

# FUN*da*MENTALS™ of Design

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# FUN*da*MENTALS of Design

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## ABOUT This Book

*A college student challenged a senior citizen, saying it was impossible for their generation to understand his. "You grew up in a different world," the student said. "Today we have television, jet planes, space travel, nuclear energy, computers..." Taking advantage of a pause in the student's litany, the geezer said, "You're right. We didn't have those things when we were young; so we invented them! What are you doing for the next generation?"<sup>1</sup>*

This book is about helping people to learn how to create their own future! It does this by taking advantage of the fact that the reader's LEFT brain sees the LEFT side (FUN) of the book. The RIGHT brain sees the (MENTAL) side of the book. Its simply *FUNdaMENTAL*! This in itself is a key feature of this book: It seeks to train the brain to think by many a link. Creating things is NOT done by following a monotonous recipe... The ability to create can be learned by anyone who has a yearn to learn! But the eye must be quick to sort and pick! Embedded inside, many a hidden creative message may reside!

In fact, design is like a big box of LEGOS<sup>TM</sup> from which you want to pick pieces to build a toy spaceship: if you just pick from the top layer, you might not get a very interesting model. Turn over the box and scan through all the pieces! Better yet, if you either have the pieces organized into bins, or are aware of all the types that exist, you can select even faster! Whether it is the designer's desk, file cabinet, or the real world of resources available through catalogs and the internet, there is an element of randomness to the accessibility and presentation of information. This randomness, however, like nature itself, provides robustness to the system, for it ensures that different people will see different things and catalyze a team to develop new and innovative solutions to difficult problems. Contrast this to a team of clones all looking through the same catalogs in the same order...

Successful practising design engineers take advantage of this by wearing two hats: they are passionately wild & crazy, and they are coldly calculating & logical. They have no fear to think of wild and crazy things while randomly sifting and searching through resources. Accordingly, this book is organized in a similar way:

- The material is presented in a coarse-to-fine manner, with chapters, sections, and subsections, just like any other engineering textbook. In addition, dozens of spreadsheets are provided for making design calculations. *Hence this book can be effectively used for an introductory course, or an advanced course, because each time it is read, a new layer of depth will reveal itself.*
- Each topic is discussed on two pages, and if more space is needed, that defines the need for a finer level of granularity, and hence another set of two pages...
- Each set of two pages has one page of fine detail text, such as may be found in a conventional engineering science textbook, where the discussion focusses on the topic and addresses it in a systematic manner...
- The second page of the set presents visual information corresponding to the text NOT in a systematic numbered figure manner, but as a collage of images that represent a box of parts that has been spread across the floor (or information on the internet)! When reading the text, specific figures are rarely referenced. The intent is to get the reader to create a picture in their mind, to scan the picture page and find the image that fits the description. By working to find the image, and seeing others along the way, the images become better packed into the reader's neurons. Like life, full color is used, and the intent is to excite and entice the reader's eyes and brain to scan and search and try to create patterns and relations amongst the images, and then to connect them to the detailed text... Different people will see different things and make different connections, and hence begins the formation of a robust design team.
- The second page also often has some text, which is representative of what a student may have otherwise highlight on the first page, if the reader was using a classical textbook.

*How should the student use this book in a design class?* When most people get a magazine, they first flip through and look at the pictures. Then they go back and read the articles of interest, and eventually they get around to reading the rest of it. Every time they pick it up, the images are seen again... Given that the best way to learn something is to see it/use it multiple times, the structure of this book, and modes in which it may be used in a class takes advantage of this:

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1. An anonymous story received by many via email

Detail Read Side: Read in detail when a topic really interests you, or when you need to know the detail.

**Contact Bearings:** *Flexural*

*Flexural bearings* rely on elastic deformation to attain smooth motion. Since there are millions of planes of atoms in a typical flexural bearing, an averaging effect is produced that allows flexural bearings to achieve atomically smooth motion. For example, flexural bearings allow the tip of a scanning tunneling microscope to scan an object with subatomic resolution. There are two types of flexures, *monolithic* and *clamped*.

