

# Atoms, Lasers, and Qubits

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## Part I

# LASER PHYSICS

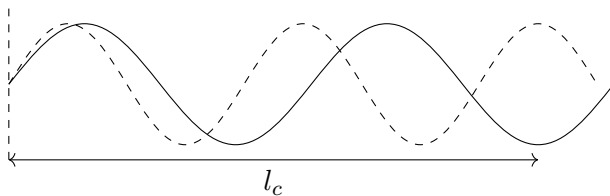
## Lecture 1 Introduction

- **Note:** The course will be more reading based than math based. Read the references on each summary sheet.
- Need light oscillation, not just amplification.
- 1 in  $10^{18}$  atomic clock accuracy.
- LD: laser diode
- Non-linear crystals allow different wavelengths
- Laser transitions based on E group of materials
- Learn the unit conversions
- Magneto-optical trap to cool atoms
- Optical frequency comb → accurate measurement of wavelength of light
- Sodium atoms in upper atmosphere which we fluoresce for AO
- **LEARN!** Q on paper always - contents of a laser
  1. More in excited state than ground
  2. Pump gets energy in
  3. Mirrors to make light bounce back and forward

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO LASERS

Lasers - coherence → 2 types - longitudinal and transverse

- Lasers are highly coherent, both transversely and longitudinally. Longitudinal and temporal coherence is related to linewidth, and will be discussed. Coherence length  $l_c$  and coherence time  $\tau_c$  are the distance and time over which a coherent wave maintains a specified degree of coherence, i.e. when its phase is predictable.



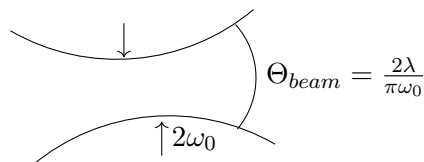
Coherence length and time:

$$l_c = \frac{2\pi c}{\delta\omega}, \quad \tau_c = \frac{2\pi}{\delta\omega} \quad (1.1)$$

- Can't have an infinitely narrow spectrum. Monochromaticity - laser has a spectral linewidth  $\delta\omega$ , this is much smaller than the actual carrier/centre frequency.  $\delta\omega \ll \omega_0$  for a laser where  $\omega_0$  is the centre frequency. From mHz to GHz in range.
- Highly directional beam → energy contained in one region.

Directionality:

- Lasers have highly directional beams that diverge due to diffraction
- Beam will be larger
- Waist of beam,  $2\omega_0$ .



- All in a very low frequency range → all energy oscillating in small area in small frequency range - useful applications.

Brightness:

- Lasers are spectrally bright

- Definition of brightness - amount of power in particular area (solid angle) of the beam:

$$B_{\omega} = \frac{P}{A\Delta\Omega\Delta\omega}, \quad (1.2)$$

where  $A$  is the area,  $\Delta\Omega$  is the solid angle, and  $\Delta\omega$  is the linewidth.

Electromagnetic Field Modes - not examinable:

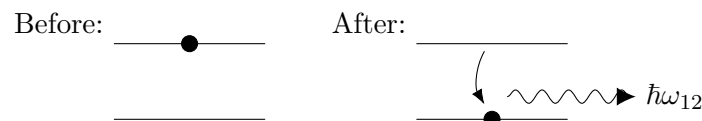
- 1st Chapter of 'Laser Physics' book
- Planck's radiation law
- Each unique solution of field is EM mode
- $L^3$  factored out when divided by volume
- Modes exist with or without energy

## Lecture 2 Einstein's rate equations

A laser requires amplification due to stimulated emission of radiation.

$$\begin{array}{c} 2 \quad \text{-----} \quad E_2, g_2, N_2 \\ 1 \quad \text{-----} \quad E_1, g_1, N_1 \end{array} \quad E_2 - E_1 = \hbar\omega_{12} \quad (2.1)$$

1. Spontaneous emission: Atom in some excited state, until some time later where it spontaneously decays into a lower state, with a photon emitted with energy shown in Eq (2.1). Rates:  $A_{21}$  per  $N_i$  atoms, or  $A_{21}N_2$  per  $m^3$ .

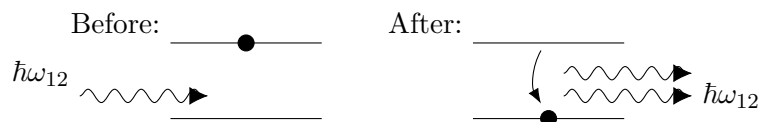


2. Absorption: Excite into excited state using energy of photon. Rates:  $B_{12}\rho(\omega_{12})$ ,  $B_{12}\rho(\omega_{12})N_1$ .

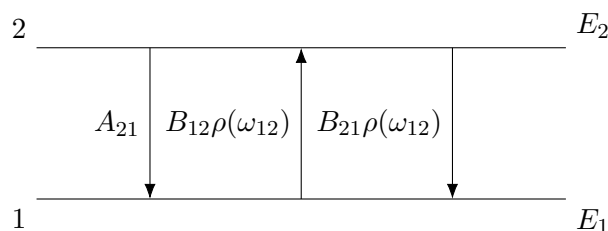


3. Stimulated emission: At the initial time we have an atom in an excited state which we then apply a radiated field (photon) to. Later, the atom will decay into a lower state and there will be two outgoing photons - they have been emitted into the same mode. Rates:  $B_{21}\rho(\omega_{12})$ ,  $B_{21}\rho(\omega_{12})N_2$ . Note:

- Here,  $\rho(\omega_{12})$  is the spectral energy density - the energy density, per unit angular frequency range at  $\omega$ , with units of  $J m^{-3} s$ .
- Generally, the light being used here is broad-band.



### 2.1 APPLY THE 3 PROCESSES



Conservation of atom number:

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = -\frac{dN_1}{dt} \quad (2.2)$$

$$N_1 + N_2 = N = \text{const} \quad (2.3)$$

$$N_1 B_{12} \rho(\omega_{12}) = N_2 A_{21} + N_2 B_{21} \rho(\omega_{12}) \quad (2.4)$$



Rearrange for the spectral energy density:

$$\rho(\omega_{12}) = \frac{N_2 A_{21}}{N_1 B_{12} - N_2 B_{21}} = \frac{\frac{A_{21}}{B_{21}}}{\frac{N_1}{N_2} \frac{B_{12}}{B_{21}} - 1} \quad (2.5)$$

Substitute using Boltzmann Law:

$$\frac{N_2}{N_1} = \frac{g_2}{g_1} \exp\left(-\frac{\hbar\omega_{12}}{k_B T}\right) \quad (2.6)$$

$$\Rightarrow \rho(\omega_{12}) = \frac{\frac{A_{21}}{B_{21}}}{\frac{g_1}{g_2} \frac{B_{12}}{B_{21}} \exp\left(\frac{\hbar\omega_{12}}{k_B T}\right) - 1} \quad (2.7)$$

Now look at Planck's Law:

$$\rho(\omega) = \frac{\hbar\omega^3}{\pi^2 c^3} \frac{1}{\exp\left(\frac{\hbar\omega}{k_B T}\right) - 1} \quad (2.8)$$

Einstein realised there must be an extra condition to switch between these two forms. This reveals:

$$g_1 B_{12} = g_2 B_{21} \quad (2.9)$$

$$A_{21} = \frac{\hbar\omega_{12}^3}{\pi^2 c^3} B_{21} \quad (2.10)$$

Notes:

- Effectively only 1 coefficient as if we know A, we know B.
- $A_{21}$  is the radiative decay rate,

$$A_{21} = \frac{1}{\tau_2} \quad (2.11)$$

- B has units  $m^3 J^{-1} s^{-2}$ .
- A and B are constants for a particular atom.
- From the  $\omega^3$  term, we can see that an infrared transition may decay very fast, but a microwave transition may decay very slow.
- Ratio of  $A/B \propto \omega^3$  - lasers at high frequency harder to achieve.
- The principle of detailed balance states that **in equilibrium, the total number of particles entering a quantum state by a particular rate per unit time is the same as the number leaving by the same rate.**

## 2.2 STEADY STATE SOLUTION

For simplicity, we will assume that  $g_1 = g_2$  such that the B coefficients are the same.

$$N_1 B_{12} \rho(\omega_{12}) = N_2 A_{21} + N_2 B_{12} \rho(\omega_{12}) \quad (2.12)$$

$$N_1 = N - N_2 \quad (2.13)$$

Now we can rearrange to eliminate  $N_1$ .

$$\frac{N_2}{N} = \frac{B_{12} \rho(\omega_{12})}{A_{21} + 2B_{12} \rho(\omega_{12})} \quad (2.14)$$

Now consider the form of the above as the spectral energy density tends to infinity. What we see is that  $N_2 \rightarrow \frac{N}{2}$ . This tells us that for at least a two-level atom we cannot get population inversion, which is required for lasers, i.e. steady state inversion impossible.

### 2.3 NUMBER OF PHOTONS PER MODE

$\bar{n}$  can be thought of as the mean number of photons per mode, and  $g(\omega) d\omega$  as the mode density.

$$\rho(\omega) d\omega = \bar{n} \times g(\omega) d\omega \times \hbar\omega \quad (2.15)$$

Standard result:

$$g(\omega) d\omega = \frac{\omega^2}{\pi^2 c^3} d\omega \quad (2.16)$$

$$\implies \bar{n} = \frac{\rho(\omega)}{\hbar\omega g(\omega)} = \frac{\pi^2 c^3}{\hbar\omega^3} \rho(\omega) \quad (2.17)$$

$$\bar{n} = \frac{B_{21}\rho(\omega)}{A_{21}} = \frac{\text{rate of stimulated emission}}{\text{rate of spontaneous emission}} \quad (2.18)$$

It follows that:

- $\bar{n} > 1$  - stimulated emission dominates  $\implies$  LASERS
- $\bar{n} < 1$  - spontaneous emission dominates  $\implies$  classical light source

For a black body:

$$\bar{n} = \frac{1}{\exp\left(\frac{\hbar\omega_{12}}{k_B T}\right) - 1} = \frac{B_{12}\rho(\omega)}{A_{21}} \quad (2.19)$$

These rates are equal when

$$\frac{\hbar\omega_{12}}{k_B T} = \ln(2) \quad (2.20)$$

For  $\lambda = 500 \text{ nm}$ ,  $T = 41400 \text{ K}$ . So for most black bodies, stimulated emission is negligible.

## Lecture 3 Linewidths and Lineshapes

2 types of broadening:

- Homogeneous - all atoms in sample affected the same
- Inhomogeneous - atoms in sample affected differently

### 3.1 HOMOGENEOUS BROADENING

Every atom/molecule exhibits this type of broadening to varying magnitudes.

**Radiative (natural) broadening:**

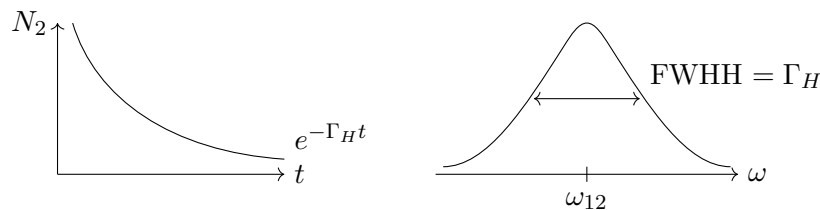
- Consider some excited state population,  $N_2$ .  $e^{-\Gamma_H t}$  Leads to some spread in maximum.

$$FWHM = \Gamma_H \quad (3.1)$$

This broadening follows from the Heisenberg uncertainty principle: Finite lifetime  $\Rightarrow$  spread in energy,  $\Delta E \Delta t \approx \hbar/2$ , then a spread in energy  $\Rightarrow$  a spread in frequency,

$$\Delta E = \hbar \Delta \omega \Rightarrow \Delta \omega = \frac{1}{\tau_2} = A_{21} = \Gamma_H \quad (3.2)$$

This is only for a 2 level atom.

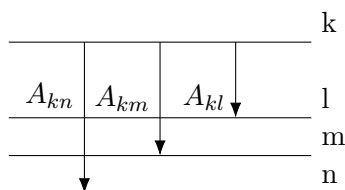


- Define the normalised lineshape function:

$$L_H(\omega) = \frac{\Gamma_H/2\pi}{(\omega - \omega_{12})^2 + \frac{\Gamma_H^2}{4}} \quad (3.3)$$

$$\int_0^\infty L_H(\omega) d\omega = 1 \quad (3.4)$$

- For multiple decay paths:

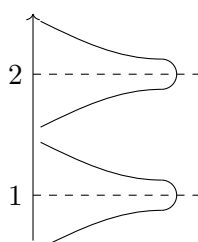


For level k

$$\frac{dN_k}{dt} = -N_k A_{kl} - N_k A_{km} - N_k A_{kn} \quad (3.5)$$

$$\tau_k = \frac{1}{\sum A_{ki}} = \frac{1}{\Gamma_H} \quad (3.6)$$

- When both levels decay:



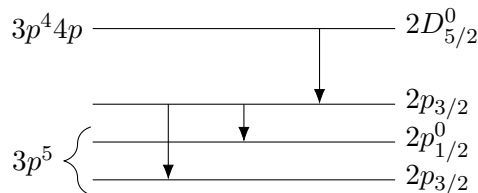
$$\Gamma_2 = \sum A_{2i} = \frac{1}{\tau_2} \quad (3.7)$$

$$\Gamma_1 = \sum A_{1i} = \frac{1}{\tau_1} \quad (3.8)$$

$$\Gamma_{21} = \Gamma_2 + \Gamma_1 \quad (3.9)$$

$\Gamma_{21}$  is the emission linewidth.

### Example: Argon ion laser



$\lambda = 488 \text{ nm}$ ,  $A = 7.8 \times 10^7 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , 1 : 73,1 nm;  $A = 4.5 \times 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$ , 2 : 72.3 nm;  $A = 23 \times 10^8 \text{ s}^{-1}$ .

Emission linewidth:

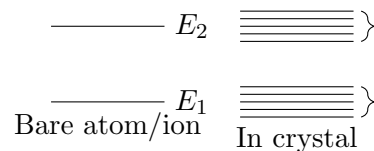
$$\sum A = 2.8 \times 10^9 = (2\pi)450 \text{ MHz} \quad (3.10)$$

### Collisional/pressure broadening:

- Collisions between atoms - de-excite the atoms to reduce excited state lifetime which broadens transition
- Depends on pressure - important for gas lasers

### Phonon broadening:

- In a crystal, two distinct groups of energy levels packed together, quantised vibrational modes  $\Rightarrow$  phonons.
- Occurs in solid state lasers, temp-dependent
- Dominant broadening at room temperature



## 3.2 INHOMOGENEOUS BROADENING

### Doppler Broadening:

- Arises due to motion of atoms - when a moving atom emits, there is a Doppler shift dependent on the component of velocity along the direction of the emitted photon.

