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Overview of Program

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Our research facilities include state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment that provides outstanding opportunities for students to conduct research at world-class laboratories. Our diverse intramural research programs include departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Microbiology and Electronic and Computer Engineering, and with the Center for Biotechnology and Biomedical Engineering and with local industries to provide additional opportunities.

Our graduates are an excellent record of finding employment in a diverse range of positions ranging from high-tech companies to the Brownian environment. We hope that when you consider the opportunity to participate in research at MSU, the possibility of high-level interdisciplinary research at the forefront of modern physics will be one of the options you consider.

Astrophysics, Relativity & Cosmology (ARC)
The ARC group studies extreme astrophysical environments where gravity interacts strongly: space-time curvature and matter are so dense that Einstein's theory of gravity alone may be insufficient. In the arc second regime around black holes, neutron stars, and compact objects, where one day may be long enough for us to observe the coalescence and ultimate merger of two neutron stars, the gravitational waves emitted during the final stages of coalescence are expected to energize the whole universe, creating a gravitational wave burst with the energy of a few billion stars. The ARC group studies these extreme environments using a combination of Einstein's theory of general relativity and astrophysical observations, including gravitational wave detections, to understand the fundamental nature of gravity and the behavior of matter under extreme conditions.

Physics Education
The Physics and Astronomy Education Group endeavors to improve teaching and learning at all levels. Graduate students pursue a Ph.D. in physics with a principal research focus on science education. Students whose primary research is in other areas may pursue a minor in science education. The group is involved in numerous educational projects, including outreach programs, teacher certification programs, and professional development activities for K-12 teachers. The group is also involved in developing and evaluating student assessment strategies and project-based learning activities.

Laser and Optics
Research in optics and lasers at MSU extends from fundamental studies of physical processes to applications in material science, engineering, and medicine. Research in this area includes the development and application of lasers, optical materials, and optical techniques for studying and modifying matter at the nanoscale. Research on lasers and nonlinear optics includes the development of new laser technologies and the study of nonlinear optical properties. Research on materials science includes the development of new materials for optical applications, such as photovoltaic materials and optical fibers.

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Solar Physics
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Space Science and Engineering Laboratory (SSEL)
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Our faculty includes over 50 full-time and part-time faculty members, as well as over 200 graduate and undergraduate students. Undergraduate and graduate programs are offered in areas such as condensed matter physics, high-energy physics, atomic and molecular physics, and nuclear physics. The MSU Department of Physics is committed to excellence in teaching and research and is home to the Image and Chemical Analysis Laboratory (ICAL), providing analytical services to research, education, and industry, and strengthening existing collaborations between the physical, biological, and engineering sciences.

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Biophysics

Biophysics is an interdisciplinary research area that brings together people from many departments at MSU. One of the exciting topics under study is the development of the new cancer treatment technology, photodynamic therapy (PDT). We are the home of the Image and Chemical Analysis Laboratory (ICAL), providing analytical technology. Advanced nanotechnology and precision instrumentation, achievements in X-ray and neutron detection, force spectroscopy, and extreme environments.

Condensed Matter Physics

Our research has a very broad scope of interests ranging from fundamental aspects of quantum mechanics to the development of devices that can be used in the real world. Our research is aimed at understanding the behavior of materials under extreme conditions such as extreme temperatures, pressures, and magnetic fields. We use a variety of experimental techniques, including synchrotron radiation, neutron scattering, and electron microscopy, to study the properties of materials under these conditions.

Physics Education

Our undergraduate teaching programs prepare students for a variety of careers in physics education, including teaching at the K-12 level, teaching at the community college level, and teaching at the university level. We also offer graduate programs in physics education, including a Ph.D. program in physics education. Our research and teaching programs are designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the principles of physics and the ability to apply these principles to real-world problems.

Spectrum Laboratory

The Spectrum Laboratory was established in 1999 to advance the opto-electronic technologies used in high technology applications. The Spectrum Laboratory conducts research including photonic signal processing, lidar, quantum computing, laser technology, and the development of optical instruments and photonic devices. Research areas include:

- Dramatic classroom demonstrations
- Embracing student learning
- Extreme Ultra Violet
- Laser Technologies
- Spectral Imaging
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