

12998 - 342 (8) Electromagnetism and Relativity (1.5L, 1.5P)

2021

Course summary:

Polarisation and magnetisation of materials, electromagnetic waves and their transitions between different media. Theory of special relativity.

Method of assessment: Flexible assessment.

Prerequisite module: Mathematics 214, 244 or Applied Mathematics 214, 244. Physics 224, 254

Language policy:

Afrikaans and English in the same class groups:

During each lecture, all information is conveyed at least in English. Summaries and/or explanation of the core concepts will also be given in Afrikaans. Questions in Afrikaans and English will, at the least be answered in the language of the question. Students will be supported in Afrikaans and English during a combination of appropriate facilitated learning opportunities.

Module relevance in programme:

Electromagnetism is the basis for understanding the properties of materials, electronics, light and lasers. Together with Special Relativity it makes GPS devices, space missions and the understanding of the universe possible.

Physics 342 build on the electrostatics of Ph144 and electrodynamics of Ph352, but in Ph342 we also take the electric and magnetic properties of material into account. This enables us to predict how electromagnetic waves (light) will behave in different materials and at interfaces. This theory is essential for understanding of optics and photonics (light-matter interaction), laser, solid state physics, advanced electromagnetism in Honours.

The Special Relativity that has been discussed in Ph144 is revised and developed further. We reach the point where we can predict what it would look like if one would travel at relativistic velocities. We learn the vector notation that is essential for further study (in Honours/postgraduate) of field theory and relativistic theories in quantum mechanics, nuclear physics and cosmology.

Outcomes of course:

This course prepares the student for more advanced applications of electromagnetism, particularly in a medium. The student is also equipped with a working knowledge of special relativity. This course forms the foundations of a number of more advanced courses in electromagnetism, optics, as well as advanced courses founded on relativity.

Lecturer:

Dr CM Steenkamp

Telephone number: (021) 808-3374

E-mail address: cmsteen@sun.ac.za

Office: Room number 1044 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 third year programme and its modules is Dr Phil Southey (e-mail: southey@sun.ac.za).

Course content:

We will conduct a theoretical study of the effect of electric and magnetic fields on matter, due to the charges and magnetic dipole moments that exist in atoms. This is relevant to the understanding of magnetism, electricity and the propagation of light. We will use Maxwell's laws to describe light, especially the behaviour of light at the interface between different media (i.e. phenomena such as reflection and refraction). The study of electromagnetic waves on this level leads to the theory of special relativity. We will study the principles and a number interesting applications of Einstein's theory of special relativity.

Communication

The official communication channels are:

- The announcement forum on the Physics 352 SUNLearn page.
- E-mail sent to your "studentnumber@sun.ac.za" e-mail address.
- You are welcome to contact the lecturers using the discussion forums on the Physics 352 SUNLearn or by e-mail.

Study material:

DJ Griffiths *"Introduction to Electrodynamics"* 3rd edition, Prentice Hall, London (1999).

Notes that serve as guide to the textbook will be provided.

Learning opportunities:

- **Learning material** will be provided on the SUNLearn webpage.
- **Lectures** as per timetable will be used **for synchronous lectures** either face-to-face or using Microsoft Teams depending on COVID regulations.
- **The tutorial time** as per timetable will be used for **synchronous problem solving sessions** either face-to-face or using Microsoft Teams depending on COVID regulations.
- The module does not include practical work.
- A demonstration of some of the optical phenomena discussed in the theory will be offered.

Assessment:

Methods of Assessments

Continuous assessment is used.

Tests, homework and self-study projects all contribute to the final mark.

Venue and time of assessment opportunities

Details will be communicated to students at start of module.

Calculation of final mark for the module:

Self study assignments 10%

Homework assignments: 40%

Test 1: 25%

Test 2: 25%