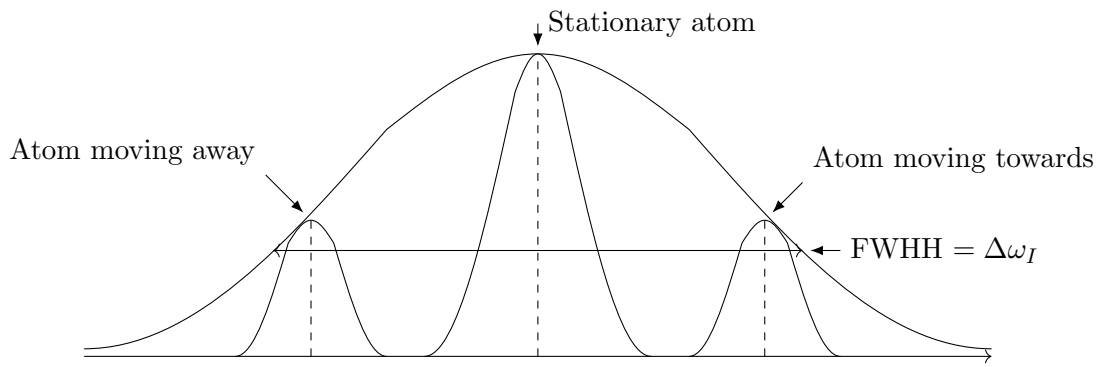
$$\omega = \omega_{12} \left( 1 \pm \frac{v_z}{c} \right) \quad (3.11)$$

$\pm$  for blue/red shift - blue as velocity towards observer, red away.

- Broadening arises due to Maxwell-Boltzmann distribution of velocities,

$$P(v_z) dv_z = \left( \frac{M}{2\pi k_B T} \right)^{1/2} \exp \left( -\frac{M v_z^2}{2k_B T} \right) dv_z \quad (3.12)$$

Use correspondence between  $v_z$  and  $\omega$  to get



$$P(\omega) d\omega = \frac{c}{\omega_{12}} \left( \frac{M}{2\pi k_B T} \right)^{1/2} \exp \left[ -\frac{Mc^2}{2k_B T} \frac{(\omega - \omega_{12})^2}{\omega_{12}^2} \right] \quad (3.13)$$

► For Doppler broadening,

$$\Delta\omega_I = \frac{2\omega_{12}}{c} \left( \frac{2k_B T}{M} \ln 2 \right)^{1/2} \quad (3.14)$$

$$= 7.16 \times 10^{-7} \omega_{12} \left( \frac{T}{M_A} \right)^{1/2} \quad (3.15)$$

$\Delta\omega_I$  is known as the Doppler width,  $M_A$  is using the mass in atomic units instead of kg as used so far for  $M$ .

#### Example: Argon ion laser 2

$M_A = 40$ ,  $\lambda = 488 \text{ nm}$ , Discharge temperature  $\approx 1200^\circ\text{C}$ .

$$\Delta\omega_I = (2\pi)2.7 \text{ GHz} \quad (3.16)$$

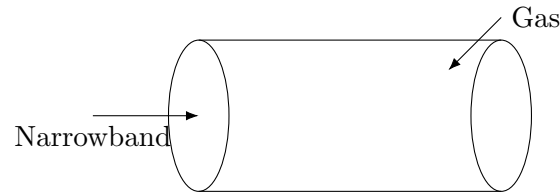
This is many times larger than the natural broadening.

#### Amorphous crystal broadening:

- Occurs in glass materials
- Inhomogeneities are Gaussian (normal), the emission is also Gaussian

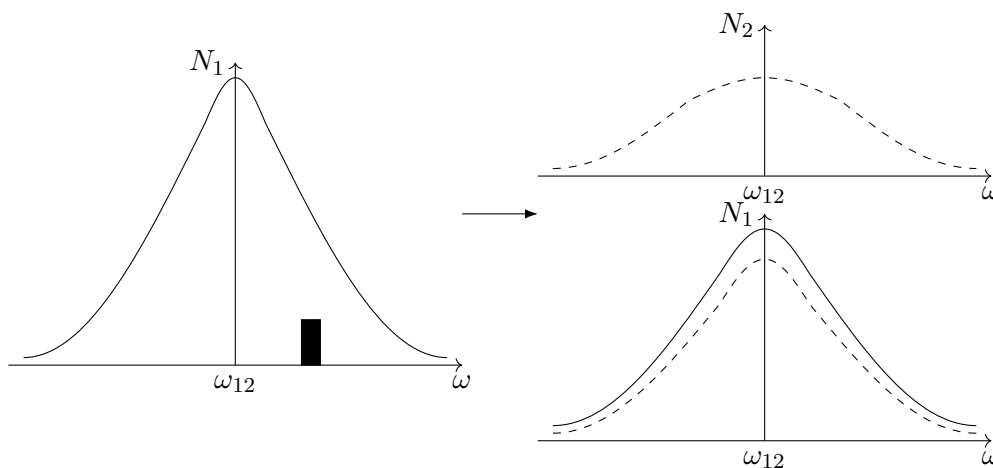
## Lecture 4 Amplification by Stimulated Emission

### Example:



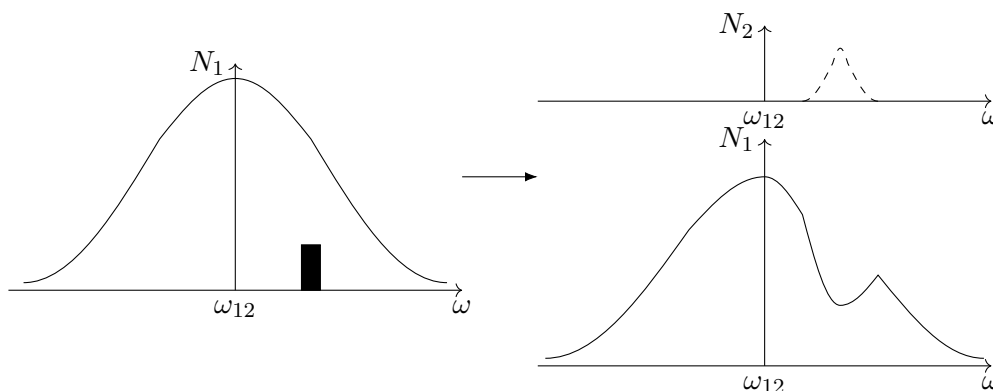
If the light beam is resonant with the atoms in the gas, we would expect some interaction. But how is the medium excited? It depends on the broadening.

#### 1. Homogeneous broadening (Lorentzian):



Turn on radiation within natural linewidth. All of these distributions will be the same - all atoms are affected equally, and the population of  $N_1$  is reduced slightly as it moves into  $N_2$ .

#### 2. Inhomogeneous broadening (Gaussian):



Distributions are now very different - atoms are affected differently, and only a subset of the atoms interact. For example, with Doppler broadening, only particles with a specific velocity would be excited strongly by the light beam. The width of the  $N_2$  Gaussian is determined by natural broadening.

Reminder:

$$A_{21}N_2 \equiv \text{rate of spontaneous emission per } m^3 \quad (4.1)$$

$$B_{12}\rho(\omega_{12})N_1 \equiv \text{rate of absorption per } m^3 \quad (4.2)$$

$$B_{21}\rho(\omega_{12})N_2 \equiv \text{rate of stimulated emission per } m^3 \quad (4.3)$$

#### 4.1 HOMOGENEOUS BROADENING

All atoms are affected the same  $\implies$  simply define a new constant:

$$a_{21}(\omega) = A_{21}L_H(\omega) \quad b_{12}(\omega) = B_{12}L_H(\omega) \quad b_{21}(\omega) = B_{21}L_H(\omega) \quad (4.4)$$

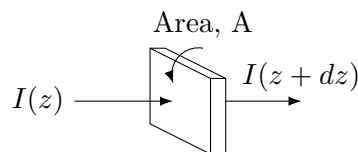
Then if we wanted to know the rate of emission now:

$$a_{21}(\omega) d\omega = \text{rate of emission in range } \omega \rightarrow \omega + d\omega \text{ per atom} \quad (4.5)$$

We have to multiply by the  $d\omega$  because  $L_H(\omega)$  has units  $\frac{1}{\omega}$ . Integrating recovers the result,

$$\int L_H(\omega) d\omega = 1 \quad (4.6)$$

Inhomogeneous broadening is more difficult. We want to do this, but we can use the results from homogeneous broadening in certain circumstances, i.e. for narrowband light and  $\Gamma_H \ll \Delta\omega_I$ .



Consider a weak narrowband beam of light, frequency  $\omega$  and bandwidth  $d\omega$ .

Assume:

- No spontaneous emission
- Homogeneous broadening
- Steady state

Find change in power of beam.

$$(I(z + dz) - I(z)) A = [N_2 B_{21} L_H(\omega) \rho(\omega_{12}) d\omega - N_1 B_{12} L_H(\omega) \rho(\omega_{12}) d\omega] \times \hbar\omega \times A dz \quad (4.7)$$

The term inside the square brackets above is the net rate of photons added to the field ( $m^{-3}$ ).

For a beam, the intensity is described as

$$I(z) = c\rho(\omega) d\omega \quad (4.8)$$

Substitute this into Eq (4.7) and rearrange, also using the expressions for A and B coefficients found in lecture 2:

$$\frac{1}{I} \frac{dI}{dz} = \frac{\hbar\omega}{c} L_H(\omega) [N_2 B_{21} - N_1 B_{12}] \quad (4.9)$$

$$= \frac{\pi^2 c^2}{\omega_{12}^2} A_{21} L_H(\omega) \left[ N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \right] \quad (4.10)$$

This uses the assumption that we are close to resonance.

The prefactor can be defined as the optical gain cross section,

$$\sigma(\omega) = \frac{\pi^2 c^2}{\omega_{12}^2} A_{21} L_H(\omega). \quad (4.11)$$

Solve equation:

$$I(z) = I(0) \exp \left[ \sigma(\omega) \times \left( N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \right) z \right] \quad (4.12)$$

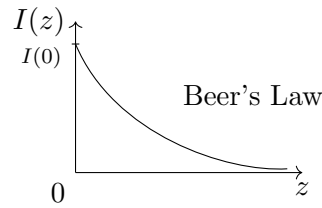
There are two cases:

1. Absorption:

$$N_2 < \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \quad (4.13)$$

$$\Rightarrow I(z) = I(0) e^{-\kappa(\omega)z}, \quad \kappa(\omega) = \sigma(\omega) \left( \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 - N_2 \right) \quad (4.14)$$

$\kappa$  is the absorption coefficient.

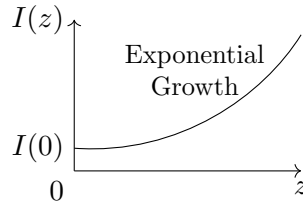


2. Amplification.

$$N_2 > \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \quad (4.15)$$

$$I(z) = I(0) e^{g(\omega)z}, \quad g(\omega) = \sigma(\omega) \left( N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \right) \quad (4.16)$$

$g(\omega)$  is the gain coefficient,  $e^{g(\omega)z}$  is the gain.



The condition for gain is

$$N_2 > \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1. \quad (4.17)$$

This is known as Population Inversion. Frequency dependence of the gain:

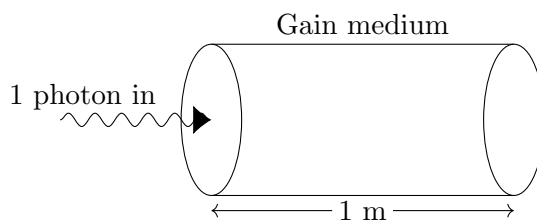
$$g(\omega) = \sigma(\omega) \times N^*, \quad N^* = N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \quad (4.18)$$

$$= \frac{\pi^2 c^2}{\omega_{12}^2} A_{21} L_H(\omega) \times \left[ N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \right] \quad (4.19)$$

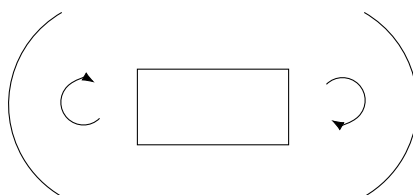
We call  $N^*$  the population inversion density. **Note:** Frequency dependence is in the optical gain cross section via  $L(\omega)$ .  $\sigma(\omega)$  is determined by the atom, we cannot control it. Broadening spreads gain over a range of frequencies.



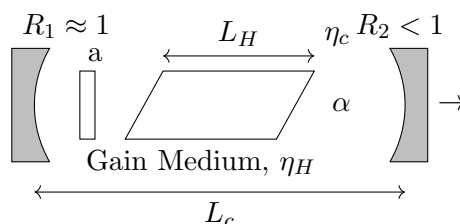
## Lecture 5 The Laser Oscillator: Cavity Basics and Threshold



Imagine we have a sample which is our laser gain sample, and we will send one photon in. For most lasers, the peak gain,  $g(\omega_{12}) \approx 0.01 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ . So one photon in to our 1m long sample, means  $e^1 = 2.7$  photons out. We must add a cavity to recirculate the light, and now using mirrors either side of the gain medium, we will pass through the gain medium 40 times,  $e^{40} \approx 10^{17}$  photons.



### 5.1 GENERAL CAVITY DESIGN



- $R_1$  is mirror 1 and must have a reflectivity as close to 1 as possible
- $R_2$  is the output coupler and must have a lower reflectivity so that the laser can eventually escape through this
- $L_c$  is the mirror separation, the length of the cavity
- $\alpha$  is the distributed loss over the length of the gain medium
- $a$  is the intracavity element - it can make pulsed lasers or change the frequency, or induce a fixed loss
- The gain cell is angled, cut at Brewster's angle to minimise loss.
- The cavity imposes spectrum and characteristics to the laser.
- Distributed loss throughout cavity of  $\alpha$  per meter.

### 5.2 LONGITUDINAL CAVITY MODES

The field in the cavity forms standing waves, i.e.

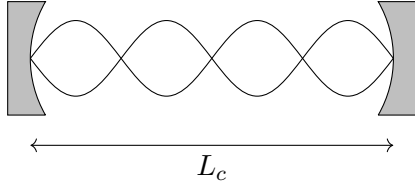
$$n \frac{\lambda_n}{2} = L_c \quad (5.1)$$

$n$  is called the mode order. Mode separation,

$$\Delta\nu_{fsr} = \nu_{n+1} - \nu_n = \frac{c}{2L_c} \quad (5.2)$$

This is the Free Spectral Range.

