

PHYSICS, BS

Physics is the study of matter and energy and their interactions, both in nature and under man-made conditions. Physics provides both the fundamental foundation for science and technology, and the framework for understanding the world around us and the universe itself.

UWM students can shape their Physics major in one of two directions. The standard major provides a broad overview of all aspects of physics: mechanics, optics, thermodynamics, quantum physics, magnetism, electricity, and the mathematical principles that underlie physics. In the astronomy focused version of the major, students master these basics plus take additional coursework in astrophysics and gravitation.

UWM's program provides excellent preparation for graduate programs in physics, engineering, and math, and can also serve as a springboard to careers in diverse areas, including engineering, business, law, and medicine. All Physics undergraduates are encouraged to get involved in research as early as their freshman year as a means to enhance their education and help diversify their career options.

Course of Study – Bachelor of Science Degree

Complete 120 credits including 90 credits in the College of Letters & Science and with 36 of the 90 credits in L&S upper-level (numbered above 300) courses and 30 of those 36 credits in designated Advanced Natural Science courses (<https://uwm.edu/letters-science/advising/degree-requirements/advanced-natural-science-approved-courses-list/>). The College requires that students must complete in residence at UWM at least 15 credits in upper-division (numbered 300 or above) courses in their major. Students are also required to complete University-wide General Education Requirements and the specific L&S requirements listed below.

To complete a major, students must satisfy all the requirements of the major as stated in this catalog. Students who declare their majors within five years of entering the UW System as a degree candidate may satisfy the requirements outlined in any catalog issued since the time they entered. Credits used to satisfy the major also may be used to satisfy other degree requirements.

University General Education Requirements (GER)

| Code | Title | Credits |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------|
| Oral and Written Communication | | |
| <i>Part A</i> | | |
| Achieve a grade of C or better in the following course: | | |
| ENGLISH 102 | College Writing and Research (or equivalent) | |
| <i>Part B</i> | | |
| Course designated as OWC-B; may be completed through a major-specific course requirement | | |
| Quantitative Literacy | | |
| <i>Part A</i> | | |
| Earn at least 3 credits with a grade of C or higher in one of the following courses or an equivalent course, or achieve a placement code of at least 30 on the mathematics placement test (or other appropriate test, as determined by the Mathematical Sciences Department) | | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| MATH 102 | Mathematical Literacy for College Students II |
| MATH 103 | Contemporary Applications of Mathematics |
| MATH 105 | Introduction to College Algebra |
| MATH 108 | Algebraic Literacy II |
| MATH 111 | Introduction to Logic - Critical Reasoning ¹ |
| or PHILOS 111 | Introduction to Logic - Critical Reasoning |
| MATH 116 | College Algebra |
| Or equivalent course | |
| <i>Part B</i> | |
| Course designated as QL-B; may be completed through a major-specific course requirement | |
| Arts | |
| Select 3 credits | 3 |
| Humanities | |
| Select 6 credits | 6 |
| Social Sciences | |
| Select 6 credits | 6 |
| Natural Sciences | |
| Select 6 credits (At least two courses including one lab) | 6 |
| UWM Foreign Language Requirement | |
| Complete Foreign Language Requirement through: | |
| Two years (high school) of a single foreign language | |
| Two semesters (college) of a single foreign language | |
| Or equivalent | |
| UWM Cultural Diversity Requirement | |
| One course from the Arts, Humanities, or Social Sciences must also satisfy UWM's Cultural Diversity requirement | |

¹ Math 111 and Philosophy 111 are jointly offered and count as repeats of one another. Students cannot receive credit for both courses.

College of Letters & Science Requirements

I. English Composition Requirement

Students must satisfy the English Composition Requirement with one of the following options:

- 1) Completing ENGLISH 102 with a grade of C or higher; or
- 2) placing beyond English 102 on the English Placement Test (EPT) (or other assessment as determined by the English Department); or
- 3) transferring a course of at least 2.5 equivalent credits from another institution that is equivalent to English 102, or a UWM higher-level expository writing course, with a grade of C or higher.

