

# PHYSICS

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## DEPARTMENT OFFICE

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## DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Lynn R. Cominsky

## ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

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## Faculty

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Lynn R. Cominsky  
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Thomas Targett

## Programs Offered

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Bachelor of Science in Physics  
Bachelor of Arts in Physics  
Minor in Physics  
Teaching Credential Preparation

Physics is the most fundamental of all the scientific disciplines. Ranging from the applied to the abstract, from the infinitesimal to the infinite, and from quarks to the cosmos, the study of physics seeks to explain all the complicated phenomena in the natural world by providing a description of these phenomena in terms of a few basic principles and laws.

Physicists also use their knowledge of fundamental principles to solve concrete problems. Problems in understanding and utilizing the properties of semiconductors and other materials; in designing and building lasers, photonics, and telecommunications devices; and in designing and using instrumentation such as adaptive optics for astrophysics, are typically solved using the techniques of physics. Such applied physics problems often have a significant overlap with topics and techniques in engineering and computational physics. Indeed, many of the department's graduates are currently employed in engineering or computationally oriented positions.

In their most abstract work, physicists seek a unified mathematical description of the four known forces of nature (gravitation, electricity and magnetism, and the weak and strong nuclear forces). This quest for the "Theory of Everything" eluded Einstein and is continued today by many physicists, including those who study superstring theory. The ultimate goal is to correctly predict the fundamental forces and the masses and interactions of the elementary particles from which all matter is formed.

The department offers a traditional, mathematically rigorous program leading to a B.S. in physics; a B.S. in physics with a concentration in applied astrophysics; and a flexible B.A. program with two advisory plans (algebra and trigonometry or calculus). All programs stress fundamental concepts and techniques, offer an unusually rich laboratory experience and intensive use of computers, and require a capstone course as a culminating experience. Capstone projects may include experimental design, instructional design, or undergraduate research—personalized and unique opportunities to demonstrate the skills and knowledge acquired in the major.

The department is housed in Darwin Hall, which is well-equipped with lower-division teaching laboratories and facilities for intermediate and advanced laboratory courses, undergraduate research, special studies and capstone projects. The Darwin facilities include thin film fabrication systems such as thermal evaporation and electrodeposition; a Hall measurement system, a 17-Tesla superconducting magnet system, an adaptive optics and astronomical instrumentation development laboratory, a 3D-printer, water sustainability experiments, and laboratories for building and testing small satellites (CubeSats). Physics majors also use the multidisciplinary Keck Microanalysis Laboratory in Salazar Hall which includes a scanning electron microscope, atomic force microscopes, an x-ray diffractometer, and a confocal microscope. A new campus makerspace is also available for student use.

A substantial program in undergraduate astronomy includes many courses, listed in this catalog under Astronomy, which may be included in the B.A. or B.S. degree programs in physics. The department operates a teaching observatory on the SSU campus and a NASA-funded remotely operated research observatory at a darker site in northern Sonoma County. Students and faculty also have access to time on an adaptive optics-equipped 1-m telescope in Southern California. Students are strongly encouraged to use all of the above facilities for special studies, undergraduate research and capstone projects.

## Careers in Physics

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For information on what you can do with a bachelor's degree in physics, follow links from: <http://phys-astro.sonoma.edu>

## Bachelor of Science in Physics

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The B.S. program is a thorough introduction to the principles of physics, providing a strong foundation for graduate study or industrial research. It is also intended for those students who wish to prepare for interdisciplinary studies on the graduate level in fields such as astronomy, atmospheric science, biophysics, environmental science, geophysics, materials science, and physical oceanography.

<b>Degree Requirements</b>	<b>Units</b>
General education (48, 9 units in the major)	39
Major Requirements	72
University Electives	9
<b>Total units needed for graduation</b>	<b>120</b>

### Major Core Requirements

PHYS 114 Introduction to Physics I (3 units may be applied to GE)	4
PHYS 116 Introductory Laboratory Experience (may be applied to GE)	1
PHYS 214 Introduction to Physics II	4
PHYS 216 Introduction Laboratory	1
PHYS 314 Introduction to Physics III	4
PHYS 325 Introduction to Mathematical Physics	3
PHYS 340 Light and Optics	3
PHYS 381 Computer Applications for Scientists	2
PHYS 430 Electricity and Magnetism	3
PHYS 450 Statistical Physics	2
PHYS 460 Quantum Physics	3
<b>Total units in the major core</b>	<b>30</b>

### Supporting Courses

CHEM 115A General Chemistry (3 units may be applied in GE)	5
MATH 161 Differential and Integral Calculus I (3 units may be applied in GE)	4
MATH 211 Differential and Integral Calculus II	4
MATH 241 Linear Algebra with Applications in Differential Equations	4
MATH 261 Multivariable Calculus	4
<b>Total units in Supporting Courses</b>	<b>21</b>

## Bachelor of Science in Physics - General

Intended for students who wish to earn a generalized degree in physics, appropriate for graduate study in physics or engineering, or for a wide variety of careers in industry.

