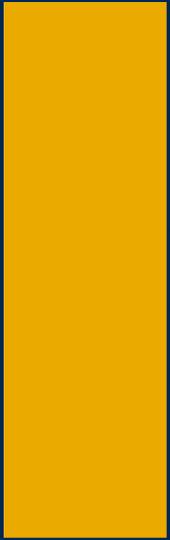




 West Virginia University
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY

SPRING 2026 VISIT DAY



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WELCOME

Welcome to West Virginia University, *our home in the mountains.*



We are pleased that WVU is among your graduate school considerations and are delighted to welcome you to campus. We hope your visit is informative and engaging, and that you have the opportunity to explore Morgantown and the surrounding area. This booklet is designed to support your visit by providing your itinerary and highlighting resources, dining options, and local attractions.

Our department offers undergraduate (BS and BA in Physics) and graduate degrees (MS and PhD), all enriched by hands-on research and modern facilities at White Hall. Faculty lead five active research areas and two major campus research centers, secure significant external funding from federal and private agencies, collaborate with top universities nationwide, and engage in international initiatives. The department's internationally recognized faculty, staff, and students have earned numerous awards and honors, underscoring our commitment to excellence in research, teaching, and public engagement.

ABOUT THE BUILDING

In 2012, the Department of Physics and Astronomy relocated to White Hall. Originally built in 1940, the building underwent a \$35 million renovation project to develop state-of-the-art research facilities and comfortable coworking spaces for students, staff, and faculty alike.



GENERAL ITINERARY

Scan the QR code at right to view the general itinerary for the event. Information about individual meetings with faculty will be shared separately.

- **Itinerary Link:** physics.wvu.edu/visitday



CONNECT WITH US

Scan the QR code at right to find links to our social media and website, summarized below:

- **Linktree:** linktr.ee/wvuphysastro
- **Website:** physics.wvu.edu
- **Facebook:** WVU Department of Physics and Astronomy; West Virginia University
- **Instagram:** @wvuphysastro; @wvupagso
- **Bluesky:** @wvuphysastro.bsky.social



QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns during your visit, please see the main office staff (found in White Hall, Room 111):

- Miranda Heitz | miranda.heizt@mail.wvu.edu, (304) 293-4887
- Viola Bryant | vm Bryant@mail.wvu.edu, (304) 293-4888



WELCOME



DEGREE INFO



Specific information and academic policies related to the Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Physics at West Virginia University can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook, located on the Department's website. Scan the QR code in the bottom-right corner, or visit: physics.wvu.edu/handbook.

EXAMPLE PLAN OF STUDY

This is an example of what to expect in each year of study working towards a Ph.D. in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

- Year One
 - Courses: Mastering fundamental physics at the graduate level.
 - Research: Surveying choices for your research advisor.
- Year Two
 - Courses: Completing core course requirements.
 - Research: Surveying subfields of specialization.
- Year Three
 - Courses: Surveying subfields of specializations; advanced analysis in subfield specialization.
 - Self-study: Completion of the candidacy examination.
 - Research: Intellectual contributions in research.
- Year Four
 - Research: Intellectual contributions in research.
 - Self-study: Writing and defending your dissertation.
- Year Five
 - Research: Intellectual contributions in research.
 - Self-study: Writing and defending your dissertation.

TYPICAL FALL COURSES

- PHYS 611: Intro to Mathematical Physics
- PHYS 651: Quantum Mechanics I
- PHYS 634: Electromagnetism II
- PHYS 710: Nonlinear Dynamics
- PHYS 761: Statistical Mechanics
- PHYS 771: Intro to Solid State Physics
- PHYS 774: Optical Properties of Solids
- PHYS 784: Magnetohydrodynamics
- ASTR 701: Computational Astrophysics
- ASTR 702: Stellar Structure and Evolution
- ASTR 705: Interstellar Medium

TYPICAL SPRING COURSES

- PHYS 633: Electromagnetism I
- PHYS 631: Classical Mechanics
- PHYS 652: Quantum Mechanics II
- PHYS 772: Semiconductor Physics
- PHYS 773: Collective Phenomena in Solids
- PHYS 781: Principles of Plasma Physics
- PHYS 783: Kinetic Theory
- PHYS 793: Special Topics
- ASTR 700: Radio Astronomy
- ASTR 704: Galactic Astronomy
- ASTR 793: Special Topics



EXAMPLE COURSE PLAN FOR GRADUATE STUDY

This is an example of the courses you are likely to take in each year of graduate study. This is not intended to serve as an advising guide.