Note: This requirement is the same as the University General Education Requirement for Oral and Written Communication Part A. The College of Letters & Science does not have a specific requirement for a writing course beyond English 102, but students must complete the university-wide requirement for Oral and Written Communication Part B listed above.

II. Mathematics and Formal Reasoning

To satisfy the Mathematics and Formal Reasoning Requirement, Bachelors of Sciences degree students must satisfy the following two requirements:

1. Complete one of the following courses or an equivalent course:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| MATH 211 | Survey in Calculus and Analytic Geometry I | 4 |
| MATH 213 | Calculus with Life Sciences Applications | 4 |
| MATH 221 | Honors Calculus I | 5 |
| MATH 231 | Calculus and Analytic Geometry I | 4 |

2. Complete one course (at least 3 credits) at the 200 level or above chosen from courses in Mathematics, PHILOS 211, or Letters and Science statistics courses:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Complete one of the following: | | |
| 3 or more credits in any 200-level or above Math course | | |
| AFRIC 220 | Introduction to Statistics in African and African Diaspora Studies | |
| ANTHRO 568 | Introduction to Anthropological Statistics | |
| BIO SCI 465 | Biostatistics | |
| ECON 210 | Economic Statistics | |
| GEOG 247 | Quantitative Analysis in Geography | |
| HIST 595 | The Quantitative Analysis of Historical Data | |
| MTHSTAT 215 | Elementary Statistical Analysis | |
| PHILOS 211 | Elementary Logic | |
| POL SCI 390 | Political Data Analysis | |
| POL SCI 392 | Survey Research | |
| PSYCH 210 | Psychological Statistics | |
| SOCIAL 261 | Introduction to Statistical Thinking in Sociology | |

Note: This requirement is NOT the same as the University General Education Requirement for Quantitative Literacy Part B. To complete the BS, students must take one of the L&S approved courses. **Not all of the courses listed here will satisfy the QL-B requirement.**

III. Foreign Language Requirement

Two courses (minimum of 6 credits) in a language (including American Sign Language) other than English at the 100 level or above are required.

Placement testing may be used to satisfy all or part of this requirement. Language courses (including American Sign Language) other than English taken in high school may be used to satisfy all or part of this requirement. One year of high school language equates to one semester of college work.

Completion of the L&S Language Requirement also satisfies the university-wide Foreign Language GER, but not vice versa.

IV. International Requirement

See Approved Courses for the L&S International Requirement (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/letters-science/approved-courses-international-requirement/>) for course options.

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Completed in one of the following ways: | | 9 |
| Complete 3 courses (min. 9 cr) in a single foreign language (not including literature-in-translation or American Sign Language) at the 3rd semester level and above | | |
| Complete 3 non-language courses (min. 9 credits) with an international content chosen from at least 2 curricular areas. | | |
| Complete 9 credits in combination of the two options above. | | |

V. Breadth Requirement

Along with completing the University General Education Requirements of 3 credits in the Arts (A); 6 credits in the Humanities (HU), Social Sciences (SS), and Natural Sciences (NS/NS+); and a course with the Cultural Diversity (CD/+) designation, L&S students must complete the Breadth requirement.

| Code | Title | Credits |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Arts | | |
| Select 3 credits | | 3 |
| Humanities | | |
| Complete 12 credits of L&S courses with Humanities Breadth designation; no more than 6 credits from a single subject area. * | | 12 |
| Social Sciences | | |
| Complete 12 credits of L&S Courses with Social Science Breadth designation; no more than 6 credits from a single curricular area. * | | 12 |
| Natural Sciences | | |
| Complete 12 credits of L&S Courses with Natural Sciences Breadth designation, including laboratory or field courses from three different curricular areas. * | | 12 |
| Cultural Diversity | | |
| Complete 3 credits in a course with Cultural Diversity (CD) designation. ** | | 3 |

- * Students should check their course selections carefully with the list of approved L&S Breadth Courses (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/letters-science/breadth-requirement-course-list/>). Students are advised to select at least 6 credits worth of courses in each of the Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Sciences areas that can satisfy both the campus-wide General Education Requirements and the L&S Breadth requirement.

