

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The department of Physics at the University of Colorado Denver enriches understanding of how the world works by incorporating physics in every aspect of life. Good intuition about how things work has been, since the time of Galileo, a hallmark of physicists.

CU Denver's faculty is committed to providing substantive applied research experiences for our undergraduate students by incorporating aspects of every day life into their classrooms and research. A major in physics is one of the few academic degree programs that prepares its students for an amazing array of careers including computer analyst, engineer, technical writer, industrial marketer, doctor, and lawyer. Our faculty is committed to provide students with opportunities for laboratory experience in a research environment. Students work elbow-to-elbow with their professor mentors on such projects as:

- Applying chaos and complex systems theory to problems ranging from the onset of turbulence in fluid flows to the erratic motions of loads hanging from cranes aboard ships at sea
- Study of quasar jets and other associated dynamical properties, supernovae and nucleosynthesis
- Superconducting Quantum Interference Devices (SQUIDs) specifically the fabrication of microelectronic SQUIDs
- Applying non-linear dynamics and stochastic modeling to biological systems to understand how variations in genotype can lead to unique behavior
- Developing detection techniques in the search for the Dark Matter component of our Universe
- Applying physics to archaeology and historic preservation
- Developing ways to help students learn physics better

Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Physics advisor, meet physics faculty engaged in research, attend departmental seminars, and explore ways that Physics relates to research undertaken by faculty in other disciplines.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) supports students to graduation using a shared advising system. CLAS students have two academic advisors with whom they should meet regularly to discuss academic and degree progress: a CLAS Academic Advisor and a major advisor.

For questions related to CU Denver Core Curriculum, CLAS, general graduation requirements, university/college academic policies, or campus resources contact:

CLAS Academic Advising

clas_advising@ucdenver.edu

Visit the CLAS Advising website [here](#)

North Classroom (NC) 1030

303-315-7100

For questions related to major requirements, major course prerequisites, or evaluation of transfer coursework in your major contact:

Physics Major Advising

[CLAS Major Advisor Contact Information](#)

Visit the department website [here](#)

North Classroom (NC) 3123 B

303-315-7390

GENERAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

All CU Denver CLAS students are required to complete the following minimum general graduation requirements to be eligible to apply for graduation:

1. Complete a minimum of 120 credit hours
2. Achieve a minimum 2.0 CU cumulative grade point average (GPA)
3. Complete a minimum of 45 upper-division (3000- to 4000-level) credit hours
4. Complete all CU Denver Core, CLAS, and major requirements
5. Complete a minimum of 30 CLAS credit hours with letter grades at CU Denver

*The following are **maximum** credit hours that can apply toward the minimum 120 hours required for graduation:*

- 16 credit hours Pass/Fail
- 12 credit hours of Independent Study/Directed Research
- 12 credit hours of internship credit
- 8 credit hours of physical education credit

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

Students are responsible for meeting with the major advisor to confirm major requirements. In addition to completing all CU Denver Core and CLAS requirements, students completing the Physics B.S. Degree are required to complete the following minimum program requirements:

1. Students must complete a total of 61 credit hours, including a minimum of 39 PHYS credit hours and 16 credit hours in ancillary coursework.
2. Students must complete a minimum of 16 PHYS upper-division (3000-level and above) credit hours in the major.
3. Students must earn a minimum grade of C- (1.7) in all courses that apply to the major and must achieve a minimum cumulative major GPA of 2.0. Courses taken using P+/P/F or S/U grading cannot apply to major requirements.
4. Students must complete a minimum of 12 PHYS credit hours with CU Denver faculty.
5. Students must declare their intention to major in Physics by the time they have completed 60 credit hours.
6. Students pursuing the 4+1 track must apply and be accepted for participation in the BS/MIS program prior to completion of the BS degree in consultation with both the undergraduate and graduate advisors. Students must complete a 4+1 intent form to formally declare this program, as they work very closely with undergraduate and graduate advisors to ensure they are on track and completing requirements as necessary. A maximum of 12 credit hours of graduate level courses that are applied to the undergraduate degree will apply to the graduate degree. Students must also earn a B- or higher in graduate level coursework, for it to apply to the Integrated Science, MIS.
7. The introductory labs, PHYS 2351 and PHYS 2361, are required for all physics majors. If the department is unable to offer one or both of these labs then PHYS 2321 may be substituted for PHYS 2351 and PHYS 2341 may be substituted for PHYS 2361, upon prior advisor approval.
8. Students earning a Physics major cannot earn a Physics minor.
9. All physics majors must complete a capstone thesis or capstone project. A thesis is required for all students wishing to graduate with departmental honors.
10. The physics faculty also encourage all physics majors to enroll in PHYS 1450, 3450, and 4450 Professional Development I, II, and III seminar courses.