### Supporting Courses **5 Units**

CHEM 115B General Chemistry	5
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### Upper Division Physics Requirements **10 Units**

PHYS 313 Electronics	3
PHYS 313L Electronics Laboratory	1
PHYS 320 Analytical Mechanics	3
PHYS 366 Intermediate Experimental Physics	3

### Capstone Requirement (Complete 1 course from the list below) **2 Units**

ASTR 492 Instructional Design Project	2
ASTR 497 Undergraduate Research in Astronomy	2
PHYS 492 Instructional Design Project	2
PHYS 493 Senior Design Project	2
PHYS 497 Undergraduate Research in Physics	2

### Physics Electives **4 Units**

To complete the 72 units required for the major, students must choose the remaining units from other upper division physics or astronomy courses including the recommended PHYS 491 Capstone Preparatory Seminar. ASTR 303, 305, 331 and 350 are not allowed as electives for the BS-Physics General. ASTR 396 & PHYS 396 selected topics courses, will only apply if approved by an advisor.

Astronomy courses may not double count towards the Physics Major and the Astronomy Minor. PHYS 494 can be taken three times for a maximum of three units.

## Bachelor of Science in Physics - Astrophysics Concentration

Students may earn a B.S. in physics with a concentration in astrophysics. This program is intended for those students who desire an emphasis on studying the physical processes of astronomical objects in the Universe. It provides a rigorous background in physics with a combination of theoretical and observational studies of planets, stars and galaxies. It is a good choice for students who wish to continue their studies in graduate astronomy programs, or who wish to work in positions at observatories, laboratories and governmental agencies. It is also an appropriate degree for science educators, and science journalists.

### Astrophysics Concentration Requirements **8 Units**

ASTR 100 Descriptive Astronomy or ASTR 150 Astronomy for Scientists	3
ASTR 331 Astronomical Imaging	2
ASTR 380 Astrophysics: Stars	3

### Capstone Requirement

#### (Complete PHYS 491 AND (ASTR 492 OR ASTR 497)) **3 Units**

PHYS 491 Instructional Design Project	1
ASTR 492 Instructional Design Project	2
ASTR 497 Undergraduate Research in Astronomy	2

### Physics Electives **10 Units**

To complete the 72 units required for the major, students must choose the remaining units from other upper division physics or astronomy courses. All Upper division Astronomy courses are allowed as electives for the BS-Physics Astrophysics Concentration. ASTR 396 & PHYS 396 selected topics courses, will only apply if approved by an advisor. Astronomy courses may not double count towards the Physics Major and the Astronomy Minor. PHYS 494 can be taken three times for a maximum of three units.

**Total Units In the Major 72 Units**

## Bachelor of Arts in Physics

(See pages 234 for sample four-year programs.)

The B.A. program allows considerable flexibility for the student who wishes to study physics as part of a liberal arts education. Two advisory plans are offered:

### Bachelor of Arts in Physics with Advisory Plan C

This plan uses calculus. Students who choose this, the more popular B.A. advisory plan, have the prerequisites to take nearly all of the courses in the department. They find employment in scientific and engineering fields. Some go on to graduate school in interdisciplinary sciences. This degree program is appropriate for those who wish to earn a California Science Teaching Credential with a concentration in Physics.