**Example: Mode order of 10cm cavity at  $\lambda = 500 \text{ nm}$**



$$n = \frac{2L_c}{\lambda} = 4 \times 10^5 \quad (5.3)$$

$$\Delta\nu_{fsr} = \frac{c}{2L_c} = 1.5 \text{ GHz} \quad (5.4)$$

### 5.3 CAVITY LOSSES

Trace intensity around the cavity:

$$I_0 \implies I_0 R_1 (1-a) R_2 (1-a) e^{-2\alpha L_c} \quad (5.5)$$

- Pass through the cavity twice, so  $(1-a)$  twice.  $2L_c$ .
- $e^{-2\alpha L_c}$  is the distributed loss over length,

$$I_0 \implies I_0 R_1 R_2 (1-a)^2 e^{-2\alpha L_c} \quad (5.6)$$

Express as round trip loss,

$$I_0 \implies I_0 e^{-\delta_c} \quad (5.7)$$

$$\delta_c = \ln \left( \frac{1}{R_1 R_2 (1-a)^2} \right) + 2\alpha L_c \quad (5.8)$$

$$\frac{I_0 - I_0 e^{-\delta_c}}{I_0} = 1 - e^{-\delta_c} \approx 1 - (1 - \delta_c) = \delta_c \quad (5.9)$$

This is the Fractional Round Trip Loss.

### 5.4 CAVITY LIFETIME

The lifetime of a photon in a cavity is a useful concept. Define cavity lifetime,  $\tau_c$ .

$$I(t) = I_0 e^{-t/\tau_c} \quad (5.10)$$

$$= I_0 e^{-N\delta_c} = I_0 e^{-t\delta_c/T_{RT}} \quad (5.11)$$

$$\tau_c = \frac{2L_c}{c\delta_c} = \frac{T_{RT}}{\delta_c} \quad (5.12)$$

$T_{RT}$  is called the Round Trip Time. Cavity has a quality factor,

$$Q = \frac{\omega}{\Delta\omega_c} = \omega\tau_c \quad (5.13)$$

So we can then think of cavities as having a linewidth,  $\Delta\omega_c = \frac{1}{\tau_c}$ .

### 5.5 THRESHOLD CONDITION

$$\text{Round Trip Gain} \times \text{Round Trip Loss} = 1 \quad (5.14)$$

- Gain  $\times$  loss  $> 1$ , intensity grows  $\implies$  laser oscillation
- Gain  $\times$  loss  $< 1$ , intensity decays  $\implies$  no laser :(

Substitute for gain and loss:

$$e^{2g(\omega_{12}L_m)} \times e^{-\delta_c} = 1 \quad (5.15)$$

$$g_{th}(\omega_{12}) = \frac{\delta_c}{2L_m} \quad (5.16)$$

**Example: Helium Neon Laser**

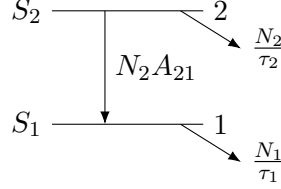
- Gain cell length =  $L_m = L_c = 50\text{ cm}$ .
- Two mirrors with  $R_1 = 0.998$  and  $R_2 = 0.98$ .
- Distributed losses are  $\alpha = 0.02\text{ m}^{-1}$ .
- $A_{21} = 3.4 \times 10^6\text{ s}^{-1}$ ,  $\lambda = 632.8\text{ nm}$ .
- Doppler width is dominant as it is a gas (could be pressure broadening, but assume not for this)
  - $\Delta\omega_I = 2\pi \cdot 1500\text{ MHz}$ .

So what is the population inversion density,  $N^*$ , required for laser oscillation?

- Considering round trip losses
- Fractional round trip loss
- Atomic properties for expression of gain
- Only thing left to then find is  $N^*$

## Lecture 6 The Laser Oscillator: Oscillation and Gain Saturation

### 6.1 GAIN SATURATION



Develop rate equations for  $N_1$  and  $N_2$ .

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = S_2 - \frac{N_2}{\tau_2} \quad (6.1)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = S_1 + N_2 A_{21} - \frac{N_1}{\tau_1} \quad (6.2)$$

In the steady state,

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = \frac{dN_1}{dt} = 0 \quad (6.3)$$

$$N_2 = S_2 \tau_2 \quad (6.4)$$

$$N_1 = S_1 \tau_1 + A_{21} \tau_1 N_2 \quad (6.5)$$

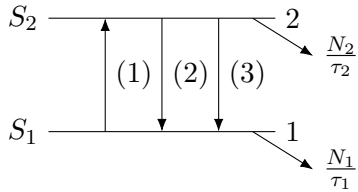
$$= S_1 \tau_1 + A_{21} \tau_1 S_2 \tau_2 \quad (6.6)$$

Population inversion density,

$$N_0^* = N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \quad (6.7)$$

$$= S_2 \tau_2 \left( 1 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} A_{21} \tau_1 \right) - \frac{g_2}{g_1} S_1 \tau_1 \quad (6.8)$$

'0' denotes small signal coefficient (in the absence of field).



$$(1) \quad \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 \sigma(\omega) \frac{I}{\hbar \omega} \quad (6.9)$$

$$(2) \quad N_2 \sigma(\omega) \frac{I}{\hbar \omega} \quad (6.10)$$

$$(3) \quad N_2 A_{21} \quad (6.11)$$

We have assumed  $L(\omega) < \Gamma_{21}$ .

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = S_2 - \frac{N_2}{\tau_2} - N^* \sigma(\omega) \frac{I}{\hbar \omega} \quad (6.12)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = S_1 - \frac{N_1}{\tau_1} + N^* \sigma(\omega) \frac{I}{\hbar \omega} + A_{21} N_2 \quad (6.13)$$

$$N_2 = S_2 \tau_2 - N^* \left( \frac{\sigma I}{\hbar \omega} \right) \tau_2 \quad (6.14)$$

$$N_1 = S_1 \tau_1 + N^* \left( \frac{\sigma I}{\hbar \omega} \right) \tau_1 + A_{21} \tau_1 N_2 \quad (6.15)$$

$$N^* = \frac{S_2 \tau_2 \left(1 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} A_{21} \tau_1\right) - \frac{g_2}{g_1} S_1 \tau_1}{1 + \left(\frac{\sigma I}{\hbar \omega}\right) \left[\tau_2 + \frac{g_2}{g_1} (1 - A_{21} \tau_2) \tau_1\right]} \quad (6.16)$$

Numerator is  $N_0^*$ :

$$N^* = \frac{N_0^*}{1 + \frac{I}{I_s}} \quad (6.17)$$

We can now define Saturation Intensity:

$$I_s(\omega) = \frac{\hbar \omega}{\sigma(\omega)} \frac{1}{\tau_2 + \frac{g_2}{g_1} \tau_1 (1 - A_{21} \tau_2)} \quad (6.18)$$

Gain is saturated too, since

$$g(\omega) = \sigma(\omega) N^* = \frac{g_0(\omega)}{1 + \frac{I}{I_s(\omega)}} \quad (6.19)$$

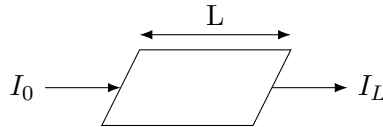
#### Comments:

- At  $I = I_s(\omega) \rightarrow g(\omega) = \frac{g_0(\omega)}{2}$ .
- $I_s(\omega)$  is frequency dependent through  $\sigma(\omega)$ , so will happen quicker at line centre.
- For an efficient laser, expect large population inversion  $\Rightarrow \tau_2 \gg \tau_1$ .
- All decays from state 2 into state 1  $\Rightarrow A_{21} \approx \frac{1}{\tau_2}$ .

$$I_s(\omega) = \frac{\hbar \omega}{\sigma(\omega) \tau_2} \quad (6.20)$$

This is usually an excellent approximation.

#### Example: Linear Amplifier



$$\frac{dI}{dz} = g(\omega) I = \frac{g_0(\omega) I}{1 + \frac{I}{I_s(\omega)}} \quad (6.21)$$

We just integrate this, after length L:

$$\int_{I(0)}^{I(L)} \frac{1 + \frac{I}{I_s(\omega)}}{I} dI = \int_0^L g_0(\omega) dz \quad (6.22)$$

$$\ln \left( \frac{I_L}{I_0} \right) + \frac{I_L - I_0}{I_s(\omega)} = g_0(\omega) L \quad (6.23)$$

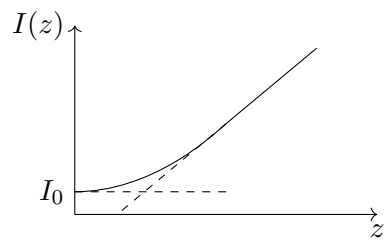
#### Two limiting cases:

1.  $I/I_s(\omega) \ll 1 \Rightarrow$  exponential growth,

$$I_L = I_0 e^{g_0(\omega) L} \quad (6.24)$$

2.  $I/I_s(\omega) \gg 1 \Rightarrow$  linear growth,

$$I_L = I_0 + g_0(\omega) I_s(\omega) L \quad (6.25)$$



## Lecture 7 Multimode lasing and output power

Last time:

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = S_2 - \frac{N_2}{\tau_2} - \frac{N^* \sigma(\omega) I}{\hbar \omega} \quad (7.1)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = S_1 - \frac{N_1}{\tau_1} + \frac{N^* \sigma(\omega) I}{\hbar \omega} + N_2 A_{21} \quad (7.2)$$

We need a third equation to describe the system. Develop equation governing the the intensity build up. Consider photon density,  $n_\phi$ .

$$\frac{dn_\phi}{dt} = \left( N^* \sigma(\omega) \frac{I}{\hbar \omega} \right) \left( \frac{L_m}{L_c} \right) - \frac{n_\phi}{\tau_c} \quad (7.3)$$

Intensity of beam,

$$I = \text{energy density} \times \text{velocity} \quad (7.4)$$

$$= n_\phi \hbar \omega \times c \quad (7.5)$$

$$n_\phi = \frac{I}{\hbar \omega c} \quad (7.6)$$

$$dn_\phi = \frac{I}{\hbar \omega c} dI \quad (7.7)$$

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = N^* \sigma(\omega) c I \left( \frac{L_m}{L_c} \right) - \frac{I}{\tau_c} \quad (7.8)$$

We know that

$$\tau_c = \frac{2L_c}{c\delta_c} \quad g_{th} = \frac{\delta_c}{2L_m}. \quad (7.9)$$

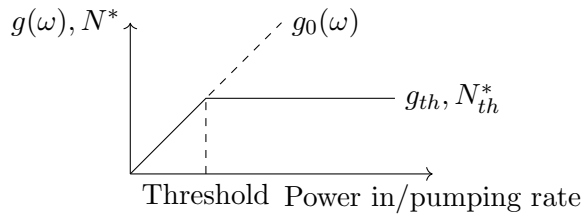
We then find the following useful for the final substitution:

$$\frac{1}{\tau_c} = \frac{c\delta_c}{2L_c} = c \left( \frac{L_m}{L_c} \right) g_{th} \quad (7.10)$$

$$g(\omega) = N^* \sigma(\omega) \quad (7.11)$$

$$\frac{dI}{dt} = c \left( \frac{L_m}{L_c} \right) [g(\omega) - g_{th}] I(t) \quad (7.12)$$

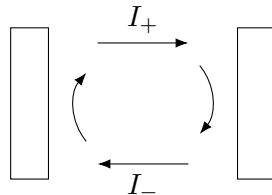
In the steady state, this should be zero which is found either if  $I(t)$  is zero which is meaningless solution, or if  $g_{ss}(\omega) = g_{th}$ . This highlights the principle of gain saturation. We can take the expression found for gain last time and apply the above relation.



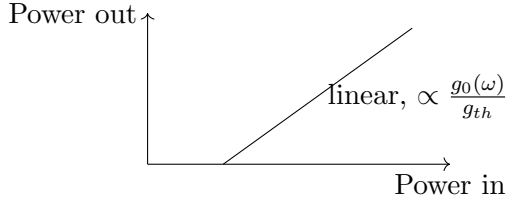
$$g_{ss}(\omega) = \sigma(\omega) N^* = \frac{g_0(\omega)}{1 + I_{ss}/I_s(\omega)} = g_{th} \quad (7.13)$$

$$I_{ss} = I_s(\omega) \left[ \frac{g_0(\omega)}{g_{th}} - 1 \right] \quad (7.14)$$

Consider simple cavity,



Mirror transmission,  $T = (I_+ - R)$ ,  $I_{out} = T \times I_+$ . Assume low output coupling-uniform field approximation, i.e.  $I_+ \approx I_-$ .



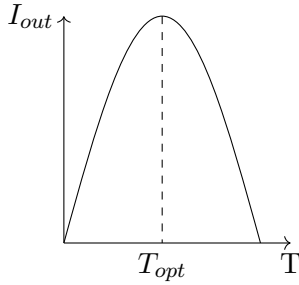
$$I_{ss} = I_+ + I_- \approx 2I_+ \quad (7.15)$$

$$I_{out} = T \times \frac{I_{ss}}{2} = T \frac{I_s(\omega)}{2} \left[ \frac{g_0(\omega)}{g_{th}} - 1 \right] \quad (7.16)$$

To get output power, we need to know mode area,  $A_{mode}$ .

$$P_{out} = A_{mode} I_{out} = \frac{1}{2} I_s(\omega) A_{mode} T \left[ \frac{g_0(\omega)}{g_{th}} - 1 \right] \quad (7.17)$$

## 7.1 OPTIMUM OUTPUT COUPLING



$$I_{out} = T \frac{I_s(\omega)}{2} \left[ \frac{g_0(\omega)}{g_{th}} - 1 \right] \quad (7.18)$$

$$g_{th} = \frac{\delta_c}{2L_m}, \quad \delta_c = T + \delta_{loss} \quad (7.19)$$

$$I_{out} = T \frac{I_s(\omega)}{2} \left[ \frac{2g_0(\omega)L}{T + \delta_{loss}} - 1 \right] \quad (7.20)$$

Differentiate expression for  $I_{out}$  with respect to  $T$  and set to zero:

$$\frac{dI_{out}}{dT} = \frac{I_s(\omega)}{2} \left[ \frac{2g_0(\omega)L}{T + \delta_{loss}} - 1 \right] - \frac{T I_s(\omega)}{2} \frac{2g_0(\omega)L}{(T + \delta_{loss})^2} \quad (7.21)$$

$$2g_0(\omega)L(T + \delta_{loss}) - (T + \delta_{loss})^2 = 2g_0(\omega)LT \quad (7.22)$$

$$(T + \delta_{loss})^2 = 2g_0(\omega)L\delta_{loss} \quad (7.23)$$

$$T_{opt} = \sqrt{2g_0(\omega)L\delta_{loss}} - \delta_{loss} \quad (7.24)$$

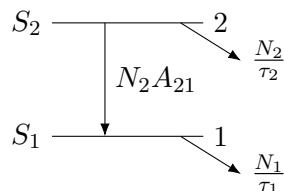
$$I_{opt} = \left[ 1 - \left( \frac{\delta_{loss}}{2g_0(\omega)L} \right)^{1/2} \right]^2 g_0(\omega)L I_s(\omega) \quad (7.25)$$

$$I_{max} = g_0(\omega)L I_s(\omega) \quad (7.26)$$



## Lecture 8 Requirements for Population Inversion

### 8.1 CONDITION FOR STEADY STATE POPULATION INVERSION



Develop rate equations for  $N_1$  and  $N_2$ .