LYNXCONNECT RESOURCES

Are you interested in learning about internship, study abroad, career, and research opportunities for this major? Visit the CU Denver LynxConnect, located in Tivoli Student Union (TV) Suite 339, and browse the LynxConnect [website](#) for more information.

Degree Requirements	Credits	Notes
* Course prerequisites change regularly. Students are responsible for consulting advisors and the class schedule in the student portal for prerequisite information. *		
CU Denver Core Curriculum Requirements	34 - 40	CU Denver Core Curriculum Requirements
CLAS Graduation Requirements	15 - 29	CLAS Graduation Requirements
PHYS Major Requirements	61-65	16 credit hours must be upper-division
PHYS Required Courses		
PHYS 2311 General Physics I: Calculus-Based	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in MATH 1401
PHYS 2351 Applied Physics Lab I	1	**PHYS 2321 General Physics Laboratory I may be substituted only with advisor approval
PHYS 2331 General Physics II: Calculus-Based	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2311 and MATH 2411
PHYS 2361: Applied Physics Lab II	1	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2351 *PHYS 2341 General Physics Laboratory II may be substituted only with advisor approval
PHYS 2711 Vibrations and Waves	3	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2331 and MATH 2411
PHYS 2811 Modern Physics I	3	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2331 and MATH 2411
PHYS 3120 Methods of Mathematical Physics	3	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in MATH 2421 and either MATH 3195 or MATH 3191 and MATH 3200
PHYS 3211 Analytical Mechanics	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2711, MATH 2421, and either MATH 3195 or MATH 3191 and 3200 *Corequisite: PHYS 3120
PHYS 3411 Thermal Physics	3	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2331, PHYS 2811, and MATH 2421 *Corequisite: MATH 3195 or MATH 3191 and 3200
PHYS 3711 Advanced Experimental Physics Laboratory (must be taken twice for a total of four credit hours)	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2711 or PHYS 2811
Complete Courses for one of the following tracks:		
Pure & Applied Physics Track		
PHYS 4211 Quantum Mechanics	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2811 and 3211 *Corequisite: PHYS 4212
PHYS 4212 Quantum Mechanics Seminar	1	*Corequisite: PHYS 4211
PHYS 4311 Electricity & Magnetism	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in PHYS 2331 and PHYS 3120 *Corequisite: PHYS 4312
PHYS 4312 Electricity & Magnetism Seminar	1	Corequisite: PHYS 4311
PHYS electives at 3000-level or above	6	*See department for approved courses. Check individual courses for prerequisites.
Physics, BS 4+1, Masters of Integrated Science Track		
These courses will also apply to the MIS		
MINS 5200 Research Methods in Interdisciplinary Science	3	*Prerequisite: MIS Candidate and Program Director approval (consent required)
PHYS 5211 Quantum Mechanics	3	
PHYS 5311 Electricity & Magnetism	3	
One graduate level STEM (MATH, PHYS, ELEC, BIOL, etc.) course chosen to meet the student's MIS Program Goals.	3	*See department for approved courses. Check individual courses for prerequisites. Course chosen in consultation with MIS Program Director.
Complete one of the following options:		
1) PHYS 3751 Physics Capstone Proposal and PHYS 4751 Physics Capstone Thesis (must take twice and complete two credit hours) or 2) PHYS 3751 Physics Capstone Proposal and PHYS 4711 Physics Capstone Project	3	*Check individual courses for prerequisites.
Required Ancillary Courses		
MATH 1401 Calculus I	4	*Prerequisite: C- or higher in MATH 1109, 1070, or 1110 and MATH 1120; or C- or higher in MATH 1130; or C- or higher in MATH 1401; or entry into the MA01 Student Group OR ALEKS PPL score 76-100. Course can fulfill CU Denver Core Mathematics
MATH 2411 Calculus II	4	*Prerequisite: C- or better in MATH 1401 Course can fulfill CU Denver Core Mathematics
MATH 2421 Calculus III	4	*Prerequisite: C- or better in MATH 2411 Course can fulfill CU Denver Core Mathematics
1) MATH 3195 Linear Algebra and Differential Equations or 2) MATH 3191 Applied Linear Algebra and MATH 3200 Elementary Differential Equations	4 - 6	*Prerequisite for MATH 3195: C- or higher in MATH 2411 (B-recommended) Prerequisite for MATH 3191: C- or higher in MATH 1401 *Prerequisite for MATH 3200: C- or higher in MATH 2411 *Corequisite for MATH 3200: MATH 3191
Estimated General Electives	0 - 8	General Elective credits will vary based on Core & CLAS Requirements. Consult with CLAS Advisor.
Total Minimum Credit Hours:	120	45 credit hours must be upper-division

