

Physics 641_Statistical Mechanics Syllabus Spring 2025

Class meeting: FMH310, Wednesdays, 6:00 pm-8:50 pm

Jan 20, 2025 – May 7, 2025

Instructor
Prof. Junjie Yang

Email
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Office Location & Office Hours
Wednesdays 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Tiernan Hall 460

General Information

Descriptions: The main goal of this course is to help students understand statistical mechanics including classical and quantum statistical mechanics. The course objective will be accomplished through lectures and problem-solving. Students are encouraged to read the materials in textbooks before coming to class. The Course Schedule below lists the topics covered. Professors will make an effort to help the students succeed by using active learning.

Prerequisites: Knowledge of thermodynamics and quantum mechanics (undergraduate level).

Learning Expectations, Goals, and Outcomes

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of terms such as equipartition theorem, entropy, fluctuations, heat capacities, Bose-Einstein distributions, Fermi-Dirac distributions, and phase transitions and the ability to use them in the context of physical systems.
- 2) Utilize the laws of thermodynamics and statistical mechanics (in particular, ensembles and partition functions) to analytically describe various thermodynamics systems and processes.
- 3) To be able to solve problems for equilibrium properties of simple quantum systems.

Professors and students will measure Outcomes by the performance on assessments as listed below under final grade calculations.

Course Materials

Text (optional): Keith Stowe, *An Introduction to Thermodynamics and Statistical Mechanics*,
Mehran Kardar, *Statistical Physics of Particles*
Kerson Huang, *Statistical Mechanics*.

***Canvas is required for this course. Lecture materials and homework assignments will be posted on Canvas.**

Final Grade Calculation:

Class Participation	10%
Homework (total 5 assignments)	30%
Research project and Oral presentation	10%
Midterm Exam (course materials from class 1 to class 5)	20%
Final Exam (class 1 to class 13)	30%
Total	100%

Class Participation: (10% of grade) Students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions by asking and answering questions, volunteering to solve problems, and working actively with others during in-class group assignments. When all students participate in each class, it creates an active learning environment that will help them understand the materials and

be more successful in the class.

Research project and Oral presentation: (10% of grade) A research-based project will be assigned to each student. Each student will do an oral presentation.

Homework: (30% of grade) Homework questions are closely related to previous exams, so the understanding you gain from doing them is an added benefit. The homework is the greatest help for you if you figure it out by yourself. There are a total of five homework assignments, evenly distributed throughout the spring semester.

Midterm Exam: (20% of grade) The midterm exam will cover course materials from class 1 to class 5. Make-up exams for missed tests are allowed only with prior approval from both your instructor and the Dean of Students.

Final Exam: (30% of grade) The Final will emphasize an overview of the whole course. The professors will help you as much as possible by covering all concepts and all settings of exam questions in class and with review sessions. Make-ups for missed exams are only with advance permission from both your instructor and the Dean of Students.

The conversion of numerical to letter grades is as follows: > 85% A; >80 to 85 B+; >70 to 80 B; >65 to 70 C+; >55 to 65 C and <55 F

If you need any extra information about class or exam questions, ask Prof. Junjie Yang. After the Final exam, the course ends, and questions and grades are not open to discussion.

Course Policies

Honor Code: The NJIT Student Council dictates: "NJIT has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating of any kind and for student behavior that disrupts learning by others." The NJIT Student Senate has requested a zero-tolerance policy for cheating of any kind and for behavior that disrupts learning. The Senate wants fairness for all students. The Dean of Students determines punishments and requires professors to report any incidents. The penalties include failure in the course plus disciplinary probation up to expulsion from NJIT. Avoid situations where anyone could misinterpret your behavior as dishonorable. Students are required to agree to the NJIT Honor Code on each exam, assignment, quiz, etc. for the course. Turn off all cellular phones, wireless devices, computers, and messaging devices of all kinds during classes and exams. Please do not eat, drink, or create noise in class that interferes with the work of other students or instructors.