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = S_2 - \frac{N_2}{\tau_2} \quad (8.1)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = S_1 + N_2 A_{21} - \frac{N_1}{\tau_1} \quad (8.2)$$

In steady state,

$$N_2 = \tau_2 S_2 \quad (8.3)$$

$$N_1 = \tau_1 S_1 + \tau_2 S_2 A_{21} \tau_1 \quad (8.4)$$

For population inversion,  $N^* > 0$ , or  $\frac{N_2}{g_2} > \frac{N_1}{g_1}$ .

$$\frac{\tau_2 S_2}{g_2} > \frac{\tau_1 S_1}{g_1} + \frac{\tau_2 S_2 A_{21} \tau_1}{g_1} \quad (8.5)$$

$$1 < \frac{g_1}{g_2} \frac{S_2 \tau_2}{S_1 \tau_1} \left[ 1 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} A_{21} \tau_1 \right] \quad (8.6)$$

We want:

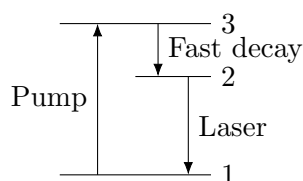
- $S_2 > S_1$  - selective pumping
- $\tau_2 > \tau_1$  - favourable lifetime ratio
- $g_1 > g_2$  - favourable degeneracy ratio
- The term in the square brackets only depends on the atomic properties, and we require

$$A_{21} < \frac{g_1}{g_2} \frac{1}{\tau_1} \quad (8.7)$$

to be able to get laser oscillation. This is the **minimum** requirement for steady state inversion - alone, it may not be a sufficient condition, but it is necessary. The lower laser level must decay faster than it is being filled by spontaneous emission.

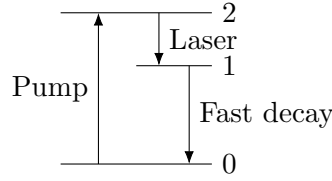
### 8.2 THREE AND FOUR LEVEL LASERS

#### 8.2.1 TRADITIONAL SOLID STATE THREE-LEVEL LASER



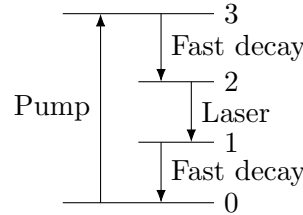
This is known as the traditional solid state three-level laser, e.g. Ruby.

### 8.2.2 GAS LASERS



This is common for gas lasers, e.g. Ar+.

### 8.2.3 SOLID STATE AND DYE LASERS



This is most solid state lasers and dye lasers, e.g. Nd:YAG.

### 8.2.4 GENERAL COMMENTS

- We only show three/four levels here but each one of these levels may be a tight collection of thousands of levels which may be close enough to be treated as a single big level.
- For three-level schemes, one transition must be non-radiative to conserve parity.
  - For three-level solid state lasers, there is fast phonon decay from 3 to 2.
  - For gas lasers, both downward transitions are radiative but pumping is achieved by collisions.
- Traditional solid state laser will have a high pumping threshold because we need to transfer  $\frac{N}{2}$  out of state 1 to get inversion, so these are not very efficient.
- Gas lasers have a low *quantum efficiency*.

$$Q.E. = \frac{E_2 - E_1}{E_2 - E_0} = \frac{\text{laser photon energy}}{\text{pump 'photon' energy}} = \frac{\hbar\omega_{12}}{\hbar\omega_{20}} \quad (8.8)$$

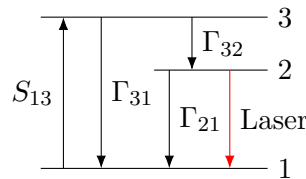
because spontaneous emission rate  $A_{21} \propto \omega_{12}^3$ , hence to achieve  $\tau_2 > \tau_1$  requires  $\omega_{10} > \omega_{12}$ .

- Four-level lasers are best, *cause bigger is better, baybeeeee*.

$$\text{Gain} = e^{g(\omega)L} = e^{\sigma(\omega)N^*L_m} \quad (8.9)$$

$\sigma(\omega)$  and  $L_m$  are fixed (or practically so), so for us to maximise our gain, we have to maximise  $N^*$  through pumping.

## 8.3 THREE-LEVEL TRADITIONAL SOLID STATE LASERS



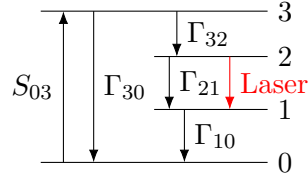
To study the steady state small signal population inversion, we ignore the effects of the laser field on the populations. The rate equations are:

$$\frac{dN_3}{dt} = S_{13}N_1 - (\Gamma_{31} + \Gamma_{32})N_3 \quad (8.10)$$

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = \Gamma_{32}N_3 - \Gamma_{21}N_2 \quad (8.11)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = -S_{13}N_1 + \Gamma_{31}N_3 + \Gamma_{21}N_2 \quad (8.12)$$

## Lecture 9 Population Inversion in Four-level lasers



$\Gamma_{32}$  is a fast, non-radiative decay;  $\Gamma_{10}$  likewise.

$$\frac{dN_3}{dt} = N_0 S_{03} - (\Gamma_{30} + \Gamma_{32}) N_3 \quad (9.1)$$

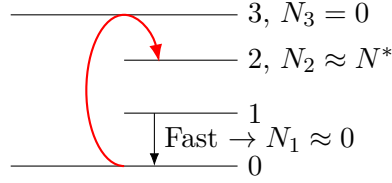
$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = N_3 \Gamma_{32} - N_2 \Gamma_{21} \quad (9.2)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = N_2 \Gamma_{21} - N_1 \Gamma_{10} \quad (9.3)$$

$$\frac{dN_0}{dt} = -N_0 S_{03} + N_3 \Gamma_{30} + N_1 \Gamma_{10} \quad (9.4)$$

In the ideal case,  $\Gamma_{32} \gg \Gamma_{30}$ , and  $N_3 \approx 0$ , i.e. decay is faster than pumping.

### 9.1 IDEALISED FOUR-LEVEL LASER



The idealised four-level laser equations:

$$N_0 \approx N \quad N_2 \approx \frac{S_{03}}{\Gamma_{21}} N_0 \quad N_3 = 0 \quad (9.5)$$

### 9.2 COMPARISON OF THREE- AND FOUR-LEVEL LASER SCHEMES

For a three-level scheme, we found that,

For four-level schemes, we found that

$$S_{13}^{th} = \frac{N + N_{th}^*}{N - N_{th}^*} \Gamma_{21} \approx \Gamma_{21}. \quad (9.6)$$

$$S_{03}^{th} = \frac{N_{th}^*}{N - N_{th}^*} \Gamma_{21} \approx \frac{N_{th}^*}{N} \Gamma_{21} \quad (9.7)$$

If we assume equal  $\Gamma_{21}$ s,

$$\frac{\text{four-level}}{\text{three-level}} = \frac{S_{03}^{th}}{S_{13}^{th}} = \frac{N_{th}^*}{N + N_{th}^*} \approx \frac{N_{th}^*}{N} \ll 1 \quad (9.8)$$

This reiterates that four-level lasers are much more efficient than three-level ones. Comparing power per unit volume absorbed at threshold:

$$\left( \frac{P}{V} \right)_{th,3} = \hbar \omega_{13} \Gamma_{21} \frac{N}{2} \quad \left( \frac{P}{V} \right)_{th,4} = \hbar \omega_{30} N^* \Gamma_{21} \quad (9.9)$$

**Example: Ruby vs Nd:YAG**

Ruby doped at 1% by weight.

$$N_0 = 3.3 \times 10^{26} m^{-3} \qquad \Gamma_{21} = 3.3 \times 10^2 s^{-1} \qquad (9.10)$$

Assume pumping at  $\lambda = 505 nm$ . Laser rod, diameter 6 mm, length 10 cm.

$$P_{th} = \left( \frac{hc}{\lambda} \right) \frac{N_0}{2} \Gamma_{21} \times V \approx 5.4 kW \qquad (9.11)$$

Now for the ND:YAG,

$$\Gamma_{21} = 1.8 \times 10^3 s^{-1} \qquad \sigma = 9 \times 10^{-19} cm^2 \qquad (9.12)$$

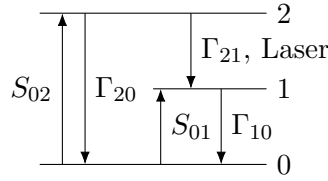
Assume cavity loss of  $\delta_c = 0.05$ , with diameter 4 mm, and length 5 cm. Pumped at 808 nm.

$$N_{th}^* = \frac{\delta_c}{2\sigma L_m} = 5.6 \times 10^{21} m^{-3} \qquad (9.13)$$

$$P_{th} = \hbar\omega_{30} N_{th}^* \Gamma_{21} V \approx 1.66 W \qquad (9.14)$$

So Ruby has a massive energy cost compared to Nd:YAG, Nd:YAG much preferable.

## Lecture 10 Population Inversion in Three-level Gas Lasers



Develop rate equations in absence of field:

$$\frac{dN_2}{dt} = S_{02}N_0 - (\Gamma_{20} + \Gamma_{21})N_2 \quad (10.1)$$

$$\frac{dN_1}{dt} = S_{01}N_0 + \Gamma_{21}N_2 - \Gamma_{10}N_1 \quad (10.2)$$

$$\frac{dN_0}{dt} = -(S_{02} + S_{01})N_0 + \Gamma_{20}N_2 + \Gamma_{10}N_1 \quad (10.3)$$

Using the steady state definition,  $\frac{dN_i}{dt} = 0$ :

$$N_2 = \frac{S_{02}}{\Gamma_{20} + \Gamma_{21}} N_0 \quad (10.4)$$

$$S_{01}N_0 + \Gamma_{21} \left[ \frac{S_{02}}{\Gamma_{20} + \Gamma_{21}} N_0 \right] - \Gamma_{10}N_1 = 0 \quad (10.5)$$

$$N_1 = \frac{S_{01}(\Gamma_{20} + \Gamma_{21}) + \Gamma_{21}S_{02}}{\Gamma_{10}(\Gamma_{20} + \Gamma_{21})} N_0 \quad (10.6)$$

For population inversion, we need

$$\frac{N_2}{N_1} > \frac{g_2}{g_1} \quad (10.7)$$

$$N^* = N_2 - \frac{g_2}{g_1} N_1 > 0 \quad (10.8)$$

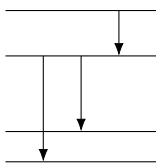
$$\frac{N_2}{N_1} = \frac{S_{02}\Gamma_{10}}{S_{01}(\Gamma_{20} + \Gamma_{21}) + \Gamma_{21}S_{02}} > \frac{g_2}{g_1} \quad (10.9)$$

We have to find another pumping technique as we cannot use light. Both down transitions are optical (radiative), so  $S_{02}$  cannot be optical due to parity conservation, and  $\Gamma_{20}$  is negligible.

$$\frac{N_2}{N_1} = \frac{S_{02}\Gamma_{10}}{(S_{01} + S_{02})\Gamma_{21}} > \frac{g_2}{g_1} \quad (10.10)$$

$$\frac{S_{02}}{S_{01}} > \left( \frac{g_1\Gamma_{10}}{g_2\Gamma_{21}} - 1 \right)^{-1} \quad (10.11)$$

### Example: Argon ion laser



$\lambda = 488.0nm$  with  $A = 7.8 \times 10^7 s^{-1}$ , decays):  $73.1nm$ ,  $A = 4.5 \times 10^8 s^{-1}$ ;  $72.3nm$ ,  $A = 23 \times 10^8 s^{-1}$ . We have a degeneracy of  $g = 2J + 1$ , so  $g_1 = 4, g_2 = 6$ .  $\Gamma_{21} = 7.8 \times 10^7 s^{-1}$ ,  $\Gamma_{10} = 27.5 \times 10^8 s^{-1}$ .

From this, we get a ratio of 0.044. For this particular system, we can pump into the lower level 22.5 times as quickly as into the upper one and still maintain population inversion due to fast natural decay rates. **Striking result!**

This can happen because  $A \propto \omega^3$  so massively different for the higher frequencies of the lower level

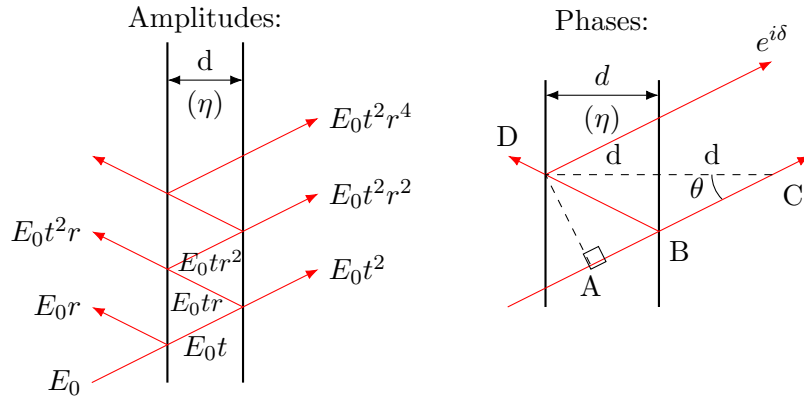
| decay. The downside is low quantum efficiency.

Gas lasers cannot be optically pumped, so they use collisions, or **particle pumping**.

## Lecture 11 The Fabry-Perot Etalon and Laser Cavity Modes

### 11.1 THE FABRY-PEROT ELATON

Consider two identical semi-reflecting parallel mirrors:



$t$  and  $r$  are the amplitude transmission and reflection coefficients respectively.