<b>Degree Requirements</b>	<b>Units</b>
Major requirements	34-38
Required area of concentration	12
Supporting courses	12
General education	41
General electives	17-21
<b>Total units needed for graduation</b>	<b>120</b>

### Major Core Requirements

PHYS 114 Introduction to Physics I (may be applied to GE)	4
PHYS 116 Introductory Laboratory Experience (may be applied to GE)	1
PHYS 214 Introduction to Physics II	4
PHYS 216 Introductory Laboratory	1
PHYS 314 Introduction to Physics III	4
PHYS 340 Light and Optics	3
<i>Choose one of the following two programming courses:</i>	2-4
PHYS 381 Computer Applications for Scientists	2
CS 115 Programming I	4
<i>Capstone course; One of the following:</i>	2
ASTR 492 Instructional Design Project	2
ASTR 497 Undergraduate Research in Astronomy	2
PHYS 492 Instructional Design Project	2
PHYS 493 Senior Design Project	2
PHYS 497 Undergraduate Research in Physics	2

The major must include a minimum of 24 upper-division units in physics and astronomy; with an advisor, choose 13-15 units in additional upper-division physics and astronomy courses. Physics 100 may be used to substitute for an advanced Physics elective course.

**Total units in the major core** 34-38

### Required Area of Concentration

Courses in one other field, chosen in consultation with an advisor.

**Total units in area of concentration** 12

### Supporting Courses

MATH 161 Differential and Integral Calculus I (3 units may be applied in GE)	4
MATH 211 Differential and Integral Calculus II	4
MATH 261 Multivariable Calculus	4
<b>Total units in supporting courses</b>	<b>12</b>

**Total units in the major and supporting courses (up to 9 may be applied in GE)** 58 - 62

### Bachelor of Arts in Physics with Advisory Plan T

This plan uses algebra and trigonometry. Students may select from upper-division courses, appropriate to careers as science or technical writers, scientific sales personnel, technicians, programmers, or other technical specialists. There is opportunity to take courses that lead to careers in the health sciences or environmental fields. This degree program is appropriate for those who wish to earn a California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Advisory Plan T is often taken as part of a double major.

<b>Degree Requirements</b>	<b>Units</b>
Major requirements	32-36

Required area of concentration	12
Supporting course	4
General education	41
General electives	27-31
<b>Total units needed for the degree</b>	<b>120</b>

### Major Core Requirements

PHYS 209AB General Physics Laboratory	2
PHYS 210AB General Physics	6
<i>Choose one of the following two courses in modern physics or astronomy:</i>	3-4
ASTR 305 Frontiers in Astronomy	3
PHYS 314 Introduction to Physics III	4
<i>Choose one of the following two courses in optics:</i>	3
PHYS 340 Light and Optics	3
PHYS 342 Light and Color	3
An approved course in computer applications, e.g., PHYS 381 (2):	2-4
<i>Capstone course; One of the following:</i>	2
ASTR 492 Instructional Design Project	2
ASTR 497 Undergraduate Research in Astronomy	2
PHYS 492 Instructional Design Project	2
PHYS 493 Senior Design Project	2
PHYS 497 Undergraduate Research in Physics	2

The major must include a minimum of 24 upper-division units in physics and astronomy, so, with an advisor, choose 13-16 units in additional upper-division physics and astronomy courses. Physics 100 may be substituted for an advanced physics elective course.

**Total units in the major core** 32-36

### Required Area of Concentration

Courses in one other field chosen in consultation with an advisor.

**Total units in area of concentration** 12

### Supporting Course

MATH 160 Pre-calculus Mathematics (3 units may be applied in GE):	4
<b>Total units in supporting course</b>	<b>4</b>

**Total units in the major (up to 9 may be applied in GE)** 48-52

### Minor in Physics

Completion of a minimum of 20 units in physics courses, including not more than one first course or more than one second course, constitutes a minor in physics. (First courses are PHYS 100, 210A, and 114, and their equivalents taught elsewhere. Second courses are PHYS 210B, 214, and their equivalents.) Interested students should consult with the advisor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

### Teaching Credential Preparation

See the Teaching Credential Preparation in the Science Courses section of this catalog or contact the department advisor.

## Sample Four-Year Program for Bachelor of Science in Physics

The sequential nature of the physics curriculum necessitates an early start with major requirements and the distribution of general education courses over four years.

### FRESHMAN YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
CHEM 115A (5)	CHEM 115B (5)
MATH 161 (4)	MATH 211 (4)
GE (3)	PHYS 114 (4)
PHYS 100 (3) (Recommended)	PHYS 116 (1)
	PHYS 494 (1) (Recommended)

### SOPHOMORE YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
MATH 261 (4)	MATH 241 (4)
PHYS 214 (4)	PHYS 313 (3)
PHYS 216 (1)	PHYS 313L (1)
GE (6)	PHYS 314 (4)
	GE (3)

### JUNIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS 325 (3)	PHYS 320 (3)
PHYS 381 (2)	PHYS 340 (3)
GE (6)	PHYS 366 (3)
Elective (4)	GE (6)

### SENIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (16 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (14 Units)</i>
PHYS 450 (2)	PHYS 430 (3)
PHYS 460 (3)	PHYS Capstone (2)
GE (8)	GE (9)
Elective (3)	

### TOTAL UNITS: 120

See your advisor to discuss acceptable physics electives and when they will be offered. Nine of the units of GE are met by required courses listed here (3 each in areas B1, B3 and B4).

