

# Texas Tech University

## Department of Physics and Astronomy

# Undergraduate Handbook

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for the physics major. Only students who enter the College of Arts & Sciences in Fall 2017 through Fall 2024 will be under the guidelines of this booklet.



### Contact Points

Deanna Licon  
Senior Academic Advisor  
Academic Sciences Building room 038  
(806) 834-3484  
[delicon@ttu.edu](mailto:delicon@ttu.edu)  
Book appointments at [Raider Success Hub](#)

Dr. Thomas Gibson  
Associate Professor and Chair of Undergraduate Committee  
Science 027  
(806) 834-1561  
[thomas.gibson@ttu.edu](mailto:thomas.gibson@ttu.edu)

Physics and Astronomy Department Office  
Science 101  
(806) 742-3767  
fax (806) 742-1182  
[physics.academic.advising@ttu.edu](mailto:physics.academic.advising@ttu.edu)  
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/phas/>

Like us on [Facebook](#) at **Texas Tech Department of Physics and Astronomy**  
**@TechPhysicsAstronomy**

Check out our **Flickr** page @TTUPHAS: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ttuphas>

*Revised 5/19/2025.*

# Physics Major

## B.S. Degree Requirements

### *General Education Requirements for the College of Arts & Sciences*

**English (9 hours)**    ENGL 1301    ENGL 1302    ENGL 23--

**Oral Communication (3 hours)**

**Mathematics (6 hours)**    MATH 1451    MATH 1452

**Life and Physical Sciences (8 hours)**    PHYS 1408    PHYS 2401

**United States History (choose 6 hours)**    HIST 2300    HIST 2301    HIST 2310

**Political Science (6 hours)**    POLS 1301    POLS 2306

**Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 hours)**

**Language, Philosophy, and Culture (3 hours)**

**Creative Arts (3 hours)**

**Personal Fitness and Wellness (1 hour)**

**Foreign Language:** Freshman proficiency plus 3 hours at the sophomore level or higher in the same language. (Students who wish to take Spanish should take the Spanish Placement Exam.)

***40 Credits Required at the Junior/Senior Level***

***120 Credits Required Total***

*This menu of courses is required by Texas Tech University for any student seeking a B.S. degree in the College of Arts & Sciences. The basic pattern is defined by the state and SACS. Courses for the various categories can be found under "Academic Requirements" in the 2024-2025 Catalog or at [https://www.depts.ttu.edu/artsandsciences/academics\\_and\\_admission/programs\\_degrees/undergraduate\\_programs/index.php](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/artsandsciences/academics_and_admission/programs_degrees/undergraduate_programs/index.php)*

**\*Communication Literacy Requirement:** Regardless of concentration, a physics major must take at least 3 courses with the Communication Literacy (CL) attribute within the major. Communication Literacy (CL) courses (marked with an asterisk below) will be aimed towards providing and assessing student abilities in both oral and written communication of scientific information in the specific ways that are common to professional physicists and astrophysicists, both in traditional and non-traditional positions.

## **Physics Major: Professional Concentration**

### ***Required Physics Courses (47 hours)***

PHYS 1408 Principles I: Mechanics  
PHYS 2401 Principles II: E&M  
PHYS 2302 Principles III (*no longer offered, substitute MATH 2360 or another course approved by the academic advisor*)\*\*\*\*  
PHYS 2305 Computation for the Physical Sciences\*  
PHYS 3301 Modern Physics  
PHYS 3201 Modern Physics Lab and Data Analysis (must be taken with 3301)  
PHYS 3304 Intermediate Experimental Physics\*  
PHYS 3305 Electricity & Magnetism I  
PHYS 3306 Electricity & Magnetism II  
PHYS 3401 Optics\*  
PHYS 4302 Statistical & Thermal  
PHYS 4304 Mechanics  
PHYS 4307 Quantum Mechanics I  
PHYS 4308 Quantum Mechanics II  
PHYS 4306 Capstone Project\*

### ***Physics Electives (choose 6 hours)***

PHYS 3000 Undergraduate Research  
PHYS 4000 Independent Study  
PHYS 4301 Computational  
PHYS 4309 Solid State  
PHYS 4312 Nuclear & Particle  
PHYS 4315 Intro to Quantum Computing  
PHYS 4350 Relativity  
ASTR 3300 Special Topics in Astrophysics  
ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I  
ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II  
ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes

### ***Required Mathematics Courses (18 hours)***

MATH 1451 Calculus I  
MATH 1452 Calculus II  
MATH 2450 Calculus III  
PHYS 4325 Math Methods for Physicists I (or MATH 3350 or MATH 3354)  
PHYS 4326 Math Methods for Physicists II (or MATH 3351 or MATH 4354)

Students are strongly encouraged to take MATH 2360 (Linear Algebra) to complete a MATH minor.