- ** Students are advised to select a course that satisfies the Cultural Diversity requirement as well as a Humanities or Social Science breadth/GER requirement.

VI. The Major

The College requires that students attain at least a 2.0 GPA in all credits in the major attempted at UWM. In addition, students must attain a 2.0 GPA on all major credits attempted, including any transfer work. Individual departments or programs may require higher GPAs for graduation. Some departmental majors require courses from other departments. Contact your major department for information on whether those credits will count as part of the major GPA. The College requires

that students must complete in residence at UWM at least 15 credits in upper-division (numbered 300 or above) courses in their major.

Research Requirement

Within their majors, students must complete a research experience approved by the L&S faculty. A list of courses satisfying the research requirement in each major can be found here (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/letters-science/approved-courses-research-requirement/>).

VII. The Minor

The College requires that students attain at least a 2.0 GPA in all credits in the minor attempted at UWM. In addition, students must attain a 2.0 GPA on all minor credits attempted, including any transfer work. Individual departments or programs may require higher GPAs for graduation.

Physics Major Requirements

Freshmen who enter with scores of 4 or 5 on the Physics Advanced Placement exam given by CEEB are given partial credit for the introductory courses.

Students who have a combined GPA of 2.500 or above in all mathematics and physics courses taken in the first two years will be approved for a major in physics. This requirement will be waived in those cases where students are able to show evidence of unusual circumstances.

The department offers two study options. The standard physics major is for students who seek a general physics degree. The physics major with astronomy emphasis is for students who wish to pursue their interest in astronomy. While the standard physics major generally is followed by students who plan to go on to graduate school, the major with astronomy emphasis also enables students to pursue graduate work in physics.

Both options require that students take at least 15 credits in advanced-level (numbered 300 and above) courses in residence at UWM. The College of Letters & Science requires that students attain at least a 2.0 GPA on all credits in the major attempted at UWM. In addition, students must attain a 2.0 GPA on all major credits attempted, including any transfer work. All students in the College are required to complete a research experience in their majors. Physics majors meet this requirement by successfully completing an upper-level, 3-credit laboratory courses.

Standard Physics Major

A minimum of 43 credits in physics, including:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Select one of the following options: ¹ | | 10 |
| Option 1: | | |
| PHYSICS 209 & PHYSICS 214 | Physics I (Calculus Treatment) and Lab Physics I (Calculus Treatment) | |
| PHYSICS 210 & PHYSICS 215 | Physics II (Calculus Treatment) and Lab Physics II (Calculus Treatment) | |
| Option 2: | | |
| PHYSICS 219 | Physics I: Calculus-Based, Studio Format | |
| PHYSICS 220 | Physics II: Calculus-Based, Studio Format | |
| PHYSICS 309 | Physics III: Modern Physics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 317 | Thermodynamics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 325 | Optics | 4 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---|
| PHYSICS 370 | Analytical and Numerical Methods in Physics | 3 |
| Select one of the following: ² | | 3 |
| PHYSICS 406 | Introduction to Infrared Microspectroscopy | |
| PHYSICS 408 | Experiments in Linear Electronics | |
| PHYSICS 409 | Modern Physics Laboratory | |
| PHYSICS 670 | Electron Microscopy Laboratory | |
| PHYSICS 391 | Undergraduate Research Participation ³ | |
| PHYSICS 411 | Mechanics | 4 |
| PHYSICS 420 | Electricity and Magnetism I | 3 |
| PHYSICS 422 | Electricity and Magnetism II | 3 |
| PHYSICS 441 | Introduction to Quantum Mechanics I | 4 |
| PHYSICS 442 | Introduction to Quantum Mechanics II | 3 |
| Electives | | |
| Selecting electives are encouraged (see below) | | |

Total Credits 43

¹ PHYSICS 209/PHYSICS 214 and PHYSICS 210/PHYSICS 215 are strongly recommended; however, PHYSICS 219 and PHYSICS 220 may be substituted.

² These courses are **not** offered every semester; check with the undergraduate advisor to plan for completing this requirement.

