PHYSICS, BACHELOR OF ARTS

College of Letters & Science

The Major Program

From the smallest subatomic particles to atoms, molecules, stars, and galaxies, the study of physics is the study of what makes the universe work. Knowledge gained using atomic-scale microscopes and high-energy particle accelerators and nuclear reactors teaches us not only what holds the atomic nucleus together but also how proteins function and why stars shine.

The Program

The Department of Physics & Astronomy offers a Bachelor of Arts in Physics and two Bachelor of Science degree programs: in Physics (which also offers an emphasis in Astrophysics), and in Applied Physics. The A.B. degree provides broad coverage of classical and modern physics while permitting a broader liberal arts education than is possible with the other two programs. The B.S. degree in either Physics or Applied Physics should be followed by the student who plans to enter physics as a profession, and also provides excellent training for a wide variety of technical career options. The B.S. in Applied Physics provides the student with a solid introduction to a particular applied physics specialty. For the student who plans to enter the job market upon completing a B.S. degree, the applied physics orientation would be an asset. Either B.S. program provides a solid foundation in physics for the student interested in graduate work in either pure or applied physics.

Career Alternatives

Careers in physics and applied physics include research and development, either in universities, government laboratories, or industry; teaching in high schools, junior colleges, and universities; management and administration in industrial laboratories and in government agencies; and in production and sales in industry. A major in physics also provides a strong base for graduate-level work in such interdisciplinary areas as chemical physics, biophysics and medical physics, geophysics and environmental physics, astrophysics and astronomy, computer science, and materials science.

Program Variance

Similar courses from other departments may be substituted for courses in the depth subject matter requirements by obtaining prior written permission from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Chairperson.

Astronomy

In addition to the introductory Astronomy courses listed, upper division and graduate courses in Astronomy, Astrophysics and Cosmology are listed under Physics.

Graduate Study

The Department of Physics & Astronomy offers programs of study and research leading to M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. Further information regarding requirements for these three degrees, graduate research, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships may be obtained by writing to the Chairperson, Department of Physics, One Shields Avenue, University of California, Davis, CA 95616.