- Fall (Year 1)
 - PHYS 611: Introduction to Mathematical Physics
 - PHYS 651: Quantum Mechanics I
 - PHYS 796: Graduate Seminar (Colloquium)
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective (Optional)
- Spring (Year 1)
 - PHYS 633: Electromagnetism I
 - PHYS 631: Classical Mechanics
 - PHYS 797: Research
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective (Optional)
- Fall (Year 2)
 - PHYS 761: Statistical Mechanics
 - PHYS 797: Research
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective (Optional)
- Spring (Year 2)
 - PHYS 797: Research
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective
 - PHYS/ASTR Elective (Optional)

CANDIDACY AND DEFENSE

Before the completion of their third year in the program, students must deliver a presentation reviewing a published paper related to the candidate's research field, followed by an oral examination with the student's doctoral committee. Students who pass the exam are then admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. Research is then the central focus of the degree, as directed by a faculty advisor. When the student's research is completed, it is described in a written dissertation and defended before their doctoral committee.

ELECTIVE AND UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Elective courses may be chosen from outside of the Department with the constraint that they must be approved by the Graduate Advising and Studies Committee. A student may choose to take a/an undergraduate course(s) in their first year if they feel inadequately prepared for graduate-level courses. These courses will not be counted towards completion of the graduate degree, but they will maintain the student's good standing.



FACULTY / STAFF



View the complete faculty and staff directory, including post-doctoral researchers, on the Department's website. Scan the QR code in the bottom-right corner, or visit our website: physics.wvu.edu/directory

LEADERSHIP

Maura McLaughlin | Chair, Astrophysics (maura.mclaughlin@mail.wvu.edu)

Alan Bristow | Associate Chair, Condensed Matter (alan.bristow@mail.wvu.edu)

Ned Flagg | Associate Chair, Condensed Matter (edward.flagg@mail.wvu.edu)

FACULTY

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Jason E. Ybarra | TAP and Planetarium Director (jason.ybarra@mail.wvu.edu)

EMERITUS FACULTY

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Miranda E. Heitz | Academic Program Assistant II (miranda.heitz@mail.wvu.edu)

Ben Lukk | Academic Laboratory Manager II (benjamin.lukk@mail.wvu.edu)

Greg Lusk | Research Associate for KINETIC Center (glusk@mail.wvu.edu)

Margaret Mattson | Program Coordinator for GWAC (mamattson@mail.wvu.edu)

JR Raber | Senior Instrument Specialist (william.raber@mail.wvu.edu)

Vicki Snively | Grants Administrator (vicki.snively@mail.wvu.edu)



The Physics and Astronomy Graduate Student Organization (PAGSO) serves as an inclusive environment to enrich the graduate student experience in the WVU Department of Physics and Astronomy. Scan the QR code in the bottom-right corner, or visit physics.wvu.edu/pagso

OUR PURPOSES

The purpose of the PAGSO is:

- To promote professional and social interactions between physics and astronomy graduate students within West Virginia University and its departments and graduate students of other learning institutions.
- To aid graduate students in their professional endeavors.
- To promote interaction between graduate students and faculty within the areas of physics and astronomy.
- To represent and promote all facets of West Virginia University, the Department of Physics and Astronomy, and the physics and astronomy community in a positive and respectful manner.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

PAGSO was formed in Fall 2013 to open clearer lines of communication between graduate students and faculty/staff. The organization provides a platform for graduate students to share their ideas, concerns, and feedback, contributing to the continued development of the Department. Participation in PAGSO offers an opportunity to engage with peers, influence positive change through outreach, and contribute meaningfully to the graduate experience.

