

# Physics and Astronomy

## Chair

- Mary Hall Reno

## Director, Undergraduate Studies

- Jane M. Nachtman

## Director, Graduate Studies

- Allison N. Jaynes

## Director, Research Operations

- John P. Prineas

**Undergraduate majors:** physics (BA, BS); applied physics (BS); astronomy (BA, BS)

**Undergraduate minors:** physics; astronomy

**Graduate degrees:** MS in physics; MS in astronomy; PhD in physics

**Faculty:** <https://physics.uiowa.edu/people>

**Website:** <https://physics.uiowa.edu/>

The Department of Physics and Astronomy provides comprehensive and rigorous instruction in all basic aspects of its subjects. It also provides research facilities and guidance in selected specialties for advanced individual scholarly work.

In addition to its undergraduate and graduate programs of study, the department offers several courses that undergraduate students in all majors may use to satisfy the GE CLAS Core Natural Sciences requirement. Look for courses with prefixes ASTR and PHYS under "Natural Sciences" in the GE CLAS Core section of the catalog. The department often offers First-Year Seminars designed for entering undergraduates.

The applied physics degree offers flexibility in the choice of concentration corresponding to career goals, and can also be customized beyond the existing areas of concentration.

Students may pair a BA in physics or astronomy or a BS in applied physics with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), data science, or another postgraduate degree. More information can be found on the Department of Physics and Astronomy website.

The department also participates in an interdisciplinary doctoral program, the Applied Mathematical and Computational Sciences Program (Graduate College).

All of the department's courses and advanced laboratories are taught by faculty members. Faculty members also supervise associated laboratories taught by graduate students. Enrollment in courses beyond the elementary level is typically 15 to 20 students; there is ample opportunity for individual work. Special introductory courses are offered for students majoring in physics and astronomy and for others with a special interest in these subjects.

## Student Organizations

The Department of Physics and Astronomy sponsors two organizations open to students for support and enrichment.

Students may join the University of Iowa undergraduate student chapter of the Society of Physics Students (SPS). Chapter activities include outreach events to community groups and local schools, helping with public observing nights at the Van Allen Observatory, faculty dinners, undergraduate colloquia, and less formal social gatherings.

The department also sponsors GradMAP, a peer mentoring program for graduate students that assists early graduate students in navigating the nuances of our graduate school, informs them about departmental, collegiate, and university resources for their professional development, and provides a network of mentorship to support them during the transition to the graduate program.