#### 11.1.1 PATH DIFFERENT BETWEEN SUCCESIVE RAYS

$$P.D. = AB + BD = AB + BC = AC \quad (11.1)$$

$$= 2d \cos \theta \quad (11.2)$$

$$\delta = 2kd \cos \theta = \frac{4\pi d}{\lambda} \cos \theta \quad (11.3)$$

#### 11.1.2 TRANSMITTED AMPLITUDE

$$E_T = E_0 t^2 \left( 1 + r^2 e^{i\delta} + r^4 e^{2i\delta} + r^6 e^{3i\delta} + \dots \right) \text{ - Geometric Progression} \quad (11.4)$$

$$= \sum_0^{\infty} r^{2n} e^{in\delta} = \frac{1}{1 - r^2 e^{i\delta}} \quad (11.5)$$

$$= \frac{E_0 T}{1 - R e^{i\delta}}, \quad T = |t|^2, \quad R = |r|^2 \quad (11.6)$$

#### 11.1.3 TRANSMITTED INTENSITY

$$I_T = |E_T|^2 = \frac{I_0 T^2}{|1 - R e^{i\delta}|^2} \quad (11.7)$$

One can easily show that

$$|1 - R e^{i\delta}|^2 = (1 - R)^2 \left[ 1 + \frac{4R}{(1 - R)^2} \sin^2 \left( \frac{\delta}{2} \right) \right] \quad (11.8)$$

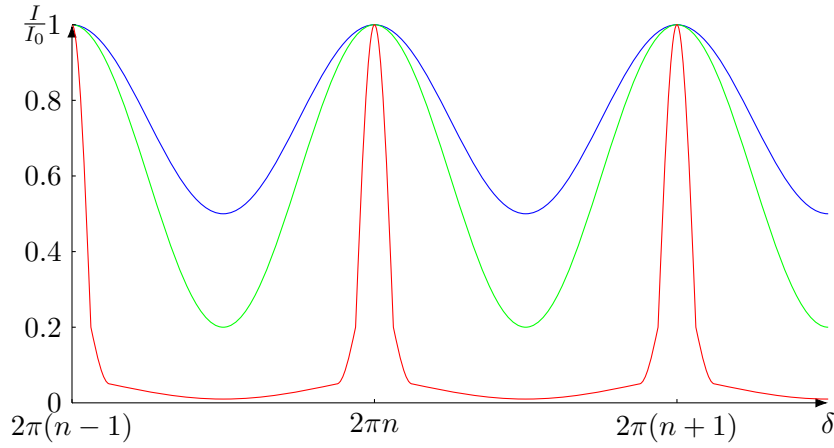


Hence, we have

$$\frac{I_T}{I_0} = \frac{T^2}{(1-R)^2} \frac{1}{1 + \frac{4R}{(1-R)^2} \sin^2 \frac{\delta}{2}} = \frac{T^2}{(1-R)^2} \frac{1}{1 + \frac{4F^2}{\pi^2} \sin^2 \frac{\delta}{2}} \quad (11.9)$$

Where we can define **Finesse**:

$$F = \frac{\pi\sqrt{R}}{1-R} \quad (11.10)$$



#### 11.1.4 POINTS TO NOTE

- For mirrors,  $T + R + A = 1$ , absorption  $A \approx 0$ , so  $T = 1 - R$ .

$$\left. \frac{I_T}{I_0} \right|_{max} = 1 \quad (11.11)$$

So all light transmitted at cavity resonance.

- Phase difference:

$$\delta = \frac{4\pi d}{\lambda} \cos \theta \quad (11.12)$$

Dependent on angle, separation, and wavelength.

- For bright fringes,  $\sin \frac{\delta}{2} = 0$  so  $\delta = 2n\pi$ , or  $2d \cos \theta = n\lambda$ .
- Free spectral range,  $\Delta\nu_{fsr}$ . At maxima,

$$\lambda = \frac{2d \cos \theta}{n} \implies \nu = \frac{c}{\lambda} = \frac{nc}{2d \cos \theta} \quad (11.13)$$

$$\Delta\nu_{fsr} = \nu_{n+1} - \nu_n = \frac{c}{2d \cos \theta} \quad (11.14)$$

Then, at normal incidence,

$$\Delta\nu_{fsr} = \frac{c}{2d} \quad (11.15)$$

- Fringe width. What is the full width at half maximum (FWHM) of fringes? Assume  $\frac{I_T}{I_0} = \frac{1}{2}$  when  $\delta = 2\pi n \pm \delta_{1/2}$ .

$$\frac{1}{1 + \frac{4F^2}{\pi^2} \sin^2\left(\frac{\delta_{1/2}}{2}\right)} = \frac{1}{2} \quad (11.16)$$

$$\sin^2\left(\frac{\delta_{1/2}}{2}\right) = \frac{\pi^2}{4F^2} \quad (11.17)$$

$$\delta_{1/2} = 2 \sin^{-1} \left( \frac{\pi}{2F} \right) \quad (11.18)$$

$$\delta_{1/2} \approx \frac{\pi}{F}, \quad F \gg 1 \quad (11.19)$$

$$\text{FWHM} = 2\delta_{1/2} = \frac{2\pi}{F} \quad (11.20)$$

Separation of adjacent peaks (in radians) =  $2\pi$ . Hence, finesse,

$$F = \frac{\Delta\nu_{fsr}}{\Delta\nu_{FWHM}}. \quad (11.21)$$

So high finesse  $\rightarrow$  sharp fringes, and vice versa. Before,

$$F = \frac{\pi\sqrt{R}}{1-R} \implies \Delta\nu_{FWHM} = \frac{c}{2d} \left( \frac{1-R}{\pi\sqrt{R}} \right). \quad (11.22)$$

### Example:

30cm long etalon with mirrors,  $R = 0.99$ .

$$\Delta\nu_{fsr} = \frac{c}{2d} = 500 \text{ MHz} \quad (11.23)$$

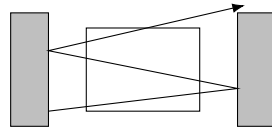
$$F = \frac{\pi\sqrt{R}}{1-R} \approx 313 \quad (11.24)$$

$$\Delta\nu_{FWHM} = \frac{\Delta\nu_{fsr}}{F} = 1.6 \text{ MHz} \quad (11.25)$$

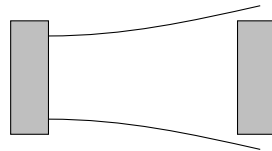
In visible range, say  $\lambda = 550 \text{ nm}$ ,  $\nu = 545 \text{ THz}$ . We can use this etalon to resolve to 1 part in  $10^8$ .

## 11.2 LASER CAVITIES

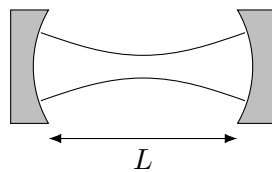
The Fabry-Perot etalon is not a good laser cavity. We need to place a gain medium between mirrors.

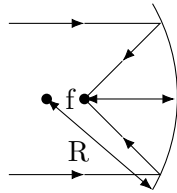


This cavity however is difficult to align. More fundamentally, diffraction will cause losses.



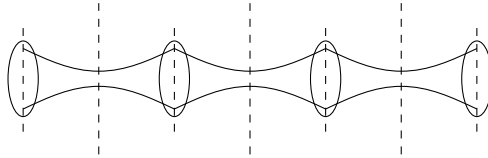
Diffraction leads to large losses. The solution is to use curved mirrors: Each curved mirror acts as a lens,





$$f = \frac{R}{2}. \quad (11.26)$$

where here  $R$  is the radius of curvature. Cavity acts as a sequence of lenses.



Related by Fourier transform, so essentially we want a function that is its own Fourier transform, we will see Gauss-Hermite.

## Lecture 12 Gaussian Beams and Cavity Stability

The electric field distribution needs to reproduce after a round trip, so it needs to be its own Fourier transform, i.e. Gause-Hermite modes.

$$U = \frac{U_0}{q} e^{i(kz - \omega t)} e^{ikr^2/2q} H_l \left( \frac{\sqrt{2}x}{w} \right) H_m \left( \frac{\sqrt{2}y}{w} \right) e^{-i(l+m)\alpha} \quad (12.1)$$

$$q = z - z_0 - iZ_R, \quad r^2 = x^2 + y^2, \quad \tan \alpha = \frac{z}{Z_R} \quad (12.2)$$

Where  $Z_R$  is the Rayleigh range, and  $z_0$  is the location of beam waist. Gaussian beam ( $\text{TEM}_{00}$ ):

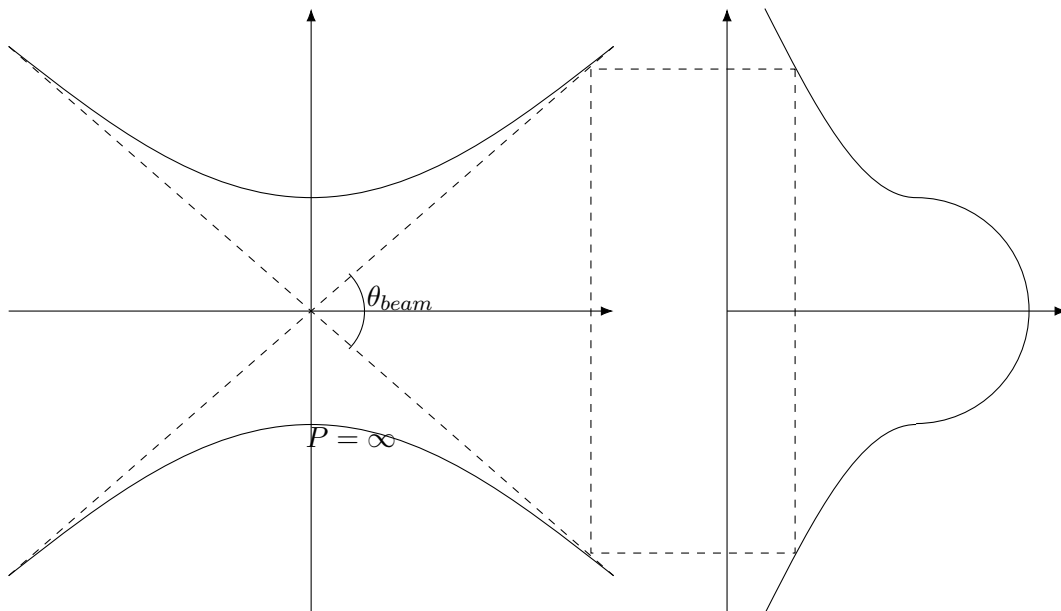
$$U = U_0 e^{i(kz - \omega t)} \frac{e^{ikr^2/2q}}{q} \quad (12.3)$$

### 12.1 PROPAGATION OF GAUSSIAN BEAMS

$$w(z) = w_0 \left( 1 + \left( \frac{z}{z_R} \right)^2 \right)^{1/2} \implies \frac{w(z)^2}{w_0^2} - \frac{z^2}{z_R^2} = 1 \quad (12.4)$$

This is the equation of hyperbola with asymptotes at

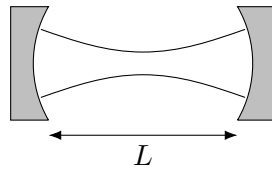
$$w(z) = \pm \frac{w_0 z}{z_R} \quad (12.5)$$



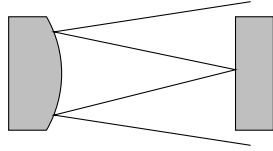
$$\theta_{beam} = \frac{2w_0}{z_R} = \frac{2\lambda}{\pi w_0} = 1.27 \frac{\lambda}{w_0} \quad (12.6)$$

So a Gaussian beam is diffraction limited, as we get a very similar result here as you would for a circular aperture.

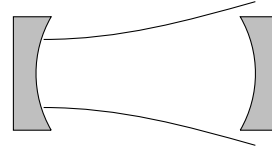
$$I = \frac{2P}{\pi w(z)^2} e^{-2r^2/w(z)^2} \quad (12.7)$$



What values of  $L_c$ ,  $R_1$ , and  $R_2$  lead to a stable solution? Some things won't work.



Concave and flat mirrors

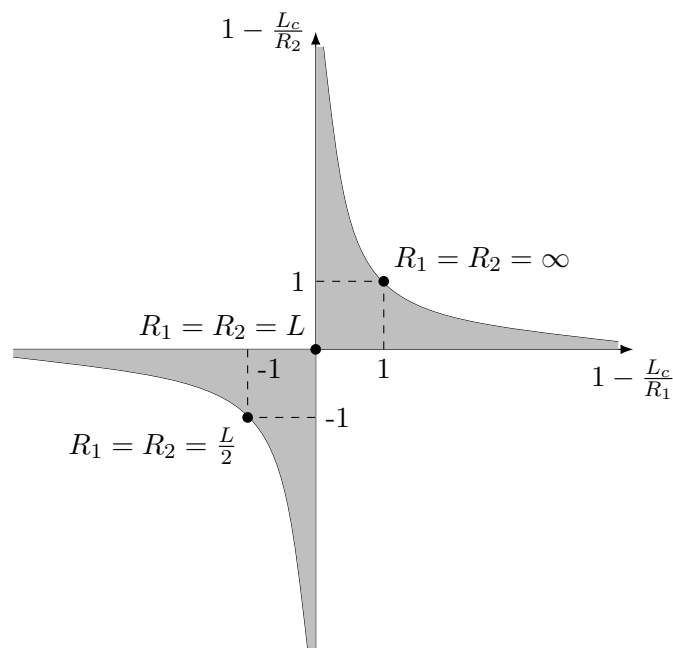


Two curved mirrors too far apart

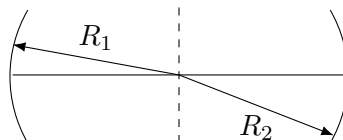
The stability condition is

$$0 < \left(1 - \frac{L_c}{R_1}\right) \left(1 - \frac{L_c}{R_2}\right) < 1. \quad (12.8)$$

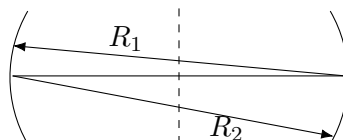
This can often be represented graphically:



1. Symmetric concentric:



2. Symmetric confocal:



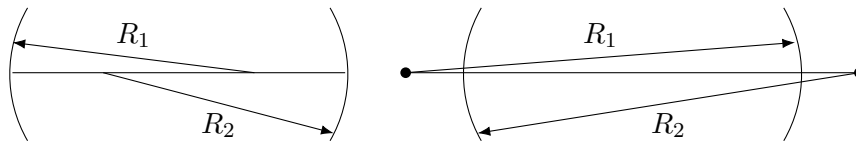
- The difference between concentric and confocal is where the radius of curvature begins - at the centre, or at each end.

3. Plane parallel:



We want to design cavity to be in the shaded regions of the graph, and this requires satisfying two conditions in the inequality:

- $L_c < R_1 + R_2$
- The centres of curvature must **both** be inside or outside the cavity.



### Example:

A laser has mirrors with  $R_1 = 1.0m$ , and  $R_2 = 0.35m$ . What ranges of  $L_c$  are stable?

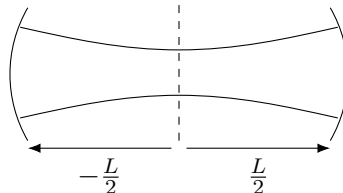
From the second requirement, we know there are two ranges.