## **Physics Major: Astrophysics Concentration**

### ***Required Physics Courses (38 hours)***

PHYS 1408 Principles I: Mechanics  
PHYS 2401 Principles II: E&M  
PHYS 2302 Principles III (*no longer offered, substitute MATH 2360 or another course approved by the academic advisor*)\*\*\*\*  
PHYS 2305 Computation for the Physical Sciences\*  
PHYS 3301 Modern Physics  
PHYS 3201 Modern Physics Lab and Data Analysis (must be taken with 3301)  
PHYS 3304 Intermediate Experimental Physics \*  
PHYS 3305 Electricity & Magnetism I  
PHYS 3401 Optics\*  
PHYS 4302 Statistical & Thermal  
PHYS 4304 Mechanics  
PHYS 4307 Quantum Mechanics I

### ***Required Astronomy Courses (17 hours)***

ASTR 1401 Stellar Astronomy  
ASTR 2401 Observational Astronomy  
ASTR 3300 Special Topics in Astrophysics  
ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I  
ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II

### ***Required Senior-Level Courses (choose 6 hours)***

PHYS 4312 Nuclear & Particle  
PHYS 4350 Relativity  
ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes

### ***Required Mathematics Courses (18 hours)***

MATH 1451 Calculus I  
MATH 1452 Calculus II  
MATH 2450 Calculus III  
PHYS 4325 Math Methods for Physicists I (or MATH 3350 or MATH 3354)  
PHYS 4326 Math Methods for Physicists II (or MATH 3351 or MATH 4354)

Students are strongly encouraged to take MATH 2360 (Linear Algebra) to complete a MATH minor.

## Physics Major: Applied Physics Concentration

### ***Required Physics Courses (44 hours)***

PHYS 1408 Principles I: Mechanics  
PHYS 2401 Principles II: E&M  
PHYS 2302 Principles III (*no longer offered, substitute MATH 2360 or another course approved by the academic advisor*)\*\*\*\*  
PHYS 2305 Computation for the Physical Sciences\*  
PHYS 3301 Modern Physics  
PHYS 3201 Modern Physics Lab and Data Analysis (must be taken with 3301)  
PHYS 3304 Intermediate Experimental Physics\*  
PHYS 3305 Electricity & Magnetism I  
PHYS 3306 Electricity & Magnetism II  
PHYS 3401 Optics\*  
PHYS 4302 Statistical & Thermal  
PHYS 4304 Mechanics  
PHYS 4307 Quantum Mechanics I  
PHYS 4306 Capstone Project\*

### ***Physics Electives (choose 3 hours)***

PHYS 3000 Undergraduate Research  
PHYS 4000 Independent Study  
PHYS 4301 Computational  
PHYS 4308 Quantum Mechanics II  
PHYS 4309 Solid State  
PHYS 4312 Nuclear and Particle  
PHYS 4315 Intro to Quantum Computing  
PHYS 4350 Relativity  
ASTR 3300 Special Topics in Astrophysics  
ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I  
ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II  
ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes

### ***Applied Physics Electives (choose 12 hours)***

Pre-approved ECE courses: ECE 3302, 3303, 3306, 3311, 3312  
Pre-approved Geophysics courses: GPH 3300, 3310, 4300, 4321, 4323  
Pre-approved Renewable Energy courses: RE 3300, 3301, 3303, 4300  
Pre-approved ATMO courses: ATMO 3301, 3310, 3316, 4300, 4312, GIST 3300, GEOL 3322

### ***Required Mathematics Courses (18 hours)***

MATH 1451 Calculus I  
MATH 1452 Calculus II  
MATH 2450 Calculus III  
PHYS 4325 Math Methods for Physicists I (or MATH 3350 or MATH 3354)  
PHYS 4326 Math Methods for Physicists II (or MATH 3351 or MATH 4354)

Students are strongly encouraged to take MATH 2360 (Linear Algebra) to complete a MATH minor.

## Course Planning for a Calculus-Ready Physics Major

The following is an example of how the four years of a calculus-ready Texas Tech physics major might be structured. Courses outside the Physics & Astronomy department and electives for the professional and applied physics concentrations have been omitted. This table is just an example—always confer with the academic advisor before registering for classes.