Missed exams and quizzes: There is *no make-up* for in-class activities. If you miss an exam and the make-up time, you will receive a score of zero for that Exam. That score will be included in the calculation of your final grade. To get credit for an exam, you must notify your instructor before the exam you will miss. To be qualified to receive a "make-up" exam score (a very rare occurrence), the student should present documentation for not being able to take the test as scheduled. As is the standard policy of NJIT, this documentation should be presented to the **Dean of Students - (973) 596-3466, Room 255 Campus Center**. BOTH the instructor and Dean of Students must concur in permitting a "make-up" exam. Students who miss exams and do not present documentation within 7 days of the exam will receive a zero score for the exam.

Late work: Homework is due by times and dates indicated in the homework. Overdue homework without any notice will get a zero grade. For any special cases in which students can

not submit the homework on time, the student should notify the instructor by email 24 hrs before the deadline. The student should also present documentation (approved by the Dean of Students) for not being able to submit the homework on time.

Class attendance: The NJIT attendance policy is the following: “It is expected that students will attend all classes. Your teacher will take attendance at all classes and exams. More than 3 unexcused absences (in total) are excessive.” If you have excusable absences, contact your instructor or the Dean of Students - (973) 596-3466, Room 255 Campus Center. If you have to miss class, let your professor know.

Withdrawal: If you must withdraw from the course, do it officially through the Registrar, otherwise your course grade will be F.

Late Withdrawals: Withdrawals after the 10th week require documented extenuating circumstances via the Dean of Students Office. The course instructor and the Dean of Students are the principal points of contact for students considering withdrawing from a course.

Electronics: Cell phones and laptops must be off during classes and exams, except as indicated by the instructor.

Course Schedule

We recommend that you read the relevant materials in the optional textbooks as indicated below before class. The combination of reading and discussion helps learning.

Class 1 to 2: Basic concepts and laws (Keith Stowe)

Degree of freedom, Equipartition theorem

First Law, Second Law, and Third Law

Heat Capacity, Entropy, Free Energy, and Special Processes

Class 3 to 5: Classical Statistics (Mehran Kardar and Kerson Huang)

Ensembles: Micro-canonical, Canonical, Grand canonical,

Occupation number, Partition Functions

Maxwell-Boltzmann Statistics

Interaction and van der Waals gas

Class 6: Midterm Exam

Class 7 to 13: Quantum Statistics (Mehran Kardar and Kerson Huang)

Phonons, Photons,

Fermi statistics,

Bose-Einstein statistics, Superfluids

Phase Transitions, Landau theory, Spins and Magnetism

Class 14: Oral presentation

Exams:

Midterm exam: Feb 26 (Wed), Course materials from class 1 to class 5.

Final exam: May 14 (Wed), Course materials from class 7 to class 13.

Academic Integrity: Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility

to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#).

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

Generative AI: Student use of artificial intelligence (AI) is permitted in this course for certain assignments and activities. It is not permitted to be used in the following assignments, as doing so would undermine student learning and achievement of course learning outcomes: homework assignments and final report for the research project. Additionally, if and when students use AI in this course, the AI must be cited as shown on the [NJIT Library AI citation page](#) for AI. If you have any questions or concerns about AI technology use in this class, please reach out to your instructor before submitting any assignments.

Student Absences for Religious Observance: Students must notify the instructors in writing of any conflicts between course requirements and religious observances, by the end of the second week of classes and no later than two weeks before the anticipated absence.

Extenuating Circumstances & Other Situations: When a student invokes extenuating circumstances for any reason, the student should be referred to the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will make the determination of whether extenuating circumstances exist and will notify the instructor accordingly. Instructors should never request or accept medical or other documents from students; all documents should be submitted by the student to the Dean of Students Office. Except for cases determined by law, an instructor is not required to accommodate student requests even when extenuating circumstances are certified by the Dean of Students.