- Both inside  $\rightarrow 1.0 < L_c < 1.35$
- Both outside  $\rightarrow 0 < L_c < 0.35$

## 12.2 FINDING THE MODE SHAPE FOR A CAVITY

Simple case, **Symmetric**:

The waist must be at the centre, so  $R_1 = R_2 = R$ .



At each mirror, the radius of curvature of the beam is the same as the mirror. Recall

$$R(z) = \frac{z^2 + z_R^2}{z} \quad (12.9)$$

$$R\left(\frac{L_c}{2}\right) = R = \frac{\frac{L_c^2}{4} + z_R^2}{\frac{L_c}{2}} \quad (12.10)$$

$$z_R^2 = \frac{L_c}{4}(2R - L_c) \equiv \left(\frac{\pi w_0^2}{\lambda}\right)^2 \quad (12.11)$$

$$w_0^2 = \frac{\lambda}{2\pi} [L_c(2R - L_c)]^{1/2} \quad (12.12)$$

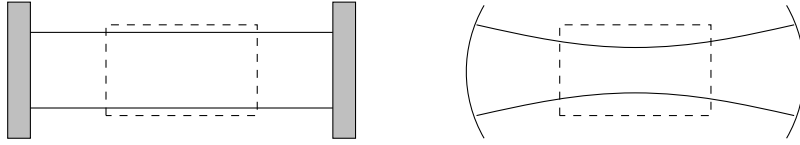
We know the beam waist is inside a symmetric cavity from  $R$  and  $L_c$ .

## 12.3 MODE VOLUME

How do we choose what cavity parameters to use? Try to match mode volume to Gain medium.

$$V \leq \pi w_0^2 L_c \quad (12.13)$$

This assume the beam is not spreading, i.e.  $Z_R \gg L_c$ .



## Lecture 13 Cavity Effects: Single Frequency Operation

Spectral and spatial hole burning occur for homogeneous and inhomogeneous systems  $\rightarrow$  multimode lasing:

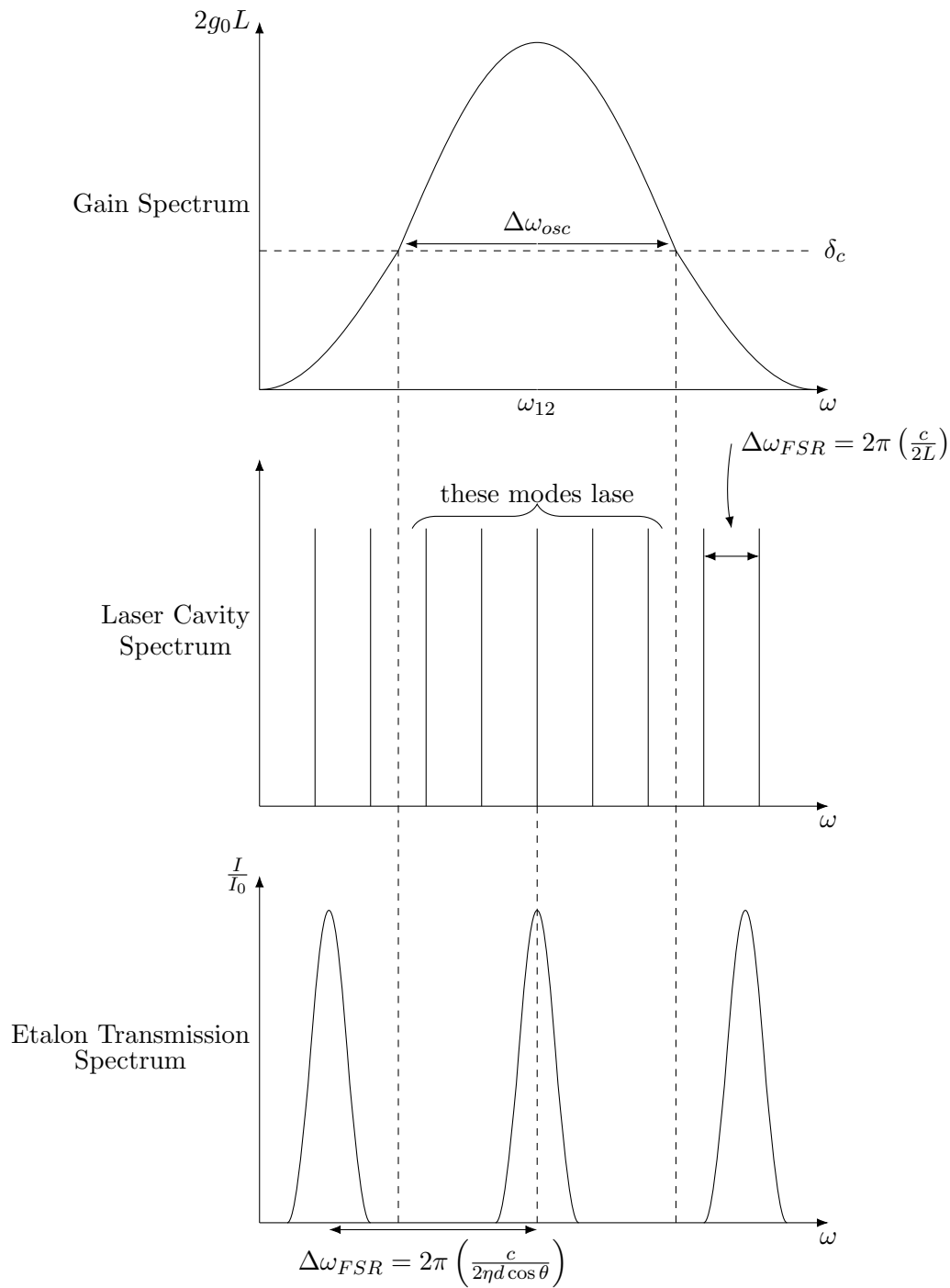
- Homogeneous - **spatial** hole burning
- Inhomogeneous - **spectral** hole burning

This multimode (longitudinal) behaviour can be eliminated but to do so in each case is different.

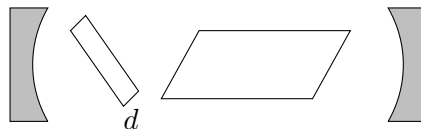
### 13.1 INHOMOGENEOUS - SPECTRAL HOLE BURNING

In a Doppler broadened gain medium, it is likely the laser will oscillate simultaneously on several longitudinal modes if the cavity mode spacing is less than the range of frequencies over which there is net gain.  $\Delta\omega_{osc}$  = range over which the laser can lase on;  $\Delta\omega_{FSR}$  = the mode separation.





A common solution to multimode lasing is to introduce an **intracavity etalon** (Fabry-Perot Etalon), whose thickness is such that only one longitudinal cavity mode lases.



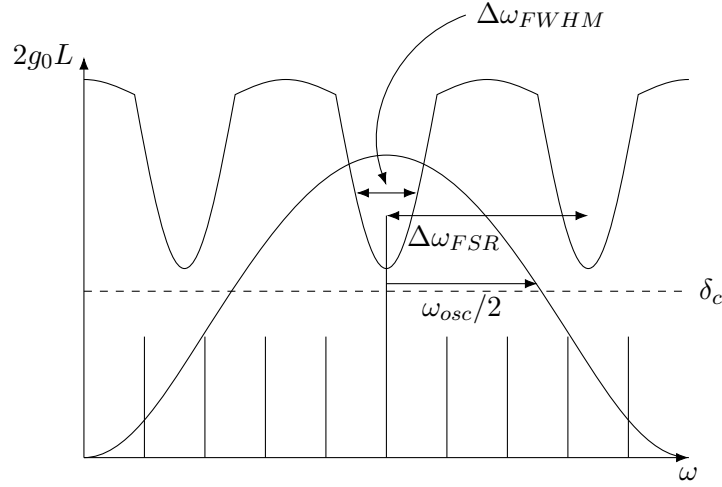
As you decrease  $d$ , the free spectral range decreases.

Etalon is usually solid and mounted at a small angle. This may allow for turning of the etalon transmission, since

$$\Delta\omega_{FSR} = 2\pi \left( \frac{c}{2\eta d \cos \theta} \right) \quad (13.1)$$

This can be a frequency control (moves transition peak around).

There are now two cavities to consider: cavity length,  $L$ ; and etalon length,  $d$ . It is instructive to think of the etalon as altering the round trip lenses; the etalon loss is high when light is reflected from the etalon, but then drops on its resonance. So we end up with a single mode to lase on.



The etalon must satisfy two conditions:

1. Etalon free spectral range must be greater than half the cavity spectral range  $\rightarrow$  to prevent modes in wings from lasing.

$$\Delta\omega_{FSR} = 2\pi \left( \frac{c}{2\eta d \cos \theta} \right) > \frac{\Delta\omega_{osc}}{2} \quad (13.2)$$

2. To select only one mode, less than the mode FSR:

$$\Delta\omega_{FWHM} < 2\pi \left( \frac{c}{2L_c} \right) \quad (13.3)$$

Since

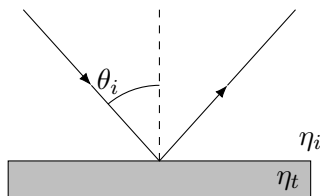
$$\Delta\omega_{FSR} = \frac{2\pi c}{2\eta d \cos \theta}, \quad F = \frac{\Delta\omega_{FSR}}{\Delta\omega_{FWHM}}, \quad (13.4)$$

the above conditions imply conditions on  $d$  and  $R \rightarrow$  etalon thickness and reflectivity.

### 13.2 HOMOGENEOUS - SPATIAL HOLE BURNING

For a homogeneously broadened gain medium, we may get **multimode operation** due to spatial hole burning. We have a standing wave in the cavity of  $\cos^2$  nature which depletes gain in some regions, but leaves unused gain in other regions. This is bad because the laser generally finds a way to use this gain by running on additional modes. Solution: eliminate the standing wave to remove spatial hole burning. We can do this by using a **ring cavity** (a square or ring), in which the laser mode only propagates in one direction using an optical diode.

1. Mirror (M1) transmits the pump light (but reflects laser light) and allows pump beam into cavity. The beam is focused to a similar waist to the cavity mode within the crystal. Pump is  $Ar^+$  or doubled Nd:YAG.
2. Crystal



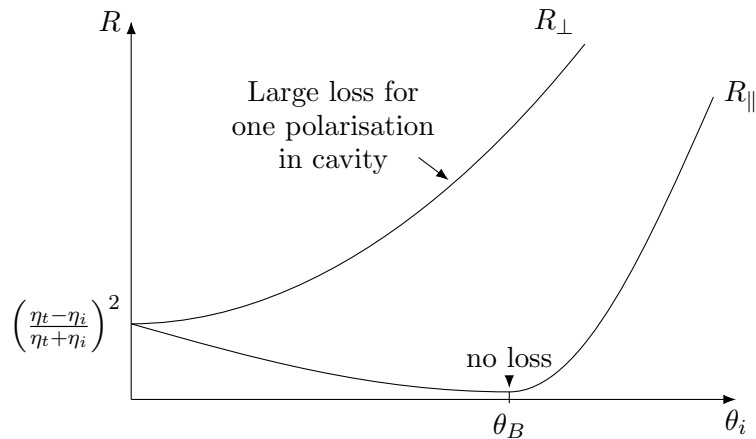
Cut such that it is inserted into the cavity as Brewster's angle. Typically  $\approx 2cm$  long and  $5mm$  diameter. Brewster's angle means we have

zero reflection at the air-crystal boundary for Fresnel coefficients.

one polarisation. Boundary conditions  $\Rightarrow$

$$\tan \theta_B = \frac{\eta_t}{\eta_i} \quad (13.5)$$

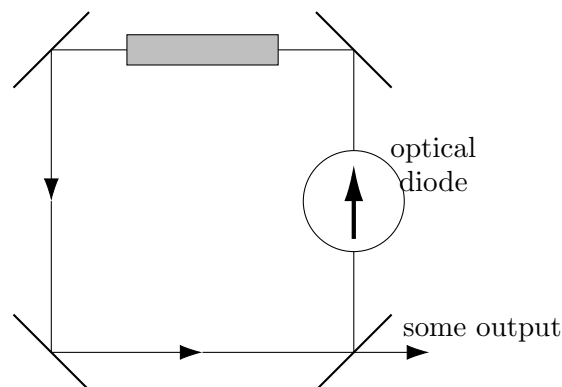
For Ti:Sapphire:  $\eta = 1.76 \Rightarrow \theta_B \approx 60^\circ$ . Note: for one population in the cavity, there is no loss at the crystal; for the other, there is a very large reflection loss.



3. Optical Diode: Consists of 2 elements that rotate the polarisation of the light. One is the standard waveplate,  $\frac{\lambda}{2}$ . Other is a Faraday Rotator; this is a device based on the Faraday effect - for some materials placed in a magnetic field, the light polarisation is rotated. The direction of rotation depends on the direction of light propagation with respect to the direction of the  $\mathbf{B}$ -field.

There is no time reversal symmetry  $\rightarrow$  it imposes directionality on the cavity such that if it is the wrong way, then there is complete loss. So the laser is forced to lase in a single direction; eliminates spatial hole burning and makes it easier to achieve single frequency oscillation.

A simple ring cavity might look something like:

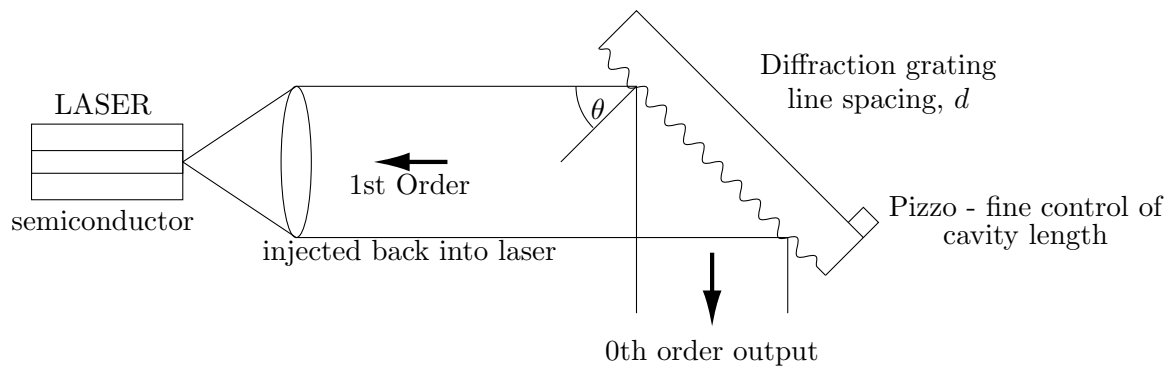


Instead of two mirrors, we now have multiple.

