement.

Departmental Support and Activities

Advising

Every student majoring in Physics has a faculty advisor within the department. (See page 3 of this document.) In the Physics Department, advisors are assigned to the students of a given class, so that physics majors have the same advisor from the time they enter the program until they graduate.

Normal counseling periods are during Fall and Spring pre-registration. Students should discuss their programs with their advisors at this time. Students will not be cleared for registration until they meet with their faculty advisors. Student should keep this in mind as the preregistration period approaches. Advisors, and the Undergraduate Program Director, are available at other times to provide academic guidance.
The advisors are responsible for guiding their students in the choice of courses and in the completion of Physics Major, College and University requirements. Students should use the SPIRE system to verify their progress towards meeting University, College, and Departmental requirements.

At the end of this handbook, there are one-page checklists for the three Physics degree tracks (Professional, Applied, and General). During the first advising visit with your academic advisor, any applicable courses you have taken will be marked on the checklist, and the list placed in your academic file. The checklist is updated every semester during advising visits. It is particularly important that students intending to follow the Applied or General tracks have their 18-credit area concentrations approved by their advisors before the senior year, preferably before the junior year.

**Independent Study**

Physics students may occasionally wish to concentrate on topics of their choice outside of the structured setting of traditional lecture classes. Opportunities for this sort of investigation exist by way of Independent Study courses. These courses are arranged privately, on a semester basis, between an individual student and a professor. Depending on the course load involved, these classes generally range from 1 to 3 credits. These courses are listed in the *Undergraduate Catalog* under the numbers 196, 296, 396, 496, and 596, corresponding to all of the possible undergraduate levels.

Arrangements for Independent Study should be carried out between the student and the instructing professor at some stage during the semester prior to the planned investigation. The Undergraduate Program Director must then approve enrollment in the course.

**Undergraduate Research**

Engaging in cutting-edge research is a valuable experience that can help you decide what you want to do for your career and likely enhance your excitement about studying physics. Research provides valuable training that complements your coursework and is an important component of your resume if you apply for graduate school or technical jobs. In general, research opportunities can be found here on campus, or at non-profit institutions, government-run national labs, private companies, or other universities. There are a great many programs because so many institutions value the opportunity to train and recruit students like you. Research positions are generally paid, last for a summer (9-10 weeks), and sometimes are continued the following summer. Sometimes internships at companies or national labs lead to job offers. Internships can be taken by undergraduate students or graduate students.

Internships are most often in research or development but they could also be in teaching or other areas. If you are looking for teaching opportunities, then you can find more information from Brokk Toggerson (who teaches a class on teaching physics, Phys390T), or the UMass School of Education, or the Amherst Regional Public Schools or other local public school systems.

Here at UMass, joining an on-campus research group in physics is very common. (The graduating class of 2016 reported that 70% of students had a research experience here on campus.) The Physics department has approximately 30 faculty and most of them engage in original research. Most of the faculty work with undergraduate students either part-time during
the semester or full-time during the summer (or both). During the semester, research experience is most commonly arranged as an Independent Study course (Physics 196, 296, 396 or 496) for academic credit. Sometimes these projects are full-time during the summer for pay. These experiences are effectively internships, even though we do not always refer to them as such.

The Commonwealth Honors College Capstone Experience (essentially a senior thesis) is one excellent way to gain research experience, but participation in research is not limited to Commonwealth College students. Commonwealth Honors College also provides funds for undergraduate research on a competitive basis. The Department also offers the Edward S. Chang Endowed Fund to support summer research. (Proposals are due annually in February.)

Finding on-campus research opportunities is not difficult, but it is quite different from signing up for courses. The main difference is that you have to take the initiative in reaching out to professors. Here is what we recommend:

1) Take Physics 185 and/or 186 to get an overview of research and to see some details about some of the faculty. Also look at the department's webpage and follow the research link. You will see a fairly brief (but vague) listing of faculty by the broad areas of research. You can also look at other departments; physics students have worked in Chemistry, Polymer Science and Engineering, and various departments in our Engineering college.

2) When you find something that looks interesting (even if you don’t know much about it and don’t know if you are qualified!), then send an email to the professor. In your email, express an interest in the general topic of research, summarize courses you have taken (if any), and ask for a time to meet in person so that you (the student) can learn more about the science. Feel free to send more than one such letter in parallel. If you don’t receive a reply, then write again a few days later and/or stop by the professor’s office.