Flexural bearings' major drawback is their limited range of motion. For monolithic bearings, the ratio of range of motion to bearing size is on the order of 1/20. For flexural bearings made from high strength spring steel clamped in place, the ratio of range of motion to bearing size is on the order of 1/10. Unlike other bearings, flexural bearings are inherently preloaded and they generate a restoring force because they are essentially self-guided springs. Their applications range from silicon Micro Electro Mechanical Systems (MEMS), to fine instruments, to large trucks and trains where leaf springs also guide the motion of axles. They can also be used as "living hinges" in consumer products. The major advantage of flexural bearings is that they can be used for the intended lifetime of the product. In robot design situations, they can be made from sheet metal and used to create small range of motion guidance mechanisms, or as flexural Vees for kinematic couplings (see page 9-20).

Because flexural bearings are elastic elements, they are easily designed using the basic principles of strength of materials. Most flexures are used as either pivots, or as four-bar linkages. For a simple pivot as shown:

$$\alpha = \frac{3MR}{2Ew[y^2 - R^2]} \left[ \frac{1}{y} + \frac{1}{[y^2 - R^2]} \left[ \frac{2R^2 + y^2}{y} + \frac{3Ry \left( \frac{\pi}{2} - \tan^{-1} \left( \frac{-R}{\sqrt{y^2 - R^2}} \right) \right)}{\sqrt{y^2 - R^2}} \right] \right]$$

For a 4-bar flexure with blades of length  $L$ , thickness  $t$ , and width  $w$ , subject to a force  $F$ , each blade is subject to  $F/2$ , and the maximum bending moment in the blades will be  $FL/4$ . The first-order deflection  $\delta$  of the platform in the desired motion direction, and the maximum stress will be:

$$\gamma = l/2 + R \quad \delta = \frac{FL^3}{2EI_{\text{eff}}} \quad \sigma = \frac{3FL}{2A_{\text{eff}}}$$

There are two parasitic error motions that occur with simple 4-bar flexures. The first parasitic error motion is the motion of the platform normal to the direction of motion. The second parasitic error motion is a pitching motion that occurs when the force is applied to the platform to just overcome the spring force of the blades. For small displacements  $\delta$ , distance between flexure blades  $b$ , and force applied at a distance  $a$ , above the fixed end of the springs, the parasitic error motions are:

$$\delta_{\text{phase}} \approx \frac{\delta^2}{2L} \quad \theta_{\text{pin}} \approx \left( \frac{6(L-2a)t^2}{3Lb^2 - 2Lt^2 + 6at^2} \right) \frac{\delta}{L}$$

These problems can be overcome by twice applying reciprocity to flip the flexure twice, which results in a *folded flexure* design. Hence there are four sets of 4-bar flexures, and the travel (deflection) is  $\delta_{\text{folded flexure}} = 2\delta_{4\text{-bar}}$

Note the green flexure with the purple screws and the round holder located 2/3rds of the way back from the ends of cantilever beams. Recall that  $\delta = FL^3/3EI$  and the slope  $\alpha = FL^2/2EI$ . Here a sine error  $L\alpha$  is used to cancel deflection so the round holder (of a lens!) undergoes pure rotation. Why are the purple screws threaded into thin cantilevers that push on thicker cantilevers? Can flexures act as transmission elements? What is the Transmission ratio? This clever device was created by Dr. Bill Plummer of Polaroid.