2025-2026 CLUB OFFICERS

- Jackson Taylor | President, Astrophysics (jdt00012@mix.wvu.edu)
- Maggie Emig | Vice-President, Condensed Matter (mme00014@mix.wvu.edu)
- Sloane Sirota | Treasurer, Astrophysics (ss00300@mix.wvu.edu)
- Makesi Pantor | Secretary, Plasma (mrp00031@mix.wvu.edu)
- Graham Doskoch | Faculty Liaison, Astrophysics (gd00010@mix.wvu.edu)
- Gustavo Elias Bartolo | Climate Liaison, Plasma (geb00019@mix.wvu.edu)



PAGSO



HOUSING

WVU Campus and Community Life maintains resources related to off-campus housing both on campus and in the greater Morgantown area. To learn more, scan the QR code on the bottom-right or visit: campuslife.wvu.edu/living-off-campus/off-campus-housing

HOW THEY CAN HELP

Campus and Community Life offers information to students about apartment hunting, moving in and out, and their rights and responsibilities as renters. Their goal is to ensure that students feel confident, supported, and well-prepared to live in the Morgantown community while attending WVU. The office hosts housing fairs in the fall and spring semesters to allow students to explore many of their options and talk directly to local landlords and property managers.

HOUSING RESOURCE PORTAL

The Campus and Community Life website contains a listing of landlords and property managers in the greater Morgantown area. The list is available both traditionally and as an interactive map. Roommate matching tools are also available, as well as information about short-term housing and much more. Visit campuslife.wvu.edu/resource-portal/housing to access this information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Feel free to contact the office via email at OCH@mail.wvu.edu or call them at (304) 293-5611 if you have any questions regarding housing in Morgantown. You may also contact Skylar Braithwaite (slbraithwaite@mail.wvu.edu).



OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Off-Campus Housing is committed to helping students transition from the residence halls to the Morgantown Community.

West Virginia University

WALKING



The Graduate Student Handbook is available on the Department's website. The Handbook contains important policies and information, helpful links, and other resources to guide you through your time as a graduate student in the WVU Department of Physics and Astronomy. Scan the QR code in the bottom right, or visit: physics.wvu.edu/handbook

OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

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 - Safety Training



RESTAURANTS



Morgantown has a ton of great food options. The list below, curated by PAGSO, mentions the best-of-the-best.

- Almost Heaven Bar and Grill (A)
- Apothecary Ale House & Cafe (A)
- Blue Moose Cafe & Zeke's Bakery (C, V)
- Bombay (V)
- Casa D'Amici (Pizza)
- Chaang Thai (A, D, G, V+)
- Chipotle (G, D, V+)
- Cold Stone Creamery (G, D, V+)
- D.P. Dough (Calzones)
- Dirty Bird (Sandwiches and Chicken)
- Domino's Pizza (Pizza)
- Escobar's (A, V, D, G)
- Fat Daddy's Bar & Grill (A)
- Flour and Feed (G, V)
- Fresh Mint (D, G, V)
- Gibbie's Pub and Eatery (A, G, V)
- Great Wall (Chinese)
- Happy's Pub and Stuff (A)
- Iron Horse Tavern (A, V)
- Layne's Chicken Fingers (V)
- Linsan Soul Food (G)
- Little Paris Cafe (C, D, G, V, V+)
- Monarca Taqueria (V)
- Mountain Halal Restaurant (D, V)
- Mountain State Brewery (A, G, V)
- Oliverio's Ristorante (A, G, V)
- Quantum Bean (C, D, V+)
- Roots Natural Kitchen (D, G, V, V+)
- Sports Page (A)
- Subway (D, V)
- Table 9 (A, D, G, V+)
- The Grind (C, D, G, V+)
- The Mediterranean Guys (D, G, V, V+)
- Von Blaze (G, D, V+)
- Wings Ole (Chicken Wings)
- Yama Japanese Restaurant (D, G, V+)

KEY

A: Alcoholic Beverages

C: Coffee

D: Dairy Free Options

G: Gluten Free Options

V: Vegetarian Options

V+: Vegan Options

Note: Though we endeavored to include everyone, the list may be incomplete!



