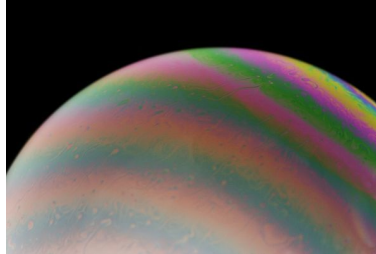


OPTI-210  
PHYSICAL OPTICS I  
SPRING 2026



**Instructor**

Dalziel Wilson

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Course website: [d2l.arizona.edu/d2l/home](https://d2l.arizona.edu/d2l/home)

**Teaching Assistants**

Morgan Choi (morganchoi@arizona.edu)  
Atkin Hyatt (atkindavidhyatt@arizona.edu)

**Lectures**

Time: Monday & Wednesday, 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM  
Location: Meinel 410

**Office hours**

Instructor: TBA  
TA : TBA

**Course objectives**

OPTI-210 will introduce students to concepts from physical optics, including:

**Mathematical tools for describing waves (e.g. complex numbers)**  
**Maxwell's equations and the electromagnetic wave equation**  
**Plane electromagnetic waves**  
**The Lorentz oscillator model of light-matter interaction.**  
**Reflection and refraction at a dielectric interface**  
**Thin film interference and the Fabry-Pérot cavity**  
**Light polarization and its description using Jones calculus**  
**1D Fraunhofer diffraction: single and double slit diffraction**  
**2D Fraunhofer diffraction: square and circular apertures**

**Learning outcomes**

After completing the course, students should be able to

1. Explain the concept of wave motion as applied to optics.
2. Describe the propagation of plane-wave optical fields
3. Explain the microscopic origin of material optical properties.
4. Analyze transmission and reflection at an interface.
5. Analyze multiple beam interference devices.
6. Describe polarized light using Jones calculus.
6. Analyze simple problems involving diffraction of optical waves.

**Schedule of activities and topics**

The class will consist of

- Two 75-minute lecture sessions per week.
- Ten problem sets distributed evenly over the semester.
- Two in-class mid-terms plus a final exam.

Lectures will cover the following topics, in chronological order

1. Review of vector calculus and complex numbers [2 lectures]
2. Basics of wave motion [4 lectures]
3. Maxwell's equation in integral and differential form [4 lectures]
4. Maxwell's wave equation and properties of the plane-wave solution [4 lectures]
5. Reflection & refraction at an interface [4 lectures]
6. Polarization and its description [4 lectures]
7. Interference and the Fabry-Perot [2 lectures]
8. Basic concepts of diffraction by planar objects [2 lectures]

**Required materials**

Two textbooks are required for the class:

1. *Optics* ( $\geq 4^{\text{th}}$  Edition), Hecht
2. *Introduction to Modern Optics* ( $\geq 2^{\text{nd}}$  Edition), Fowles

In addition, course and lecture notes will be made available on D2L.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on the following

Homework	(30%)
Midterm exam 1	(20%)
Midterm exam 2	(20%)
Final exam	(30%)

The suggested grading scale is: A: 90-100%, B: 75-89%, C: 60-74%, D: 50-59%, E: <49%. Final grades will be assigned using the clumping method to identify natural thresholds. If clumping results in a lower grade, the suggested scale will be used. For scores at the threshold between two grades, demonstration of improvement over the course of the semester will be a deciding factor.

Note: **Homework is governed by the honor system.** Discussion with others is encouraged, but the work you hand in must be your own.

### **Classroom attendance and COVID policy**

Attendance is required at lectures and encouraged at office hours, excepting complications arising due to illness or equivalent. Per university policy:

- If you feel sick, or if you need to isolate and quarantine based on [University protocols](#), please stay home. Except for seeking medical care, avoid contact with others and do not travel.
- Notify the instructor or TAs if you will be missing an in person or online course meeting, or you will miss an assignment deadline.
- Non-attendance for any reason does not guarantee and automatic extension of due date or rescheduling of examinations/assessments. Please communicate and coordinate any request directly with your instructor.
- If you must miss the equivalent of more than one week of class, please contact the Dean of Students Office (DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu) to share documentation about the challenges you are facing.

In accordance with UA policy, absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance, or practice will also be accommodated where reasonable. See [policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy](http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy) for details.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or dean's designee) will also be honored.

### **Final Examination Date and Regulations**

The date and time of the final exam can be found at <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/schedules/finals.htm>.

Final Exam Regulations can be found at <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/courses/final-examination-regulations-and-information>.

### **Classroom behavior policy**

To foster a positive learning environment, students are asked to refrain from texting, chatting, reading a newspaper, making phone calls, or surfing the internet.

### **Threatening Behavior Policy**

In accordance with the UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy, threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself, will not be tolerated. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students> .

### **Academic integrity policy**

Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>. In particular, plagiarism is strongly discouraged. See "Grading" for note about homework.

### **Nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policy**

Students are expected, together with the instructor, to foster an environment that encourages expression of ideas without fear of harassment. As such, bullying and discrimination, as described in UA's

Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>, will not be tolerated.

**Accessibility and accommodations**

Students faced with accessibility challenges, for example due to pregnancy or due to a disability, will be given reasonable accommodation. Please consult the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) for details.

**Subject to change statement**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.