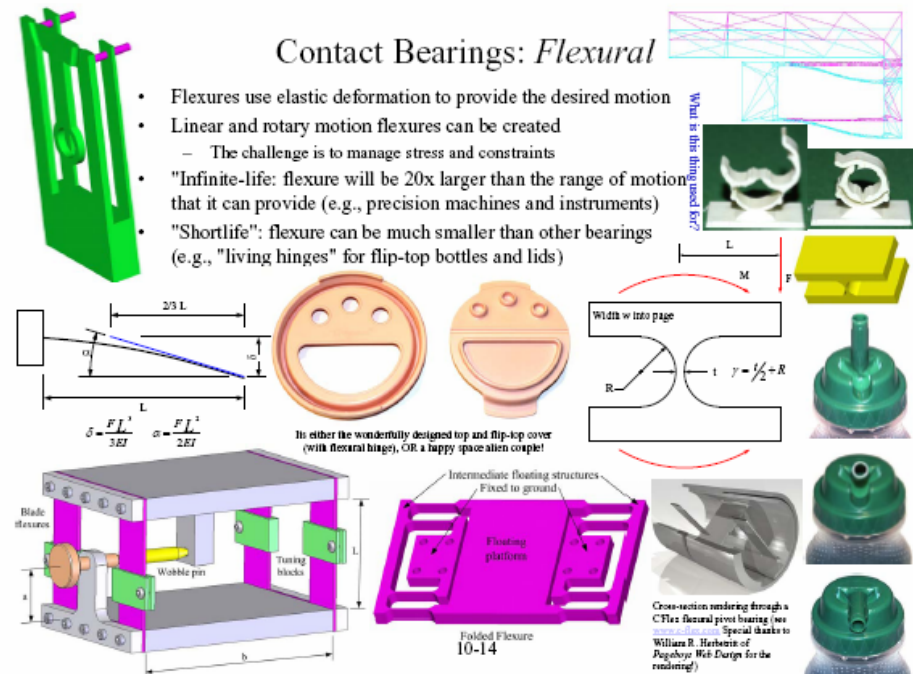
Flexures are easily designed and made. They can be made from boked-together components or cut from a plate using an abrasive waterjet. They can also be machined; however, the thin sections can be difficult to mill. For precision flexures, wire EDM can be used to cut them from hardened steel.

Identify small range of motion elements in your machine, such as triggers or alignment devices, where flexures could provide the desired motion without any parasitic friction forces. Play with the flexure design spreadsheets *Flexures 4 bars.xls* and *Flexures hourglass pivot.xls*.

Fast Scan Side: First look through the whole chapter reading this side only.

Contact Bearings: *Flexural*

- Flexures use elastic deformation to provide the desired motion
- Linear and rotary motion flexures can be created
  - The challenge is to manage stress and constraints
- "Infinite-life": flexure will be 20x larger than the range of motion that it can provide (e.g., precision machines and instruments)
- "Shortlife": flexure can be much smaller than other bearings (e.g., "living hinges" for flip-top bottles and lids)



Detailed text and analysis (for the fine points, stuff you really need to know if you are really going to create detailed designs).

Figures and “primary” points and info (stuff most likely to highlight, and to help pin the ideas in your brain so you know where to go to look for detail later if needed).

- At the start of a course, students are asked to flip through the entire book and just focus on the picture pages. This preloads the students' minds with essential information and plants markers so when they face a design challenge, an image should appear that will direct them to the location of more detailed information...
- Before each lecture, students are asked to more carefully look at the images on each page of the chapter covered by the lecture. If the student sees an interesting image, they are likely to read the detailed text. This reinforces the information markers.
- The instructor now does NOT have to put up overheads of the 2nd page, but instead can talk about how they use the material as a real designer.
- The instructor can instead give a lecture on a topic that uses information from the text as a supporting material, or the instructor could cover one of the topics in extra detail. If the class is working on a design problem, the instructor could go through in detail one aspect of the problem, so the class can see the instructor as a designer in action.
- After lecture, students can flip back through the text and read the detailed discussion pages to clarify issues or gain more in-depth knowledge.
- The student should keep a notebook for the course, which should address the thought exercises presented in red italics at the end of most pages.