<b>FIRST YEAR</b>	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
MATH 1451 Calculus I	PHYS 1408 Physics I
*ASTR 1401 Stellar Astronomy	MATH 1452 Calculus II
<b>SECOND YEAR</b>	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
PHYS 2401 Physics II	PHYS 2302 Physics III****
^MATH 2360 Linear Algebra	PHYS 2305 Computation
MATH 2450 Calculus III	PHYS 3201 Modern Lab & Data Analysis
*ASTR 2401 Observational Astronomy	PHYS 3301 Modern Physics
	PHYS 4325 Math Methods I
<b>THIRD YEAR</b>	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
PHYS 3305 E&M I	**PHYS 3306 E&M II
PHYS 3401 Optics	PHYS 4304 Mechanics
PHYS 4326 Math Methods II	*ASTR 3300 Special Topics
	*ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I
<b>FOURTH YEAR</b>	
<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
PHYS 4307 Quantum Mechanics I	PHYS 3304 Intermediate Lab
*ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II	PHYS 4302 Statistical & Thermal Physics
*ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes	**PHYS 4306 Capstone Project
	***PHYS 4308 Quantum Mechanics II
	*PHYS 4312 Nuclear & Particle –OR– PHYS 4350 Relativity

^ Required for the mathematics minor

\*Required for the astrophysics concentration

\*\*Required for the professional and applied physics concentrations

\*\*\*Required for the professional concentration

\*\*\*\* PHYS 2302 no longer offered, substitute MATH 2360 or another course approved by the academic advisor

## Scheduling of Physics Course Offerings

The courses PHYS 1408 and 2401 are offered every long semester and summer session. The ASTR courses 1400 and 1401 and the PHYS courses 3301 + 3201 are offered every long semester. PHYS 3000, 4000, and 4306 may be taken during any semester or summer session with instructor permission. Other courses are offered as shown in the listing below and *depending on instructor availability.*

Courses Offered in AY 2025-2026	
FALL 2025	SPRING 2026
3305 E&M I	2305 Computation for the Physical Sciences
3401 Optics	3304 Intermediate Physics Laboratory
4307 Quantum I	3306 E&M II
4309 Solid State	4301 Computational
4315 Intro to Quantum Computing	4302 Statistical & Thermal
4326 Math Methods II	4304 Mechanics
ASTR 2401 Observational Astronomy	4308 Quantum II
ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II	4312 Nuclear & Particle
ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes	4325 Math Methods I
	ASTR 3300 Special Topics
	ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I

Courses Tentatively Planned for Future Semesters	
EVEN FALLS	ODD SPRINGS
3305 E&M I	2305 Computation for the Physical Sciences
3401 Optics	3304 Intermediate Physics Laboratory
4307 Quantum I	3306 E&M II
4309 Solid State	4301 Computational
4315 Intro to Quantum Computing	4302 Statistical & Thermal
4326 Math Methods II	4304 Mechanics
ASTR 2401 Observational Astronomy	4308 Quantum II
ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II	4312 Nuclear & Particle
ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes	4325 Math Methods I
	4312 Nuclear & Particle
	ASTR 3300 Special Topics
	ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I
ODD FALLS	EVEN SPRINGS
3305 E&M I	2305 Computation for the Physical Sciences
3401 Optics	3304 Intermediate Physics Laboratory
4307 Quantum I	3306 E&M II
4315 Intro to Quantum Computing	4301 Computational
4326 Math Methods II	4302 Statistical & Thermal
ASTR 2401 Observational Astronomy	4304 Mechanics
ASTR 4302 Astrophysics II	4308 Quantum II
ASTR 4305 Radiative Processes	4350 Relativity
	4325 Math Methods I
	ASTR 3300 Special Topics
	ASTR 4301 Astrophysics I

## Physics Course Descriptions

**PHYS 1408. Principles of Physics I (4:3:2).** 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: MATH 1451. Calculus-based introductory physics covering mechanics, kinematics, energy, momentum, and thermodynamics. (Honors section offered) Partially fulfills core Life and Physical Sciences requirement.

**PHYS 2305. Computation for the Physical Sciences (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: PHYS 1408 and PHYS 2401. Introduces computational tools to solve science problems. Emphasizes interplay between technology application and practical learning. (Communication Literacy).

**PHYS 2401. Principles of Physics II (4:3:2).** 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: PHYS 1408 and MATH 1452. Calculus-based introductory physics covering electric and magnetic fields, electromagnetic waves, and optics. (Honors section offered) Partially fulfills core Life and Physical Sciences requirement.

**PHYS 3000. Undergraduate Research (V1-6).** 1 to 6 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor. Individual and/or group research projects in basic or applied physics, under the guidance of a faculty member.

**PHYS 3201. Modern Physics Lab and Data Analysis (2:1:3).** 2 Credit Hours. Corequisite PHYS 3301. Laboratory experiments and accompanying lectures designed to illustrate the basis of quantum physics and proper techniques for data acquisition, analysis, and determination of uncertainties.