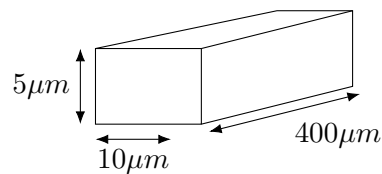
How much is single frequency output, single frequency?

### 13.3 EXTERNAL CAVITY DIODE LASER

Another example of using the elements of a cavity to achieve tunable single frequency.



Semiconductor emits light at recombination across pn junction; lens to focus diffracted light.  
A typical semiconductor looks like:



Usually high refractive index,  $\eta = 3.6$ .

$$\Delta\nu_{FSR} = \frac{c}{2\eta d} \approx 100 \text{ GHz} \quad (13.6)$$

Relectivity of uncoated ends:

$$R = \left( \frac{\eta - 1}{\eta + 1} \right)^2 \approx 0.32 \quad (13.7)$$

I.e. expect 32% reflection  $\rightarrow$  just from interface of semiconductor and air.

We define Finesse:

$$F = \frac{\pi\sqrt{R}}{1-R} = 2.6 \text{ (low)} \quad (13.8)$$

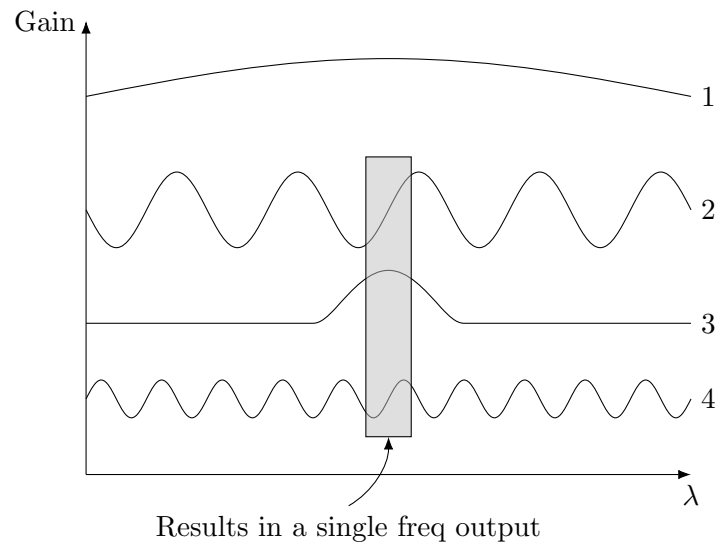
$$\Delta\nu_{FWHM} = \frac{\Delta\nu_{FSR}}{F} \approx 40 \text{ GHz} \quad (13.9)$$

Diffraction grating does two things:

- Selects  $\lambda$  via angle:  $2d \sin \theta = n\lambda$ . For 1800 lines  $mm^{-1}$ ,  $\lambda = 780nm \implies \theta = 45^\circ$ . Selects a range of frequencies by resolving power:

$$\frac{\nu}{\Delta\nu} = N = \text{total no. of lines illuminated} \quad (13.10)$$

- Forms an extended cavity
  1. Broad gain of laser from semiconductor itself.
  2. Internal cavity modes from semiconductor  $\implies$  expect low finesse oscillation from low F cavity.
  3. Diffraction grating feedback - from a secondary cavity as some light is reflected straight back to initial cavity, which results in a longer cavity and extra spectra structure.
  4. External Cavity modes.

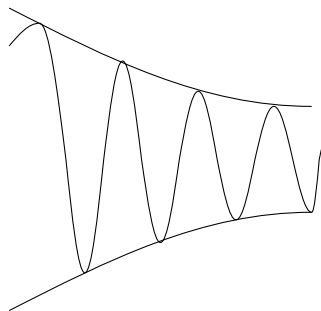


We want to tune all these such that lasing occurs where gain is large enough relative to loss. We can have a very narrow frequency output from these systems but it cannot be infinitely small  $\Rightarrow$  there is a limit on size range.

From Lecture 5, we saw **cavity linewidth**,

$$\Delta\omega_c = \frac{1}{\tau_c} \quad (13.11)$$

It depends on the cavity lifetime - if we had a cavity with some light in it, the light would escape and the field in the cavity would decay away exponentially with some time constant,  $\tau_c$ .



A Fourier transform gives  $\Delta\omega$  spread in frequency. Here we now have an oscillating field that doesn't die away. The  $\tau_c$  is infinitely long lifetime and the gain exactly balances the loss and there is no decay of the field in the cavity. We get a perfect single frequency out of the laser! So what have we missed.. $\Rightarrow$  **Spontaneous Emission.**

Spontaneous Emission can occur instead of an atom being stimulated by the laser field; stimulated emission adds coherently to the cavity field whereas spontaneous emission does not. It has no phase relationship to the cavity field and adds incoherently. It also has an inherently Lorentzian distribution of frequencies. Note: spontaneous emission has little effect on amplitude/intensity of laser output - on a plot of Power vs time, the power would appear very stable and constant, with only small oscillations about the central value.

$$P_{em} = \frac{\hbar\omega_{12}^3}{\pi^2 c^3} (1 + \bar{n}) B_{21}, \quad \bar{n} \geq 10^6 \quad (13.12)$$

Where  $(1 + \bar{n})$  represents the spontaneous and stimulated effects respectively, combined; and  $\bar{n}$  is the number of photons per mode. Remember:

$$A_{21} = \frac{\hbar\omega_{12}^3}{\pi^2 c^3} B_{21} \quad (13.13)$$

However, spontaneous emission causes phase of the electric field to wander randomly - noticeable as the variation in phase leads to some linewidth.

$$\omega \propto \frac{d\phi}{dt} \quad (13.14)$$

A full quantum optics treatment leads to the **Schawlow-Townes formula**:

$$\Delta\omega_{laser} = \frac{\hbar\omega}{2P_{out}} \Delta\omega_c^2 \quad (13.15)$$

This is the 'Quantum limit to laser linewidth' - can't get any better than this.

#### Example: HeNe Laser

1mW - low output laser,  $\lambda = 632.8nm$ . Cavity:  $L_c = 1m$ ,  $\delta_c = 1\%$ .

$$\Delta\omega_c = \frac{c\delta_c}{2L_c} = 2\pi \times 0.24 MHz - \text{Cavity Linewidth} \quad (13.16)$$

$$\Delta\omega_{laser} = \frac{\hbar\omega}{2P_{out}} \Delta\omega_c^2 = 2\pi \times 0.006 MHz - \text{Laser linewidth} \quad (13.17)$$

The laser linewidth is the frequency spread of output.

Such low linewidths are very difficult to achieve as they require phenomenably stable cavities.

### 13.4 PRACTICAL LIMIT

Recall modes:

$$\omega_n = 2\pi \left( \frac{c}{2L_c} \right) n \quad (13.18)$$

$$\frac{\Delta\omega}{\omega} = -\frac{\Delta L_c}{L_c} \quad (13.19)$$

So what limits the laser linewidth? Consider the HeNe example - to reach the fundamental limit:

$$\Delta\omega_{laser} = 2\pi \times 0.006 MHz \implies \frac{\Delta\omega_{laser}}{\omega} \approx 10^{-19} \implies \Delta L \approx 10^{-19} M \quad (13.20)$$

This is a tiny fraction of the size of the atom (better than LIGO!). If we stabilise the cavity to 0.1% of the optical wavelength:

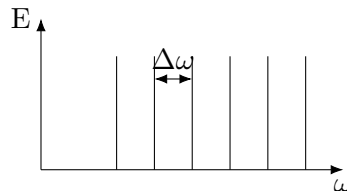
$$\frac{\Delta L}{L} \approx 6 \times 10^{-10} \implies \Delta\omega_{laser} \approx 2\pi \times 0.3 MHz \quad (13.21)$$

## Lecture 14 Pulsed Lasers

We will consider two types of pulsed operation:

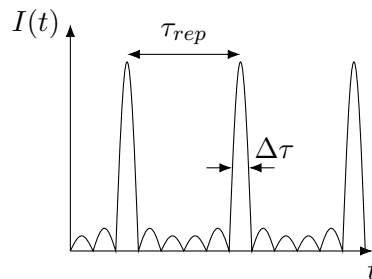
1. Mode Locking
2. Q-Switching

### 14.1 MODE LOCKING



Modes - each with its own frequency and phase. If the phases are 'locked', the intensity output of the laser is

$$I(t) = \frac{I_0 \sin^2 \left( \frac{1}{2} N \Delta \omega t \right)}{\sin^2 \left( \frac{1}{2} \Delta \omega t \right)} \quad (14.1)$$



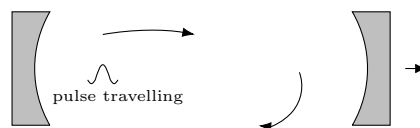
There are  $N - 2$  intermediate peaks, where  $N$  is the number of modes lasing. What is the time separation between these peaks,  $\tau_{rep}$ ?

#### 14.1.1 REPETITION RATE

When numerator and denominator are simultaneously zero, i.e. when  $\frac{1}{2} \Delta \omega t = m\pi$ . Hence,

$$\tau_{rep} = \frac{2\pi}{\Delta \omega} = \frac{2L}{c} \quad (14.2)$$

This is just the cavity round trip time - every time the beam in the cavity hits the output coupler, some beam gets emitted again.



#### 14.1.2 PULSE DURATION

Time separation between peak pulse and first minima,  $\Delta \tau$ . This will occur when numerator is zero, i.e.

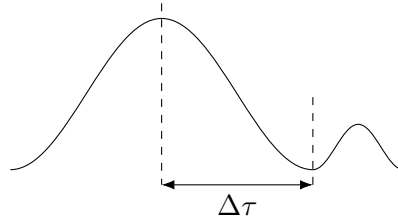
$$\sin \frac{1}{2} N \Delta \omega t = 0 \quad (14.3)$$

$$\frac{1}{2}N\Delta\omega\Delta\tau = \pi \quad (14.4)$$

$$\Delta\tau = \frac{2\pi}{N\Delta\omega} = \frac{\tau_{rep}}{N} \quad (14.5)$$

$$\Delta\tau = \frac{2\pi}{\Delta\omega_{osc}} \approx \frac{1}{\text{Gain Bandwidth}} \quad (14.6)$$

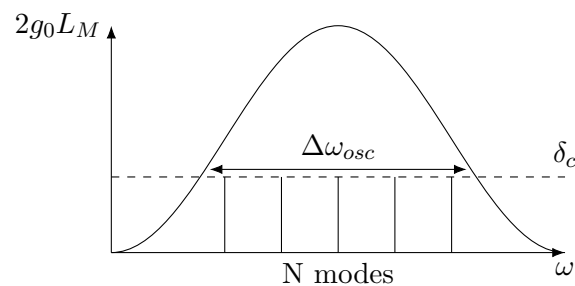
The final approximation is accurate when assuming very large  $N$ .



### 14.1.3 MAXIMUM INTENSITY

$$I(t) = N^2 I_0 \quad (14.7)$$

This can be huge.  $N$  can be  $> 1000$ . You can deduce  $\Delta\omega_{osc}$  from gain and loss:



### 14.1.4 EXAMPLES

► HeNe laser:

$L = 0.5m$ ,  $\lambda = 632.8nm$ , Doppler width -  $\Delta\nu_D = 1.5GHz$ .

$$\tau_{rep} = \frac{2L}{c} \approx 3ns \quad \Delta\tau = \frac{1}{\Delta\nu_D} \approx 0.7ns \quad (14.8)$$

There are four modes a lasing, 3 nanoseconds, 2 lectures left, and a partidge in a pear treeeeeeee.

► Ti:Sapphire:

$L = 2m$ , Gain from  $700nm - 1000nm \rightarrow 120THz$ .

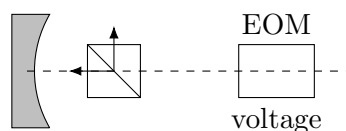
$$\tau_{rep} = \frac{2L}{c} \approx 12ns \quad \Delta\tau = \frac{1}{\Delta\nu} \approx 10fs \quad (14.9)$$

This is roughly equivalent to 1.6 million modes lasing.

Mode locking can be achieved using active or passive methods.

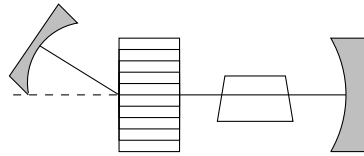
► Active Mode Locking

- ➡ Electro-Optic Modulator: used with a polarisator, applying a voltage can let light through at repetition rate, by rotating polarisation.



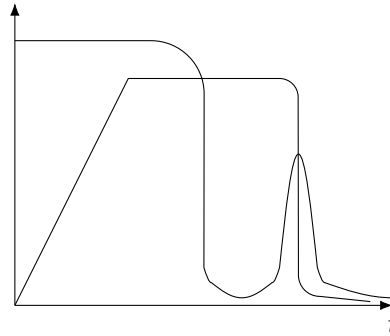


➡ Acousto-Optic Modulator: sound wave in crystal using Bragg diffraction.



## 14.2 Q SWITCHING

Reminder - cavity linewidth  $\Delta\omega_c = \frac{1}{\tau_c}$ , and a Quality factor,  $Q = \frac{\omega}{\Delta\omega_c} = \omega\tau_c$ . The cavity Q factor is switched dynamically to control the build up of gain.



- Initially cavity has high loss (low Q)
- Pumping leads to build up of population in upper level (requires long  $\tau_c$  to stop decay)
- When population inversion = gain reaches steady state, switch to low loss-high Q
- Suddenly there is a cavity and radiation builds up.
  - ➡ Exponential growth leads to development of a single giant pulse which extracts a large fraction of the energy from the gain medium (depletes  $N^*$ )

Historically achieved using rotating mirrors, while modern lasers use the AOM or EOM methods - pulses limited to  $\approx 100ps$ .

## Lecture 15 Nonlinear Optics

We have net non-linear optical effects as **saturation**, **frequency doubling**, and **Keir lensing**; here we consider the physics of optical non-linearities, and how non-linearities are used in laser physics and fundamental research.

Nonlinear optics - *"the modification of the optical properties of a medium by the presence of light."* Typically, only laser light is intense enough to do this.