There are several types of courses that can use this book:

- A project-based introduction to design course at the advanced high school or community college level can use this book, where the primary emphasis is on the image-filled pages. Selected detailed text pages would also be appropriate. The spreadsheet design tools can be used without having to worry about the details of the mathematics behind the formulas. For example, schools that have FIRST robot contest teams may want to give an introduction to design course, where the design topic is the previous year's contest. Students can use the book to help develop plans for a design to beat the previous year's winner. Then, when the new contest is announced, the students would be experienced and ready to begin development of the robot for the current year.
- A project-based introduction to design course at the university level can use this book, where it is expected that students will read the detailed first pages before lecture and study the detailed text pages before or after lecture. The spreadsheet design tools can be used as is, or with modification

by engineering students who should have the analytical skills required for their customizing. For example, schools that have a robot design competition, such as MIT's 2.007, can use this text in the same manner as 2.007.<sup>1</sup>

- An advanced project-based course or a machine elements course at the university level can use this book. Students would be study image and detailed text pages before lecture, and then lectures could focus on the mechanics of machine elements and many of the subtle points that are associated with their optimization and use. Students may write their own design code for analysis or build from the spreadsheets. All the details in the book would be utilized in the completion of the design project.

An excellent and fun way to use this book in a none-project design course is to use it in a how-things-work course, or an introduction to technology course, where topics are assigned from the book, and then discussions and assignments are focussed on study of real-world objects with respect to how they work and can students identify elements of the book at use in the objects. From FUNdaMENTAL principles to machine elements, philosophy in reality is a fantastic learning mode.

Speaking of FUNdaMENTAL principles, hardware is constantly changing, but FUNdaMENTAL principles do not; hence above all else, the goal of this book is to help readers better understand how to design, with the understanding that success requires continual learning. Finally, writing this book has been a labor of love and passion, and it has also been just *plane* fun. Sprinkled throughout are various little mind puzzles, puns, and fun-connections that were placed strategically using random neural firing methods. Indeed, the reader may occasionally encounter some unconventional thoughts and references, or create their own, all lovingly associated with making machines better, because we are extremely super extra ♥*Passionate* ♥



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1. Indeed, this book was developed for MIT course 2.007, and with the availability of a standard kit of parts, it makes it easy for any school to run this type of course and contest: <http://pergatory.mit.edu/2.007>  
 2. This is the reader's first notice: this book will try to get the reader to think about things from different perspectives, and to decode the true meaning of design life! After all, the QUESTION is does anyone really have a zip code of 0.02381 (see page 3-14)





## **FUNdaMENTALS of Design**

### **Topic 1: Design is a Passionate Process**

Design is a Passionate Process 1  
Design Contests 2  
Passion LOVE to Create 3  
Passion Focus! 4  
Deterministic Design 5  
Deterministic Design: Play 6  
Deterministic Design: Analytical Instinct 7  
Deterministic Design: Reverse Engineering 8  
Deterministic Design: Disruptive Technologies 9  
Deterministic Design: Best Engineering Practice 10  
Deterministic Design: Schedules 11  
Deterministic Design: Risk Management 12  
Deterministic Design: Coarse-to-Fine Funnels 13  
Deterministic Design: FRDPARRC 14  
FRDPARRC and Funneling Example: Dinner 15  
Design is a Series of Steps Blended Together 16  
First Step: Resource Assessment 17  
Second Step: Understanding the Problem (Opportunity!) 18  
Third Step: Developing Strategies 19  
Third Step Example: Precision Linear Motion System 20  
Third Step Example: Strategies for The MIT and the Pendulum!  
Design Contest 21  
Fourth Step: Developing Concepts 22  
Fourth Step Example: Precision Linear Motion System 23  
Fourth Step Example: Concepts for the Collect Balls & Pucks  
Strategy 24  
Fifth Step: Developing Modules 25  
Fifth Step Example: Modules for the Harvester Concept 26  
Sixth Step: Developing Components 27  
Sixth Step Example: Components for the Paddle Module 28

Patterns from the Process: RepeatsRepeatsRepeatsRepeats 29  
Topic 1 Study Questions 30