³ The research proposal must be approved by the undergraduate advisor and the Departmental Undergraduate Committee, and it must demonstrate pedagogical value. Unfocused laboratory internships are not acceptable.

Electives

No elective courses are required, but students are encouraged to select electives from Physics or Astronomy courses 300 level or above from the following list. Only the courses identified in the list below with the phrase "if not selected above" will be counted in the student's major GPA. Electives may not be offered every semester; check with the undergraduate advisor to plan for completing this requirement.

| Code | Title | Credits |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ASTRON 400 | Astrophysics I | 3 |
| ASTRON 401 | Astrophysics II | 3 |
| PHYSICS 305 | Medical Physics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 306 | Introduction to Biophysics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 351 | Basics of Condensed Matter Physics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 391 | Undergraduate Research Participation | 1-6 |
| PHYSICS 406 | Introduction to Infrared Microspectroscopy (if not selected above) | 3 |
| PHYSICS 408 | Experiments in Linear Electronics (if not selected above) | 3 |
| PHYSICS 409 | Modern Physics Laboratory (if not selected above) | 3 |
| PHYSICS 501 | Special Topics: Mathematical Models of Physical Problems I | 3 |
| PHYSICS 515 | Statistical Mechanics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 517 | Special Relativity | 3 |
| PHYSICS 531 | Principles of Quantum Mechanics I | 3 |
| PHYSICS 532 | Principles of Quantum Mechanics II | 3 |

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|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------|--|
| PHYSICS 541 | Elementary Particles | 3 | Or another course approved by the undergraduate advisor | |
| PHYSICS 551 | Introduction to Solid State Physics I | 3 | | |
| PHYSICS 651 | Introduction to Solid State Physics II | 3 | | |
| PHYSICS 670 | Electron Microscopy Laboratory (if not selected above) | 3 | | |

Physics Major with Astronomy Emphasis

A minimum of 55 credits in physics and astronomy courses, including:

| Code Required | Title | Credits |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Select one of the following options: ¹ | | 10 |
| Option 1: | | |
| PHYSICS 209 & PHYSICS 214 | Physics I (Calculus Treatment) and Lab Physics I (Calculus Treatment) | |
| PHYSICS 210 & PHYSICS 215 | Physics II (Calculus Treatment) and Lab Physics II (Calculus Treatment) | |
| Option 2: | | |
| PHYSICS 219 | Physics I: Calculus-Based, Studio Format | |
| PHYSICS 220 | Physics II: Calculus-Based, Studio Format | |
| PHYSICS 309 | Physics III: Modern Physics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 325 | Optics | 4 |
| PHYSICS 317 | Thermodynamics | 3 |
| PHYSICS 370 | Analytical and Numerical Methods in Physics | 3 |
| Select one of the following: ² | | 3 |
| PHYSICS 406 | Introduction to Infrared Microspectroscopy | |
| PHYSICS 408 | Experiments in Linear Electronics | |
| PHYSICS 409 | Modern Physics Laboratory | |
| PHYSICS 670 | Electron Microscopy Laboratory | |
| PHYSICS 391 | Undergraduate Research Participation ³ | |
| PHYSICS 411 | Mechanics | 4 |
| PHYSICS 420 | Electricity and Magnetism I | 3 |
| PHYSICS 422 | Electricity and Magnetism II | 3 |
| PHYSICS 441 | Introduction to Quantum Mechanics I | 4 |
| PHYSICS 442 | Introduction to Quantum Mechanics II | 3 |
| ASTRON 400 | Astrophysics I ² | 3 |
| ASTRON 401 | Astrophysics II ² | 3 |
| Electives² | | |
| Select 6 credits from the following: | | 6 |
| ASTRON 103 or ASTRON 211 | Survey of Astronomy | |
| ASTRON 175 | Principles of Astronomy | |
| ASTRON 175 | Cosmic Origins | |
| ATM SCI 110 | The Origin, Composition, and Structure of the Planetary Atmospheres | |
| GEO SCI 120 | Geology of the Planets | |
| PHYSICS 391 | Undergraduate Research Participation | |
| PHYSICS 501 | Special Topics: Mathematical Models of Physical Problems I | |
| PHYSICS 517 | Special Relativity | |
| PHYSICS 541 | Elementary Particles | |

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|----------------------|-----------|
| Total Credits | 55 |
|----------------------|-----------|

¹ PHYSICS 209/PHYSICS 214 and PHYSICS 210/PHYSICS 215 are strongly recommended; however, PHYSICS 219 and PHYSICS 220 may be substituted.