## Sample Four-Year Program for Bachelor of Science in Physics with Concentration in Astrophysics

The sequential nature of the physics curriculum necessitates an early start with major requirements and the distribution of general education courses over four years.

### FRESHMAN YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (16 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (14 Units)</i>
CHEM 115A (5)	MATH 211 (4)
MATH 161 (4)	PHYS 114 (4)
GE (4)	PHYS 116 (1)
ASTR 150 (3)	GE (4)
	PHYS 494 (1) (recommended)

### SOPHOMORE YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
MATH 261 (4)	MATH 241 (4)
PHYS 214 (4)	ASTR 331 (2)
PHYS 216 (1)	PHYS 314 (4)
GE (6)	GE (5)

### JUNIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS 325 (3)	ASTR 380 (3)
PHYS 381 (2)	GE (5)
GE (5)	PHYS Elective (3)
Elective (5)	PHYS 340 (3)

### SENIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS 450 (2)	PHYS 430 (3)
PHYS 460 (3)	ASTR Capstone (2)
PHYS Elective (3)	PHYS 491 (1)
GE (3)	PHYS Elective (3)
Elective (4)	GE (6)

### TOTAL UNITS: 120

See your advisor to discuss acceptable physics electives and when they will be offered. Nine of the units of GE are met by required courses listed here (3 each in areas B1, B3, and B4).

## Sample Four-Year Program for Bachelor of Arts in Physics with Advisory Plan C

The sequential nature of the physics curriculum necessitates an early start with major requirements and the distribution of general education courses over four years.

### FRESHMAN YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
MATH 161 (4)	MATH 211 (4)
GE (7)	PHYS 114 (4)
PHYS 100 (3) (Recommended)	PHYS 116 (1)
PHYS 494 (1) Recommended)	GE (6)

### SOPHOMORE YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
MATH 261 (4)	PHYS 314 (4)
PHYS 214 (4)	Elective (4)
PHYS 216 (1)	GE (7)
GE (6)	

### JUNIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS 381 (2)	PHYS 340 (3)
Area of Concentration (3)*	PHYS Elective (3)
GE (8)	Area of Concentration (3)*
Elective (2)	GE (3)
	Elective (3)

### SENIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS Elective (3)	PHYS Capstone (2)
Area of Concentration (3)*	Area of Concentration (3)*
GE (4)	PHYS Elective (3)
Electives (5)	Electives (7)

### TOTAL UNITS: 120

\* Area of Concentration = 12 units in one other subject.

Nine of the units of GE are met by required courses listed here (3 each in areas B1, B3, and B4).

## Sample Four-Year Program for Bachelor of Arts in Physics with Advisory Plan T

The sequential nature of the physics curriculum necessitates an early start with major requirements and the distribution of general education courses over four years.

### FRESHMAN YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
MATH 160 (4)	PHYS 209A (1)
GE (7)	PHYS 210A (3)
PHYS 100 (3) (Recommended)	GE (8)
PHYS 494 (1) (Recommended)	Elective (3)

### SOPHOMORE YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS 209B (1)	PHYS Elective (4)
PHYS 210B (3)	Elective (3)
GE (9)	GE (8)
Elective (2)	

### JUNIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
ASTR 305 (3)	PHYS 342 (3)
PHYS 381 (2)	PHYS Elective (3)
Area of Concentration (3)*	Area of Concentration (3)*
GE (3)	GE (3)
Elective (4)	Elective (3)

### SENIOR YEAR: 30 Units

<i>Fall Semester (15 Units)</i>	<i>Spring Semester (15 Units)</i>
PHYS Electives (6)	PHYS Capstone (2)
Area of Concentration (3)*	Area of Concentration (3)*
Electives (6)	Electives (10)

### TOTAL UNITS: 120

\*Area of concentration = 12 units in one other subject.

Nine of the units of GE may be met by required courses listed here (3 each in areas B1, B3, and B4).