### **Topic 2: Creating Ideas**

Creating Ideas 1  
Creation: Coarse-to-fine 2  
Thought Processes 3  
Thought Processes: Systematic Variation 4  
Thought Processes: Reversal 5  
Experimentation 6  
Experimentation: Playing with Parts 7  
Experimentation: Sketch Models 8  
Experimenting: Bench Level Experiments 9  
Experimenting: Bench Level Prototypes 10  
Drawings 11  
Drawing: Motion & Force Diagrams 12  
Drawing: Sketches 13  
Drawing: Solid Models 14  
Research 15  
Patents & Standards 16  
Writing 17  
Analysis 18  
Analysis: Scoring Sensitivity 19  
Analysis: Appropriate Analysis 20  
Analysis: Geometry, Time, & Motion 21  
Analysis: Energy, Momentum, & Strength 22  
Evolving Systems 23  
Evolving Systems: Individual Thought 24  
Peer Review Evaluation Process (PREP) 25  
PREP: Example 26  
Evolving Systems: Group Brainstorming 27  
Evolving Systems: Comparing Designs 28  
Intellectual Property 29

Professional & Personal Ethics and Moral Standards 30  
Safety! 31  
How Can You Help? 32  
Evolution: It Never Stops 33  
Topic 2 Study Questions 34

### **Topic 3: FUNdaMENTAL Principles**

FUNdaMENTAL Principles 1  
Occam's Razor 2  
Newton's Laws 3  
Newton: Free Body Diagrams & Superposition 4  
Conservation of Energy... 5  
Saint-Venant's Principle 6  
Saint-Venant's Principle: Structures 7  
Saint-Venant's Principle: Bearings 8  
Saint-Venant's Principle: Bearings 9  
The Golden Rectangle 10  
Abbe's Principle 11  
Abbe's Principle: Locating Components 12  
Abbe's Principle: Cascading Errors 13  
Maxwell & Reciprocity 14  
Maxwell & Reciprocity: Reversal 15  
Maxwell & Reciprocity: Critical Thinking 16  
Self-Principles 17  
Stability 18  
Symmetry 19  
Parallel Axis Theorem 20  
Accuracy, Repeatability, & Resolution 21  
Accuracy, Repeatability, & Resolution: Mapping 22  
Sensitive Directions & Reference Features 23  
Structural Loops 24  
Preload 25  
Centers-of-Action 26

Exact Constraint Design 27  
Elastically Averaged Design 28  
Stick Figures 29  
Topic 3 Study Questions 30

### **Topic 4: Linkages**

Linkages 1  
History 2  
The First Mechanism: The Lever is a 2-bar Linkage 3  
Definitions 4  
Links 5  
Joints: Single Degree-of-Freedom 6  
Joints: Multiple Degree-of-Freedom 7  
Joints: Higher Pair Multiple Degree-of-Freedom 8  
2-Bar Linkages: Triggers 9  
3-Bar Linkages (!) 10  
4-Bar Linkages 11  
4-Bar Linkages: Booms 12  
4-Bar Linkages: Kinematic Synthesis 13  
Kinematic Synthesis: 3 Precision Point Example 14  
Kinematic Synthesis: Analysis 15  
Kinematic Synthesis: Coupler Curves 16  
Instant Centers 17  
Instant Centers: 4-Bar Linkages 18  
Instant Centers: Example 19  
5-Bar Linkages 20  
5-Bar Linkages: Analysis 21  
6-Bar Linkages 22  
Extending Linkages 23  
Extending Linkages: Scissor Linkages 24  
Extending Linkages: Scissor Linkage Example 25  
Compliant Mechanisms 26  
Compliant Mechanisms: Analysis 27

Manufacturing & Robust Design 28  
Mechanism Mania! 29  
Topic 4 Study Questions 30