² These courses are not offered every semester; check with the undergraduate advisor to plan for completing this requirement.

³ The research proposal must be approved by the undergraduate advisor and the Departmental Undergraduate Committee, and it must demonstrate pedagogical value. Unfocused laboratory internships are not acceptable.

Possible Course Substitutions for Students with Physics and Engineering Double Majors

One of the following courses may be substituted for PHYSICS 370:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------|---------|
| CIV ENG 280 | Computer Based Engineering Analysis | 3 |
| COMPSCI 240 | Introduction to Engineering Programming | 3 |
| COMPSCI 250 | Introductory Computer Programming | 3 |
| MECHENG 101 | Computational Tools for Engineers | 2 |

The following course may be substituted for PHYSICS 317:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| MECHENG 301 | Basic Engineering Thermodynamics | 3 |

The combination of both of the following may substitute for PHYSICS 411:

| Code | Title | Credits |
|-------------|----------|---------|
| CIV ENG 201 | Statics | 3 |
| CIV ENG 202 | Dynamics | 3 |

Upper level engineering technical electives may be substituted for PHYSICS 325 and independent study/research may be substituted for the 400-level laboratory courses.

Letters & Science Advising

During your time at UWM, you may have multiple members of your success team, including advisors, peer mentors, and success coaches. Letters and Science students typically work with at least two different types of advisors as they pursue their degrees: professional College Advisors and Faculty Advisors. L&S College Advisors advise across your entire degree program while departmental Faculty Advisors focus on the major.

College Advisors are located in Holton Hall and serve as your primary advisor. They are your point person for your questions about navigating college and completing your degree. College Advisors will:

- assist you in defining your academic and life goals;
- help you create an educational plan that is consistent with those goals;
- assist you in understanding curriculum, major and degree requirements for graduation, as well as university policies and procedures;

- provide you with information about campus and community resources and refer you to those resources as appropriate; and
- monitor your progress toward graduation and completion of requirements.

Faculty Advisors mentor students in the major and assist them in maximizing their development in the program. You will begin working with a Faculty Advisor when you declare your major. Faculty Advisors are an important partner and will:

- help you understand major requirements and course offerings in the department;
- explain opportunities for internships and undergraduate research and guide you in obtaining those experiences; and
- serve as an excellent resource as you consider potential graduate programs and career paths in your field.

Students are encouraged to meet with both their College Advisor and Faculty Advisor at least once each semester. Appointments are available in-person, by phone or by video.

Currently enrolled students should use the Navigate360 website (<https://uwm.edu/navigate360/>) to make an appointment with your assigned advisor or call (414) 229-4654 if you do not currently have an assigned Letters & Science advisor. Prospective students who haven't enrolled in classes yet should call (414) 229-7711 or email let-sci@uwm.edu.

College of Letters and Science Dean's Honor List

GPA of 3.750 or above, earned on a full-time student's GPA on 12 or more graded credits in a given semester.

Honors College Degree and Honors College Degree with Distinction

Granted to graduating seniors who complete Honors College requirements, as listed in the Honors College (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/honors-college/>) section of this site.

Commencement Honors

Students with a cumulative GPA of 3.500 or above, based on a minimum of 40 graded UWM credits earned prior to the final semester, will receive all-university commencement honors and be awarded the traditional gold cord at the December or May Honors Convocation. Please note that for honors calculation, the GPA is **not** rounded and is truncated at the third decimal (e.g., 3.499).

Final Honors

Earned on a minimum of 60 graded UWM credits: Cum Laude - 3.500 or above; Magna Cum Laude - 3.650 or above; Summa Cum Laude - 3.800 or above.