Physics and Astronomy

Chair
• Philip E. Kaaret

Director, Undergraduate Studies
• Jane M. Nachtman

Director, Graduate Studies
• Vincent Rodgers

Director, Research Operations
• John P. Prineas

Undergraduate majors: physics (B.A., B.S.); applied physics (B.S.); astronomy (B.A., B.S.)
Undergraduate minors: physics; astronomy
Graduate degrees: M.S. in physics; M.S. in astronomy; Ph.D. 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 department also participates in an interdisciplinary doctoral program, the Program in Applied Mathematical and Computational Sciences (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.

Total enrollment in physics and astronomy courses is approximately 2,200 each semester of the academic year and 150 during the summer session. The department has around 120 undergraduate majors, half of whom are honors students, and 75 graduate students.