### **Topic 5: Power Transmission Elements I**

Power Transmission Elements I 1  
Pulleys 2  
Pulleys: Capstans 3  
Winches 4  
Belts & Cables 5  
Belts & Cables: Stress, Tension, & Center Distance 6  
Belts & Cables: Linear Motion 7  
Belts & Cables: Crawler Tracks 8  
Belts & Cables: Rotary Motion 9  
Belts & Cables: Manufacturing & Assembly 10  
Chains 11  
Chains: Engineering 12  
Wheels 13  
Wheels: Traction & Controllability 14  
Wheels: Coefficient of Friction 15  
Wheels: Size, Torque, and Contact Pressure 16  
Wheels: Manufacturing & Mounting 17  
Wheels: Steering & Suspensions 18  
Wheels: Steering & Suspensions 19  
Wheels: Clutches & Differentials 20  
Cams 21  
Shafts 22  
Shafts: Axial Loading 23  
Shafts: Torsional Loading 24  
Shafts: Bending 25  
Shafts: Mounting & Stability 26  
Shafts: Component Attachment 27  
Shafts: Interference-Fits 28

Couplings 29  
Couplings: Cheap & Easy Example 30  
Topic 5 Study Questions 31

### **Topic 6: Power Transmission Elements II**

Power Transmission Elements II 1  
Screws! 2  
Screws: Leadscrews & Ballscrews 3  
Screws: Forces 4  
Screws: Stresses 5  
Screws: Buckling and Shaft Whip 6  
Leadscrews: Mounting 7  
Leadscrews: Differential Motion 8  
Leadscrews: Preload 9  
Leadscrews: Flexibility 10  
Leadscrews: Contest Machine Design Example 11  
Gears! 12  
Gears: Involutives 13  
Gears: Gear Trains 14  
Gear Trains: Serial Gear Train Ratios 15  
Gears: Planetary Gear Trains 16  
Epicyclic Drives: Gear Train Ratios 17  
Gears: Modular Epicyclic Drives 18  
Gears: Automotive Transmissions 19  
Gears: Differentials 20  
Gears: Robot Design Contest Kits 21  
Gears: Spur and Straight Bevel Gears 22  
Gears: Rack & Pinion 23  
Gears: Worm 24  
Gears: Selection of Parameters 25  
Gears: Accuracy, Repeatability, & Resolution 26  
Gears: CAD Modeling 27  
Gears: Prototyping 28