3) After you meet with the professor and talk about the science, then decide if you want to ask for an independent study and/or summer job. Go ahead and ask. Many groups work with first-semester freshmen, so don’t second-guess your experience level. Again, you can ask more than one professor and then choose if you receive multiple offers. No one will feel insulted if you turn down an offer.

4) To sign up for an independent study (if this is the mechanism you and your research advisor choose), first make a plan with your research advisor, who will then help you arrange it with the Undergraduate Program Director.

**Society of Physics Students and Sigma Pi Sigma**

The Society of Physics Students (SPS) is a national organization for undergraduates interested in studies connected to physics. The Department of Physics has a local chapter, which participates in the regional activities of the national organization. Our chapter sponsors and assists student-led research groups, engages in outreach projects to local schools, sponsors informational evenings on subjects such as careers and summer internships, and holds social activities for its members.

All majors are invited to become members of the organization. Membership in the national organization is not mandatory, though information on how to become a national member is available from the officers of the local chapter. For more information on SPS see the contact list near the front of this Handbook.
Sigma Pi Sigma, an adjunct to the Society of Physics Students, is a national honors society for physics majors. Information on how to become a member is available from the faculty advisor of the SPS.

**Exchange Programs**

Undergraduates in Physics may wish to pursue a portion of their studies while in residence at another institution. Arrangements for this opportunity should be made through the appropriate exchange program at the University. The International Programs Office, www.umass.edu/ipo/, is the center for information about study abroad. The Domestic Exchange Program, http://ualc.umass.edu/domestic_exchange/ is the resource center for study at other universities in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

**The Physics Major in the Job Market**

The American Institute of Physics has performed studies that track the careers of Bachelor's degree recipients in physics after graduation. The following graphs are from the AIP website, www.aip.org/statistics/trends/highlite/emp2/emphigh.htm.

![Graph: Trends in Initial Outcomes of Physics Bachelor's, Classes of 1995-2006](image-url)

*AlP Statistical Research Center, Initial Employment Survey*
Initial Employment Sectors of Physics Bachelor's, Classes of 2005 & 2006

- Private Sector 57%
- College & Universities 11%
- Civilian government, FFR&DC 8%
- Active Military 5%
- Other 6%
- High School 13%

*FFR&DC: Federally Funded Research & Development Center

AIP Statistical Research Center, Initial Employment Survey
Knowledge and skills rated as important by physics bachelors’ degree recipients 5 to 8 years after graduation.
Physics Major – Departmental Honors Checklist

Student Name __________________________ ID# ____________ Graduation year: _____

Academic Advisor’s name (in Physics): __________________________

Formally enrolled in Honors in physics? _______ Enrollment date: ________________

Honors Program Director Signature __________________________ Date: ______

Degree Plans:
Major track: (P,A,G): ______  Minor? __________________________
Second major? (If so, is physics primary?) __________________________

Seeking Dept Honors in another department as well?
(If yes, note that the Honors requirements, including capstone, must be separately satisfied for both depts.)

Departmental Honors Plans. In addition to the requirements I and II below, students must satisfy the CHC requirements.

I. Two physics Honors courses. One Honors course may be taken at any level, and the other must be at the 300-level or higher. Either requirement can be satisfied by taking a physics Honors Colloquium (e.g., Phys181H, 423H), or by enrolling in Honors independent study associated with a physics course. The latter requires that a contract be signed and given to CHC. Please note that a research-based Honors independent study does NOT normally satisfy this requirement. If there are extenuating circumstances, then you must obtain prior approval from the Honors Program Director in order for this to count toward the requirement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honors Course</th>
<th>Associated Course</th>
<th>Semester/yr</th>
<th># credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>DH approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____________</td>
<td>________________</td>
<td>____________</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>____</td>
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<tr>
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<td>_____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Senior Honors (Thesis) Project (a.k.a. Capstone), completed under the supervision of a faculty advisor. This is normally a full-year project, divided into two semesters (Phys 499Y in the Fall, 499T in the Spring). Typically, a grade of “Y” is given for satisfactory progress after the Fall semester. At the conclusion of the full project a standard letter grade is submitted, which replaces the “Y” grade.

