

12998-352(8) Atomic- and Nuclear Physics (1½ ℓ, 1½ p)

2016

Course summary:

Magnetic dipole moments, spin-orbit coupling, radiation transition rates, Zeeman effect, Helium atom. Nuclear structure and properties, radioactive decay, the nuclear force, introduction to nuclear models, apparatus of nuclear physics, elementary particles.

Continuous assessment
P Physics 254, 334

Outcomes of course:

I. **Atomics Physics**

Students are skilled on an introductory level in the theoretical modelling of atomic structure and its correspondence with experimental observation. It also serves as a unified application of quantum mechanical techniques, classical electromagnetism and mechanics as well as optics in order to describe the internal structure of atoms.

II. **Nuclear Physics**

Students are equipped with a basic knowledge of nuclear physics.

Lecturers:

Dr. H. Uys (Atomic Physics)
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Office: Room number 1046 in the Merensky Physics Building.

Dr. JJ van Zyl (Nuclear Physics)
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Office: Room number 1016 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 CM Steenkamp cmsteen@sun.ac.za

Course content:

I. **Atomic Physics - 9 (50minute) Lectures**

This is an introductory course in Atomic Physics. The quantum mechanical description of one electron atoms leads to the set of allowed radial eigenfunctions and the spherical harmonics with associated eigenvalues and the gross structure in the hydrogenic energy level scheme. Probability densities, quantised orbital angular momentum and associated magnetic dipole moments are discussed. The Stern-Gerlach experiment and introduction of electron spin is covered. Spin-orbital interaction leading to the lifting of the orbital angular momentum degeneracy and the fine structure in the spectrum is discussed. Radiational transitions are covered in an extremely rudimentary fashion. The Zeeman effect is discussed. This is followed by treating the two-electron atom and the case of identical half-integer spin particles and the Pauli exclusion principle.

II. Nuclear Physics - 9 (50 minute) Lectures

Nuclear structure and properties, nuclear stability, partial decay constants, radioactive series, multipole radiation, nuclear reaction mechanisms, magnetic moment, electrical quadrupole moment, introduction to nuclear models, nuclear energy.

Detailed Contents of Atomic Physics

a. One Electron Atoms

- i. Introduction
- ii. Development of the Schrödinger equation
- iii. Separation of the time-independent equation in its spatial components. Solutions of the separate differential equations
- iv. Eigenvalues, associated quantum numbers and degeneracy
- v. Eigenfunctions
- vi. Spatial probability distribution
- vii. Orbital angular momentum and its quantization
- viii. Eigenvalue equations

b. Magnetic dipole moment, electron spin and radiational transition probabilities

- i. Introduction
- ii. Magnetic dipole moment associated with orbital movement
- iii. The Stern-Gerlach experiment and electron spin
- iv. Spin-orbital interaction
- v. Quantization of the total angular momentum
- vi. Spin-orbit interaction energy and the fine structure in the hydrogenic energy eigenvalues
- vii. Isotope and Lamb shift
- viii. Radiational transitions and selection rules
- ix. A comparison of the older and modern quantum theories

c. The Zeeman Effect

- i. Spatial quantization of the total angular momentum in a weak external magnetic field
- ii. The Landé g-factor
- iii. Lifting of the j-degeneracy in a weak magnetic field
- iv. The normal and anomalous Zeeman effect
- v. The polarization of the Zeeman components

d. Multi-Electron Atoms

- i. Introduction
- ii. Identical particles
- iii. The Pauli exclusion principle

Detailed Contents of Nuclear Physics

1. Introduction:

Historical review; Objectives of the study of nuclei; Terminology; Occurrence of nuclei; Sizes of nuclei; Atomic masses; Binding energy; Angular momentum and parity; Excited states of nuclei.

2. Radioactivity and disintegration:

Introductory terminology; Radioactive decay; Occurrence of radioactivity; Conservation laws for radioactive decay; Properties of neutrinos; Gamma decay and internal conversion; The Mossbauer effect.

3. Nuclear reactions:

Cross sections in nuclear reactions; Reaction mechanisms

4. Other nuclear properties:

Magnetic dipole moment; Electric quadrupole moment; Isospin.

5. Nuclear models:

The strong interaction between nucleons; Liquid drop model; Fermi gas model; Shell model; Collective model.

Practical (Tutorials):

Tutorial sessions are used for assistance in problem solving in this course.

Study material:

Class notes supplied by department.

Learning opportunities:

Lectures as per time table

Assessment:***Methods of Assessments***

Continuous assessment

Venue and time of assessment opportunities

Assessments are conducted during contact sessions. Also see timetable.

Calculation of final mark for the module:

4 or more assessments counting a maximum 25% each.

Admission to examination:

Not applicable.