**PHYS 3301. Modern Physics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 1408 and MATH 2450. Corequisites: PHYS 3201 or PHYS 3101. Failure of classical physics in the microscopic realm, development and fundamentals of quantum theory, applications to atoms, molecules, solids, nuclei, and particles.

**PHYS 3304. Intermediate Physics Laboratory (3:0:6).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: C or better in PHYS 3301 and PHYS 2305. Laboratory course on advanced physical principles. Experiments in atomic, molecular, solid state, and nuclear, and particle physics as well as relativity, electricity and magnetism including data acquisition and analyses. (Communication Literacy).

**PHYS 3305. Electricity and Magnetism I (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 2401 and MATH 4325 or equivalent. Electrostatics, dielectric materials, Maxwell's equations, currents, and magnetostatics.

**PHYS 3306. Electricity and Magnetism II (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 3305 and MATH 4326 or equivalent. Magnetic properties of materials, electrodynamics, electromagnetic waves, waveguides and resonators, interaction with matter, AC circuits, radiation.

**PHYS 3401. Optics (4:2:4).** 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: PHYS 3301. Covers geometrical and physical optics, waves, reflection, scattering, polarization, interference, diffraction, modern optics, and optical instrumentation. (Communication Literacy).

**PHYS 4000. Independent Study (V1-4).** 1 to 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: Approval of advisor. Study of advanced topics of current interest under direct supervision of a faculty member.



**PHYS 4301. Computational Physics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: PHYS 1408, PHYS 2305, PHYS 2401, PHYS 3301. Numerical modeling of physical systems. Data acquisition and analysis. Graphics for displaying complex results. Quadrature schemes, solution of equations.

**PHYS 4302. Statistical and Thermal Physics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: PHYS 3301 and PHYS 4325 or equivalent. Introduction to statistical methods in physics. Formulation of thermodynamics and statistical mechanics from a unified viewpoint with applications from classical and quantum physics.

**PHYS 4304. Mechanics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 1408 and PHYS 4325 or equivalent. Dynamics of particles and extended bodies, both rigid and fluid, using Newtonian mechanics and the Euler-Lagrange equations from Hamilton's principle. Nonlinear systems and chaos with numerical modeling. Applications of the Navier Stokes equation.

**PHYS 4306. Capstone Project (3).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: Senior standing in physics major. Research in a current topic in physics and astronomy with a faculty mentor culminating in an oral presentation and a written report. (Communication Literacy).

**PHYS 4307. Quantum Mechanics I (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: C or better in PHYS 3301 and PHYS 4325 or equivalent. Introduction to fundamental concepts in quantum mechanics: probability, normalization, operators, solutions to Schrodinger equation for various potentials. Discussion of quantum mechanics in 3D, generalized uncertainty principle, angular momentum and hydrogen atom.

**PHYS 4308. Quantum Mechanics II (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 4307. Review of quantum mechanics, time-independent and dependent perturbation theory, variational principle, WKB approximation, the adiabatic approximation and scattering.

**PHYS 4309. Solid State Physics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: PHYS 3305 and knowledge of elementary quantum mechanics. The structural, thermal, electric, and magnetic properties of crystalline solids. Free electron theory of metals. Concept of energy bands and elementary semiconductor physics.

**PHYS 4312. Nuclear and Particle Physics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 4307. Deals with modern nuclear physics covering such topics as nuclear structure models, radioactivity, nuclear reactions, elementary particles, nuclear conservation, forces, and symmetry.

**PHYS 4315. Introduction to Quantum Computing (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor. Covers two-level quantum systems, qubits, quantum gates and circuits, measurement, entanglement, Bell's Theorem, no-cloning theorem, quantum parallelism, quantum teleportation, quantum algorithms.

**PHYS 4325. Mathematical Methods in Physical Sciences I (3:3:0)** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: C or better in MATH 2450. Vectors and coordinate systems, vector and scalar fields, ordinary differential equations, boundary-value problems and partial differential equations. (MATH 4325)

**PHYS 4326. Mathematical Methods in Physical Sciences II (3:3:0)** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: C or better in PHYS 4325. Continuation of PHYS 4325. Calculus of variations, an introduction to complex analysis special functions, integral transforms. (MATH 4326)

**PHYS 4350. Relativity (3:3:0)** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: C- or better in PHYS 3305. Prerequisite or corequisite: PHYS 4304. Introduction to spacetime, differential geometry, special and general relativity; with applications to black holes, cosmology, and gravitational waves.