Additional Information and Resources

Resources for NJIT Students

Academic Advising Success Center “...assist in the advisement of students who are undecided in their major, transitioning into another major at NJIT, and those students who need additional support to graduate successfully and in a timely manner.”

Academic Support and Student Affairs “From questions about becoming a student at NJIT – to student engagement – to searching for information on career development, the Division of Academic Support and Student Affairs Staff is here to help.”

Additional Tutoring Centers Physics Learning Center; Math Learning Center; Chemistry Learning Center; The Writing Center; ECE Study Groups Center for Counseling and Psychological Services “The NJIT Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) is committed to assisting students in the achievement of their academic goals as well as benefiting from their personal experience on campus. College life can be personally challenging and stressful at times. We believe that the educational process is an important component of the development of the individual as a whole person. Our goal is to optimize the college experience and improve the quality of the lives of our students by promoting their mental health and facilitating students’ personal, academic and professional growth.”

Department of Public Safety “The Department of Public Safety, conveniently located at 154 Summit St. on the first level of the Parking Deck, provides police protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

Disability Support Services “If you need accommodations due to a disability please contact Chantonette Lyles, Associate Director of Disability Support Services, Fenster Hall Room 260 to discuss your specific needs. A Letter of Accommodation Eligibility from the Disability Support Services office authorizing your accommodations will be required.”

Health Services “To ensure the good health of our students, the NJIT Student Health Service provides quality healthcare to all eligible NJIT registered students.”

IST Service Desk “The IST Service Desk is the central hub for computing information and first point of contact for getting help and reporting issues related to computing technology at NJIT. There is much technology here at NJIT, and many ways to find information or get help with it.” The Learning Center “Our mission is to assist students both in the classroom and beyond by providing tutorial services, academic coaching, academic and personal enrichment workshops and staff and peer support so students can meet the demands of their coursework and are prepared for life after graduation.”

NJIT/Rutgers Shuttle Service “The shuttle bus is operated jointly with Rutgers-Newark and provides transportation for the University community between the two campuses, major mass transit systems, and Harrison and Kearny. As a courtesy, shuttle service is free to the Rutgers/NJIT community who present identification.”

Office of Global Initiatives Resources for international students and study abroad programs. Robert W. Van Houten Library “The Van Houten Library offers electronic and print resources essential to the mission of New Jersey's science and technology university, including a core collection of academic books, databases, and journals, as well as research and consultation services.”

Student Financial Aid Services “Student Financial Aid Services (SFAS) at NJIT is committed to providing you with every opportunity to obtain funding to support your educational costs at NJIT.”

Spring 2025 Academic Calendar

January	20	Monday	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January	21	Tuesday	First Day of Classes
January	25	Saturday	Saturday Classes Begin
January	27	Monday	Last Day to Add/Drop a Class
January	27	Monday	Last Day for 100% Refund, Full or Partial Withdrawal
January	28	Tuesday	W Grades Posted for Course Withdrawals
February	3	Monday	Last Day for 90% Refund, Full or Partial Withdrawal, No Refund for Partial Withdrawal after this date
February	17	Monday	Last Day for 50% Refund, Full Withdrawal
March	10	Monday	Last Day for 25% Refund, Full Withdrawal
March	16	Monday	Spring Recess Begins - No Classes Scheduled - University Open
March	22	Saturday	Spring Recess Ends
April	3	Thursday	Wellness day
April	7	Monday	Last Day to Withdraw
April	18	Friday	Good Friday - No Classes Scheduled - University Closed
April	20	Sunday	Easter Sunday - No Classes Scheduled - University Closed
May	6	Tuesday	Thursday Classes Meet
May	7	Wednesday	Friday Classes Meet

May	7	Wednesday	Last Day of Classes
May	8	Thursday	Reading Day 1
May	9	Friday	Reading Day 2
May	10	Saturday	Final Exams Begin
May	16	Friday	Final Exams End
May	18	Sunday	Final Grades Due