

# 10587-719(8) Quantum Mechanics C (Functional Integral Formulation) (1½l, 1½p)

2016

## Course summary:

Discrete and continuous stochastic processes, diffusion and Brownian motion, functional calculus, Feynman-Kac theorem, propagators and their functional integral representation, free particle and harmonic oscillator, determinants, correlation functions and generating functionals, perturbation theory and saddle point approximation.

## Outcomes of course:

This course teaches the student the path integral formulation of quantum mechanics and path integrals as objects in their own right. The student is equipped with basic tools such as conditional probabilities and multidimensional gaussian distributions. The saddle point approximation and perturbative expansions provide more advanced tools to evaluate path integrals.

## Lecturer:

Prof H.C. Eggers  
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Office: Room 1045 in the Merensky Physics Building.

## Mentor:

The Department of Physics has appointed a staff member as mentor for each year of its physics programme to be available to students for consultation. Students should feel free to discuss general issues related to the physics programme or specific modules in the programme with the relevant mentor, in addition to usual consultations with their individual lecturers of modules.

The mentor for the Honours programme and its modules is Prof HC Eggers [eggers@physics.sun.ac.za](mailto:eggers@physics.sun.ac.za)

## Course content:

The foundations of path integrals are first studied for classical stochastic processes for discrete timesteps. The possibility and limitations of taking the continuum limit are set out. Functional calculus and the Feynman-Kac theorem lay the foundation for application of path integrals in both classical and quantum mechanical settings. The quantum mechanical propagator and its functional integral representation is derived and evaluated for harmonic oscillator and free particle cases. Correlation functions and the generating functional are introduced and calculated in simple cases. A rudimentary introduction to perturbation theory and the saddle point approximation completes the course.

## Practical (Tutorials):

Weekly tutorials

## Study material:

Lecture notes are provided, and reference material is placed on reserve in the departmental library.

**Assessment:**

***Methods of Assessments***

Continuous Evaluation. (Homework assignments and two tests.)

***Venue and time of assessment opportunities***

See ***timetable*** on Physics home page

***Availability of marks:***

2 weeks following assessment

***Calculation of mark:***

Homework/other assignments 50%, tests 50%