*CHC requires that you complete a “Capstone Completion Form” and obtain advisor’s signature.*

Project title: ____________________________________________

Faculty advisor: _________________________________________

Course Number(s) and number of credits: ____________________
### Physics Major - Professional Track (BS) Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Cr</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics 181 (Fall)</td>
<td>Physics I (mechanics)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 185 (Fall)</td>
<td>Freshman seminar (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 131</td>
<td>Calculus I</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 182 (Spring)</td>
<td>Physics II (E&amp;M)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 186 (Spring)</td>
<td>Freshman seminar (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 132</td>
<td>Calculus II</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 287 (Fall)</td>
<td>Physics III (thermo, fluids, waves…)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 289 (Fall)</td>
<td>Physics III Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 281 (Fall)</td>
<td>Computational Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 233</td>
<td>Multivariate Calculus</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 282 (Spring)</td>
<td>Techniques of Theoretical Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics 284 (Spring)</td>
<td>Modern Physics I</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 286 (Spring)</td>
<td>Lab for Modern Physics I</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 331</td>
<td>Ordinary Differential Equations</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 381 (Fall)</td>
<td>Writing in Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 421 (Fall)</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 424 (Fall)</td>
<td>Quantum Mechanics</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics 422 (Spring)</td>
<td>Electricity and Magnetism</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 423 (Spring)</td>
<td>Statistical Physics and Thermodynamics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 440 (F &amp; S)</td>
<td>Intermediate Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 235 (F&amp;S)</td>
<td>Linear algebra (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Physics Major - Applied Track (BS) Checklist

**Student Name**   | **ID#** | **email**
--- | --- | ---
**Date** | **Advisor Signature & Date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Cr</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics 181 (Fall)</td>
<td>Physics I (mechanics)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 185 (Fall)</td>
<td>Freshman seminar (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 131</td>
<td>Calculus I</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 182 (Spring)</td>
<td>Physics II (E&amp;M)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 186 (Spring)</td>
<td>Freshman seminar (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 132</td>
<td>Calculus II</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 287 (Fall)</td>
<td>Physics III (thermo, fluids, waves…)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 289 (Fall)</td>
<td>Physics III Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 281 (Fall)</td>
<td>Computational Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 233</td>
<td>Multivariate Calculus</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Modern Physics I</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 286 (Spring)</td>
<td>Lab for Modern Physics I</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 282 (Spring)</td>
<td>Tech. of Th. Physics (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 381 (Fall)</td>
<td>Writing in Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 440 (F &amp; S)</td>
<td>Intermediate Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 235 (F &amp; S)</td>
<td>Linear algebra (recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Concentration in a Scientific/Technical Field.** Minimum 18 credits, approved by your Physics advisor.*

In a few sentences below or attached, explain (a) what is the specific focus or rationale for your 18-credit concentration and (b) how the selected courses fit in with these goals.

* Courses used to fulfill the A-track concentration cannot also be used to fulfill the requirements of another major.
Physics Major - General Track (BA) Checklist

Student Name ___________________________ ID# ________________ email ________________
Date ________________ Advisor Signature & Date ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Cr</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Physics 181 (Fall)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Physics 185 (Fall)</td>
<td>Freshman seminar (recommended)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math 131</td>
<td>Calculus I</td>
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<td>Physics II (E&amp;M)</td>
<td>__________</td>
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<td>Physics 186 (Spring)</td>
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<td>Math 132</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 233 (F &amp; S)</td>
<td>Multivariate Calculus</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 284 (Spring)</td>
<td>Modern Physics I</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 286 (Spring)</td>
<td>Lab for Modern Physics I</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 282 (Spring)</td>
<td>Tech. of Th. Physics (recommended)</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 381 (Fall)</td>
<td>Writing in Physics</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics 440 (F&amp;S) †</td>
<td>Intermediate lab</td>
<td>__________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math 235 (F &amp; S)</td>
<td>Linear algebra (recommended)</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Advanced Course Requirement.** One course from: P421 Mechanics, P422 E&M, P423 Statistical Phys, P424 Quantum Mech, P531 Electronics, P553 Optics, P590M Medical physics

**Concentration in an Area of Focus.** Minimum 18 credits, approved by your Physics advisor.*

In a few sentences attached or below, explain (a) what is the specific focus or rationale for your 18-credit concentration and (b) how the selected courses fit in with these goals.

---

* Students who enrolled at UMass prior to fall 2010 are not required to take 440. They take two courses from 440, 421, 422, 423, 424, 531, 553, or 590M.

* Courses used to fulfill the G-track concentration cannot also be used to fulfill the requirements of another major.