## **Astronomy Course Descriptions**

**ASTR 1400. Solar System Astronomy (4:3:2).** 4 Credit Hours. Covers the sun, planets, moons, asteroids, comets, gravitation, and formation. (Honors section offered.) Partially fulfills core Life and Physical Sciences requirement.

**ASTR 1401. Stellar Astronomy (4:3:2).** 4 Credit Hours. Covers stars, star formation, galaxies, and cosmology models. (Honors section offered.) Partially fulfills core Life and Physical Sciences requirement.

**ASTR 2401. Observational Astronomy (4:3:2).** 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: ASTR 1400 or 1401 or consent of instructor. Designed for anyone interested in learning the use of an optical telescope, both visually and for imaging.

**ASTR 3300. Special Topics in Astrophysics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisites: C- or better in ASTR 2401, PHYS 2302, PHYS 3301, and PHYS 4325 or equivalent. (*Some prerequisites may be waived on a case by case basis with instructor permission.*) Topics in radio astronomy, X-ray astronomy, gravitational wave astronomy, compact objects, accretion, stellar explosions and others. May be repeated in different areas.

**ASTR 4301. Astrophysics I (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 3301. Introduction to the tools of astronomy, stellar properties, stellar structure, and stellar evolution.

**ASTR 4302. Astrophysics II (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: PHYS 3301. Structure, formation and evolution of galaxies; cosmology.

**ASTR 4305. Radiative Processes in Astrophysics (3:3:0).** 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: C- or better in PHYS 3305. Prerequisite or corequisite: PHYS 4307. A survey of the physical processes related to the production and propagation of radiation in astrophysical phenomena, including thermal and non-thermal radiation, and atomic transitions.

## Faculty Members

Nural Akchurin – Prof. 2000. Ph.D. 1990, U Iowa. High Energy Physics.

Vallia Antoniou – Assistant Prof. of Practice. 2019. Ph.D. 2008, U Crete. Preston Gott Observatory Dir. Astrophysics.

Elias Aydi – Assistant Prof. 2024. Ph.D. 2018, U Cape Town. Astrophysics.

Dmitry Bolmatov – Assistant Prof. 2025. Ph.D. 2013, Queen Mary U. of London. Biophysics.

Ioannis Chatzakis – Assistant Prof. 2019. Ph.D. 2009, Kansas State U. Condensed Matter Physics.

Jordan Damgov – Lecturer 2022. Ph.D. 2010, INRNE Bulgarian Academy of Science.

Wade DeGottardi - Assistant Prof. 2020. Ph.D. 2012, U. Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Condensed Matter Physics.

Robert Duncan – Prof. 2014. Ph.D. 1988, UC Santa Barbara. Condensed Matter Physics.

Yun Suk Eo – Assistant Prof. 2023. Ph.D. 2017, U Michigan. Condensed Matter Physics.

Hira Farooq – Lecturer 2024. Ph.D. 2020, Texas Tech U.

Michael Fausnaugh – Assistant Prof. 2023. Ph.D. 2017, Ohio State U. Astrophysics.

Yongbin Feng – Assistant Prof. 2024. Ph.D. 2020, U Maryland. High Energy Physics.

Thomas Gibson – Associate Prof. 1985. Ph.D. 1982, U Oklahoma. Atomic, Molecular & Optical Physics.

Emilia Järvelä – Assistant Prof. 2024. D.Sc. 2018, Aalto U. Astrophysics.

Juyang Huang – Prof. 1999. Ph.D. 1987, SUNY Buffalo. Biophysics.

Myoung-Hwan Kim – Assistant Prof. 2019. Ph.D. 2010, SUNY Buffalo. Condensed Matter Physics.

Sung-Won Lee – Prof. 2006. Ph.D. 2000, U Glasgow. Chair. High Energy Physics.

Thomas Maccarone – Prof. 2013. Ph.D. 2001, Yale U. Astrophysics.

Christopher Madrid – Assistant Prof. 2024. Ph.D. 2020, Baylor U. High Energy Physics.

Nihan Pol – Assistant Prof. 2024. Ph.D. 2020, West Virginia U. Astrophysics.

Mahdi Sanati – Prof. 2004. Ph.D. 1999, U Cincinnati. Grad Recruiter. Condensed Matter Physics.

Beth Ann Thacker – Prof. 1999. Ph.D. 1990, Cornell U. Physics Education.

Hung-Ming Tsai – Lecturer 2021. Ph.D. 2011, Duke U.

Igor Volobouev – Associate Prof. 2006. Ph.D. 1997, Southern Methodist U. Graduate Advisor. High Energy Physics.