SAMPLE ACADEMIC PLAN OF STUDY

The following academic plan is a *sample* pathway to completing degree requirements for this major. Students should tailor this plan based on previously completed college coursework (e.g., AP, IB, CLEP, dual/concurrent enrollment, and transfer credit), course availability, and individual preferences related to course load, schedules, or add-on programs such as minors or double-majors.

Year One	Fall	CRS	Spring		CRS
	ENGL 1020 – Core Composition I	3	ENGL 2030 – Core Composition II	3	
	MATH 1401 ^{PE C}	4	MATH 2411 ^{PE C}	4	
	CU Denver Core Behavioral Science	3	PHYS 2311 ^{PE C} and PHYS 2351 ^{PE}	5	
	CU Denver Core Humanities / First-Year Seminar	3	CU Denver Core Arts	3	
	CU Denver Core Social Science	3			
	Total Credit Hours	16	Total Credit Hours	15	

Year Two	Fall	CRS	Spring		CRS
	MATH 2421 ^{PE C}	4	PHYS 2711 ^{PE}	3	
	PHYS 2331 ^{PE C} and PHYS 2361 ^{PE}	5	PHYS 2811 ^{PE}	3	
	CLAS Communicative Skills	3	MATH 3195 ^{PE}	4	
	CLAS Humanities	3	CLAS Behavioral Science	3	
			CU Denver Core Cultural Diversity	3	
Total Credit Hours	15	Total Credit Hours	16		

† Availability of upper-division PHYS courses varies significantly by semester. Meet with the PHYS advisor to discuss course sequencing and availability. †

Year Three	Fall	CRS	Spring		CRS
	PHYS 3120† ^{PE}	4	PHYS 3411† ^{PE}	3	
	PHYS 3211† ^{PE}	3	PHYS 3751† ^{PE}	1	
	PHYS 3711† ^{PE}	2	PHYS 3711† ^{PE}	2	
	CLAS Second Language Semester I	5	CU Denver Core International Perspectives	3	
	Upper-Division General Elective	3	CLAS Second Language Semester II	5	
	Total Credit Hours	17	Total Credit Hours	14	

Pure and Applied Physics Track

Year Four	Fall	CRS	Spring		CRS
	PHYS 4211 and PHYS 4212† ^{PE}	4	PHYS 4311 and PHYS 4312† ^{PE}	4	
	PHYS Upper-Division Elective†	3	PHYS Upper-Division Elective†	3	
	PHYS 4751 or PHYS 4711† ^{PE} (see major advisor)	0-2	PHYS 4751 or PHYS 4711† ^{PE} (see major advisor)	0-2	
	CLAS Social Science	3	Upper-Division General Elective	3	
	Upper-Division General Elective	3	General Elective	3	
	Total Credit Hours	13-15	Total Credit Hours	13-15	

Physics, BS 4+1, Masters of Integrated Science Track

Year Four	Fall	CRS	Spring		CRS
	MINS 5200	3	PHYS 5311	3	
	PHYS 5211	3	One graduate level STEM (MATH, PHYS, ELEC, BIOL, etc.) course	3	
	PHYS 4751 or PHYS 4711† ^{PE} (see major advisor)	0-2	PHYS 4751 or PHYS 4711† ^{PE} (see major advisor)	0-2	
	General Elective	3	PHYS Upper-Division Elective†	3	
	CLAS Social Science	3	Upper-Division General Elective	3	
	Upper-Division General Elective	3	CU Denver Core Cultural Diversity	3	
Total Credit Hours	13-15	Total Credit Hours	13-15		

^M Major Course Available ^C CU Denver Core Course ^{PE} Prerequisite Enforced ^{PR} Prerequisite Recommended