Gears: Prototyping by Waterjet 29

Topic 6 Study Questions 30

## **Topic 7: Power Systems**

Power Systems 1

Systems Engineering 2

Systems Engineering: Transmissions 3

Systems Engineering: “Optimal” Transmission Ratio 4

Electricity & Magnetism: A New Revolution 5

Electricity & Magnetism: FUNdaMENTAL Principles 6

Magnetic Circuits 7

Magnetic Circuits: Permanent Magnets 8

Magnetic Circuits: Applications 9

Magnetic Circuits: Permanent Magnet Attraction 10

Magnetic Circuits: Solenoids 11

Lorentz Forces 12

Electric Motors 13

Electric Motors: DC Brushed Motors 14

DC Brushed Motors: Gearmotors 15

DC Brushed Motors: Best Operating Region 16

DC Brushed Motors: Design Spreadsheets 17

DC Brushed Motors: Design Spreadsheet Inputs 18

DC Brushed Motors: Motion Simulations 19

Gearmotors: Shaft Loading & Wire Strain Relief 20

Case Study: A CD Drive 21

Energy Supplies 22

Energy Supplies: Batteries 23

Energy Storage: Springs 24

Springs: Applications 25

Pneumatic Systems 26

Pneumatic Systems: Energy Storage 27

Pneumatic Systems: Implementation 28

Power Budgets 29

Case Study: System to Measure Gearmotor Performance 30

Topic 7 Study Questions 31

## **Topic 8: Structures**

Structures 1

Beginnings 2

FUNdaMENTAL Principles 3

Materials 4

Materials: Wear, Strength & Stiffness 5

Visualization 6

Layout: Introduction 7

Layout: Sketches 8

Layout: FRDPARRC 9

Layout: “GeekPlow” Example 10

Layout: Analysis & Bench Level Experiments 11

Layout: Evolution & Comparison 12

Layout: Solid Models 13

Stability 14

Stability: Driving Over Obstacles 15

Stability: Slopes & Balance 16

Loadings: Axial, Bending, Torsion, & Shear 17

Loadings: Structural Cross-Sections 18

Stiffness (1/Compliance) 19

Stiffness: First-Order Analysis 20

Stiffness: Analytical Methods 21

Stiffness: Energy Methods Examples 22

Stiffness: Finite Element Analysis 23

Stiffness: Plates 24

Stiffness: Plates Examples 25

Strength 26

Strength: 1st Order Analysis 27

Strength: Life, Fatigue and Stress Concentration 28

Trusses 29

Laminates & Composites 30

Topic 8 Study Questions 31

### **Topic 9: Structural Connections & Interfaces**

Structural Connections & Interfaces 1

Connections & Interfaces: Visualization 2

Connections & Interfaces: Accuracy 3

Structural Joints 4

Structural Joints: Welded 5

Welded Joint Case Study: Welded Sprocket and Coupling 6

Structural Joints: Adhesive 7

Structural Joints: Bolted 8

Bolted Joints: Mechanics 9

Bolted Joints: Stiffness 10

Bolted Joints: Bracket Case Study 11

Bolted Joints: Finite Element Analysis 12

Structural Joints: Pinned & Riveted 13

Structural Interfaces 14

Hertz Contact 15

Hertz Contact: Point Contact 16

Hertz Contact: Line Contact 17

Kinematic Couplings 18

Kinematic Couplings: 2D 19

Kinematic Couplings: 3D 20

Kinematic Couplings: Three-Grooves 21

Kinematic Couplings: Three-Groove Design 22

Kinematic Couplings: Compliant Mounts 23

Kinematic Couplings: Three-Tooth 24

Kinematic Couplings: 300mm Wafer Transport 25

Quasi-Kinematic Couplings 26

Quasi-Kinematic Couplings: Details 27

Quasi-Kinematic Couplings: Automotive Example 28

Kinematic Couplings: Servo-Controlled 29

Servo-Controlled Kinematic Couplings: Details 30

Elastic Averaging 31

Elastic Averaging: Over-Constraint 32

Topic 9 Study Questions 33

### **Topic 10: Bearings**

Bearings 1

In the Beginning... 2

Contact Bearings: Sliding Contact 3

Sliding Contact: Rotary Motion 4

Sliding Contact: Linear Motion 5

Contact Bearings: Rolling Elements 6

Rolling Elements: Rotary Motion 7

Rotary Motion: "Ball Bearings" 8

Rotary Motion: "Roller Bearings" 9

Rolling Elements: Linear Motion 10

Linear Motion: Wheels on Rails 11

Linear Motion: Ball Bushing Bearings 12

Linear Motion: Linear Motion Guides 13

Contact Bearings: Flexural 14

Contact Bearings: Flexural Rolling 15

Non-Contact Bearings: Hydrodynamic 16

Non-Contact Bearings: Aerostatic & Hydrostatic 17

Non-Contact Bearings: Magnetic 18

Preload 19

Preload: Rolling Elements 20

Mounting 21

Mounting: System Stiffness 22

Mounting: Stiffness by Finite Element Analysis 23

Mounting: Misalignment 24

Mounting: Centers of Action 25

Mounting: Saint-Venant 26

Mounting: Rotary Motion 27

Mounting: “Ball Bearings” 28

Mounting: Linear Motion 29

Example: Multiple Linear Guide Carriages 30

Example: Ballscrew Nut Coupling to a Linear Motion Carriage 31

Loads, Lube & Life 32

Loads, Lube & Life: Sliding Contact 33

Loads, Lube & Life: Rolling Contact Rotary 34

Loads, Lube & Life: Rolling Contact Linear 35

Loads, (no) Lube & Life: Flexures 36

Dynamic Seals 37

Bearings in Systems 38

Topic 10 Study Questions 39