North Central West Virginia has a wealth of exciting activities and gorgeous views. Well-known for outdoor adventure and Appalachian culture, this land is rooted in tradition and pulsing with energy! For more information, scan the QR code in the bottom-right or visit: [visitmountaineercountry.com](https://www.visitmountaineercountry.com)

EXPLORE COOPERS ROCK STATE FOREST

Popular for hiking, rock climbing, and scenic overlooks. Don't miss the panoramic view from the main overlook.

HIKE OR BIKE THE MON RIVER RAIL-TRAIL

This flat, scenic trail along the Monongahela River is perfect for cycling, walking, or jogging. Great for all skill levels!

ADVENTURE AT CHEAT LAKE

Enjoy kayaking, paddleboarding, or picnicking at Cheat Lake Park and Trail. It's a popular sport for families and outdoor lovers alike.

VISIT THE WV BOTANIC GARDEN

Relax and enjoy the diverse gardens and walking trails, perfect for a quiet escape into nature.

EXPLORE ARTHURDALE HERITAGE

Step back in time at this New Deal community, museum, and historical site founded by Eleanor Roosevelt.

CATCH A SHOW OR PLAY POOL AT THE METROPOLITAN THEATRE

Located on High Street in Morgantown, this local theatre offers live music, comedy, theatrical performances, and more. It is also home to a pool hall in the basement, open in the evenings.

VISIT THE FARMER'S MARKET

Open May through September on Saturdays (415 Spruce Street, 8:30AM-12:30PM) and Tuesdays (801 Fairmont Road, 4-7PM), you'll find local farmers selling a variety of produce, honey, breads, cheeses, and more. Bring cash, although some vendors accept credit and debit cards.

STARE OUT AT MORGANTOWN FROM SKY ROCK

Sky Rock, in Dorsey's Knob Park, stands nearly 600 feet above a landscape of deep valleys and tall pines, providing a picturesque view of greater Morgantown and the surrounding area.



WEST VIRGINIA



PENNSYLVANIA



Pittsburgh is a modern, ever-evolving city where the must-sees vary week to week. From a vibrant Cultural District with world-class productions to fan-friendly sports events in iconic stadiums, there is always something to do. Just an hour from Morgantown, the surrounding region of Pennsylvania offers even more to explore. For more information, scan the QR code at the bottom-right or visit: [visitpittsburgh.com](https://www.visitpittsburgh.com)

EXPLORE THE STRIP DISTRICT

The Strip is foodie heaven and as authentic as it is fun. The one-half square mile shopping district is chock full of international grocers, produce stands, meat and fish markets, and sidewalk vendors. Breathe deep because you won't want to escape the splendid aromas of fresh-roasted coffee or just-baked bread!

EMBRACE THE CITY OF CHAMPIONS

The Steelers (National Football League), the Pirates (Major League Baseball), and the Penguins (National Hockey League) all call Pittsburgh home!

RIDE THE INCLINE

Round-trip tickets are just \$5. Voted one of the top ten sites in the world for viewing a cityscape, it is a funicular scaling Mount Washington near the South Side neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

TAKE IN THE CITY SKYLINE

The Mount Washington Observation Deck (Grandview Avenue) and the Elliot Overlook Park (Marlow Street) in Pittsburgh offer stunning views of Pittsburgh.

ADVENTURE AT OHIOPYLE

Located on the southern reaches of the Laurel Ridge, Ohiopyle State Park encompasses approximately 20,500 acres of rugged natural beauty and serves as the gateway to the Laurel Highlands. The Youghiogheny River, or the "Yough" [yawk], provides some of the best whitewater boating in the eastern United States, as well as spectacular scenery.

VISIT THE ZOO & AQUARIUM

Wildlife can be found at every turn, and the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium is no exception. Learn about conservation projects and visit with awesome wildlife.

EXPLORE AN ARCHITECTURAL WONDER

Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright is located one-hour northeast of Morgantown off of I-68. Offering guided building tours, an artsy gift shop, and picturesque views of the Laurel Highlands, Fallingwater is not a place to miss.





**THANK
YOU FOR
VISITING** ✨