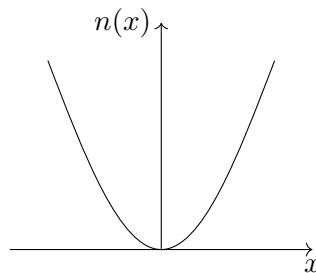
Consider the **dipole moment per unit volumen**, or **polarisation**:

$$P(t) = \epsilon_0 \chi E(t) \quad (15.1)$$

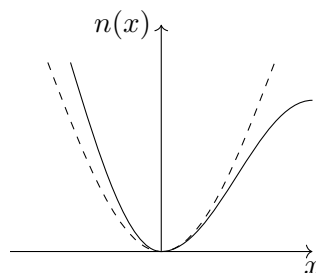
Where our variables are:  $\epsilon_0$  - permittivity of free space;  $E(t)$  - electric field;  $\chi$  - electric susceptibility, which is related to refractive index  $\eta$ , by

$$\eta = \sqrt{1 + \chi}. \quad (15.2)$$

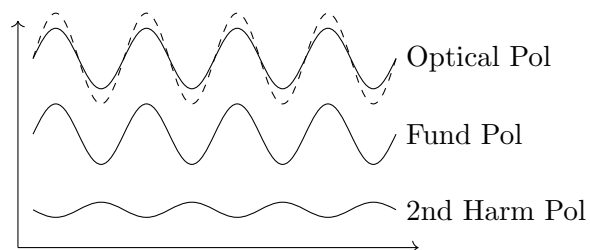
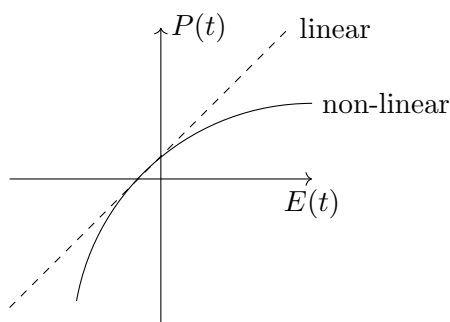
- Electron moving in a parabolic (harmonic) potential:  
Charge radiated with the same frequency as the driving field.



- If the potential is **anharmonic**, the picture changes:  
This is what the potential might look like for a non centro-symmetric material.



For low amplitude driving, the potential looks harmonic - high intensity lasers are needed to observe non-linear effects.



Nonlinear optics result in frequencies which pick up other harmonics, not just the fundamental frequency. For an anharmonic potential, express the polarisation as a power series in field strength:

$$P(t) = \epsilon_0 \left[ \chi^{(1)} E(t) + \chi^{(2)} E^2(t) + \chi^{(3)} E^3(t) + \dots \right] \quad (15.3)$$

$$P(t) = P^{(1)}(t) + P^{(2)}(t) + P^{(3)}(t) + \dots \quad (15.4)$$

The  $(i)$  numbers are just notation differentiating  $\chi^{(i)}$  as the different order susceptibilities. We take these as scalar quantities for simplicity ( $P^{(1)}$  etc). In general,  $\chi$  are frequency dependent but we neglect that here. Also assume the response to driving is instantaneous.

### 15.1 SECOND ORDER EFFECTS



Consider the time dependence of the electric field.

$$E(t) = E_0 e^{-i\omega t} + E_0^* e^{i\omega t} \quad (15.5)$$

Second Order polarisation:

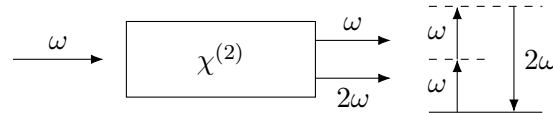
$$P^{(2)}(t) = \epsilon_0 \chi^{(2)} E(t)^2 \quad (15.6)$$

$$= \epsilon_0 \chi^{(2)} [E_0^* E_0 + E_0 E_0^* + E_0^2 e^{-i2\omega t} + E_0^{*2} e^{-2\omega t}] \quad (15.7)$$

$$= 2\epsilon_0 \chi^{(2)} E_0 E_0^* + \epsilon_0 \chi^{(2)} E_0^2 e^{-i2\omega t} + \epsilon_0 \chi^{(2)} E_0^{*2} e^{i2\omega t} \quad (15.8)$$

The first term describes the time-dependent DC field referred to as **optical rectification**; the latter terms which contain frequencies at twice the original frequency.

#### 15.1.1 SECOND HARMONIC GENERATION



- Not all light converted but can be highly efficient.
- For every two photons with angular momentum  $\omega$ , we get one out with  $2\omega$ .
- Note: spin is not conserved here (but not of concern).
- Initial path is shining a laser onto a crystal.
- This is used for **frequency doubling**, e.g. Nd:YAG at  $1064nm \rightarrow 532nm$ .

### 15.2 THIRD ORDER POLARISATION

$$P^{(3)}(t) = \epsilon_0 \chi^{(3)} E(t)^3 \quad (15.9)$$

Consider applied field,

$$E(t) = E_0 \cos(\omega t) \quad (15.10)$$

Using the trig identity:

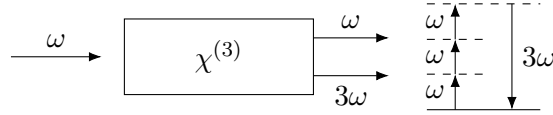
$$\cos^3(\omega t) = \frac{1}{4} \cos(3\omega t) + \frac{3}{4} \cos(\omega t) \quad (15.11)$$

$$\Rightarrow P^{(3)}(t) = \frac{1}{4} \epsilon_0 \chi^{(3)} E_0^3 \cos(3\omega t) + \frac{3}{4} \epsilon_0 \chi^{(3)} E_0^3 \cos(\omega t) \quad (15.12)$$

$$= \chi^{(3)} \epsilon_0 E_0^3 \left[ \frac{1}{4} \cos(3\omega t) + \frac{3}{4} \cos(\omega t) \right] \quad (15.13)$$

Similar to the second order case, we can achieve Third Harmonic Generation.

### 15.2.1 THIRD HARMONIC GENERATION



Sum and difference generation can also be achieved; typically we will have  $\chi^{(2)} \approx 10^{-11}[mV^{-1}]$ ,  $\chi^{(3)} \approx 10^{-22}[m^2V^{-2}]$ .

### 15.3 INTENSITY DEPENDENT REFRACTIVE INDEX

Consider a component of the field at frequency  $\omega$ :

$$P = \epsilon_0 \left( \chi^{(1)} + \frac{3}{4} \chi^{(3)} E_0^2 \right) E_0 \cos(\omega t) \quad (15.14)$$

This looks like a linear susceptibility with an additional non-linear term:

$$\chi = \chi_{linear} + \chi_{non-linear} = \chi^{(1)} + \frac{3}{4} \chi^{(3)} E_0^2 \quad (15.15)$$

and since the refractive index

$$\eta = \sqrt{1 + \chi} \quad (15.16)$$

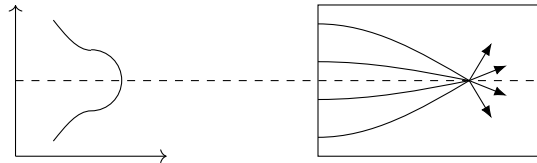
$$= \sqrt{1 + \chi_L + \chi_{NL}}, \quad \eta_0 = \sqrt{1 + \chi_L} \quad (15.17)$$

$$= \eta_0 \sqrt{1 + \frac{\chi_{NL}}{2\eta_0^2}} \quad (15.18)$$

Using a Taylor expansion, since  $\chi_{NL} \ll \eta_0^2$ :

$$\eta = \eta_0 + \frac{3}{8} \frac{\chi^{(3)}}{\eta_0} E_0^2 = \eta_0 + \eta_2 I \quad (15.19)$$

$\eta_2$  is the **Second Order Non-linear Refractive Index**. It is very small for most materials, e.g.  $10^{-20} m^2/W$  for glass. This is often called the optical (or AC) Kerr effect, and leads to **self-focusing**:



- Care is required as it can lead to damage due to 'runaway' effect.
- Used to create ultrafast pulses in mode-locked lasers.
- The intensity profile of the beam creates equivalent to graded refractive index (GRIN) lens.
- Also interesting physics, e.g. optical solitons.

## Part II

# Quantum Information and Computing

## Lecture 1

### 1.1 WHAT IS A QUANTUM COMPUTER?

It's like a classical computer, but we replace 'bits' (0s and 1s) with *qubits*. But what is a qubit? A qubit is a 2-level quantum system, with the quantum levels referred to  $|0\rangle$  and  $|1\rangle$ .

Examples of 2-level systems:

- Spin- $\frac{1}{2}$  particle: 2 states are spin 'up' and spin 'down'.
- Photon: 2 polarisations, e.g. vertical and horizontal or left-circular and right-circular.
- Atoms, ions, molecules with many energy levels and we can select 2 as our qubit states.
- 'Artificial atoms' in solid state, e.g. quantum dots in semiconductors or LC resonator in a superconductor.

List five physical implementations of qubits and their problems:

- Two energy levels in an atom trapped by an optical tweezer - difficult to localise.
- Two energy levels in an ion trapped using electrodes - it's only in one dimension (scaling problem).
- Two energy levels of an impurity ion (spin) in a semi-conductor (e.g. phosphorous in Si) - interacts with surroundings, i.e. Silicon.
- Two energy levels of an LC circuit in a superconductor - very bulky and needs  $10mK$  cryostat.
- Two polarisation modes of a photon - photons don't interact.

## Lecture 2

### 2.1 DiVINCENZO CRITERIA

The DiVincenzo criteria are often used to frame discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of different quantum computing platforms. The five criteria are:

1. Initialisation (**state preparation**) - typically means the ability to prepare identical qubits through cooling and address each qubit independently (localisation).
2. A universal set of quantum **gates** - single- and two-qubit gates at minimum.
3. Measurement (**read out**) of  $|0\rangle$  or  $|1\rangle$ .
4. Low **decoherence** - qubits isolated from environment (external world).
5. **Scalability** - the ability to scale up to say 100 or 1000 or more qubits.

### 2.2 WHY QUANTUM COMPUTING?

1. Moore's law - as transistor size is reduced, we approach atomic dimensions.
2. Energy efficiency - replace dissipative classical gates with reversible quantum gates.
3. Quantum 'advantage' - quantum computers can store more information and compute (certain problems) much faster.

A classical bit has states 0 and 1:  $N$  bits have  $2^N$  states; a qubit has states  $|0\rangle$  and  $|1\rangle$ :  $N$  qubits have  $2^N$  states, i.e. exponential scaling. To see why, we need the **Qubit State Vector**.

$$|\psi\rangle = a|0\rangle + b|1\rangle, \quad (2.1)$$

where  $a$  and  $b$  are complex coefficients that may be time-dependent which obey the normalisation criterion.

Now we want a 2 qubit state vector, where our two qubits are A and B, as a normalised product state:

$$|\Psi\rangle_{AB} = (a|0\rangle_A + b|1\rangle_A) \otimes (c|0\rangle_B + d|1\rangle_B), \quad (2.2)$$

$$= ac|00\rangle + ad|01\rangle + bc|10\rangle + bd|11\rangle. \quad (2.3)$$

In addition to product, we can have **entangled states** that are not factorisable into products.

What about 3 qubits,  $A, B, C$ ?

$$|\Psi\rangle_{ABC} = c_{000}|000\rangle + c_{001}|001\rangle + c_{010}|010\rangle + c_{011}|011\rangle + c_{100}|100\rangle + c_{101}|101\rangle + c_{110}|110\rangle + c_{111}|111\rangle, \quad (2.4)$$

which is  $2^3 = 8$  states. For 4 qubits, we would have  $2^4 = 16$  states; for  $N$  qubits,  $2^N$  states. For 40 qubits,  $2^{40} \approx 10^{12}$ ; for 100 qubits,  $2^{100} \approx 10^{30}$ .

## Lecture 3 Two-level quantum mechanics

Can think of the state vector similar to spin:

$$|\psi\rangle = a|0\rangle + b|1\rangle = a|\uparrow\rangle + b|\downarrow\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix}. \quad (3.1)$$

How does the time-dependence appear?  $|0\rangle$  and  $|1\rangle$  are solutions of a Schrodinger equation,

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |\alpha\rangle = H_0 |\alpha\rangle, \quad (3.2)$$

with energies  $E_0$  and  $E_1$ :

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |0\rangle = E_0 |0\rangle, \quad i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |1\rangle = E_1 |1\rangle, \quad (3.3)$$

$$|\psi(t=0)\rangle = a(0)|0\rangle \implies a(t) = a(0)e^{-iE_0 t/\hbar}, \quad (3.4)$$

$$|\psi\rangle = ae^{-iE_0 t/\hbar}|0\rangle + be^{-iE_1 t/\hbar}|1\rangle, \quad (3.5)$$

$$= e^{-E_0 t/\hbar} (a|0\rangle + be^{-i\omega_0 t}|1\rangle). \quad (3.6)$$

$\omega_0$  is the angular resonant frequency of the qubit,  $\omega_0 = (E_1 - E_0)/\hbar$ . We define

$$G \equiv e^{-iE_0 t/\hbar} - \text{global phase}, \quad R \equiv e^{-i\omega_0 t} - \text{relative phase}. \quad (3.7)$$

$$|a|^2 + |b|^2 = 1 \quad (3.8)$$

$$|\psi\rangle = a|0\rangle + be^{i\phi}|1\rangle, \quad (3.9)$$

So only have two free parameters in the ratio  $\frac{a}{b}$  and the phase  $\phi$ .

$$|\psi\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} \\ e^{i\phi} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a \\ be^{i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.10)$$

$\tan \frac{\theta}{2} = \frac{b}{a}$  and  $\theta$  and  $\phi$  are angles (from  $z$  down and  $x$  round respectively as spherical coordinates. So we can talk about our state vector as a Bloch vector, with all possible states of the qubit are points on the Bloch sphere.

### 3.1 SINGLE-QUBIT GATES

All single qubits are rotations on the Bloch sphere. These rotations are described by unitary operator, e.g.  $U$ ,

$$|\psi_f\rangle = U|\psi_i\rangle, \quad (3.11)$$

where  $U$  is a  $2 \times 2$  matrix. We can write  $U$  as a sum of Pauli spin matrices (and the identity matrix),

$$\hat{\sigma}_x = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \hat{\sigma}_y = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \hat{\sigma}_z = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \hat{\sigma}_0 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (3.12)$$

#### Example: Density operator

The density operator is defined as:

$$\hat{\rho} = |\psi\rangle\langle\psi|. \quad (3.13)$$



We will write this in the form of the Pauli matrices and identity, then as a single matrix:

$$\hat{\rho} = \frac{1}{2} (\hat{\sigma}_0 + u\hat{\sigma}_x + v\hat{\sigma}_y + w\hat{\sigma}_z) \quad (3.14)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1+w & u-iv \\ u+iv & 1-w \end{pmatrix}. \quad (3.15)$$

$u, v, w$  are the expectation values of  $\hat{\sigma}_x, \hat{\sigma}_y, \hat{\sigma}_z$  for the state  $|\psi\rangle$ .

### Example: Short Question #7

Let's take a particular state,

$$|\psi\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|0\rangle + e^{i\phi}|1\rangle). \quad (3.16)$$

What is the value of  $\theta$ ?

$$\cos \frac{\theta}{2} = \sin \frac{\theta}{2} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \implies \frac{\theta}{2} = \frac{\pi}{4} \implies \theta = \frac{\pi}{2}. \quad (3.17)$$

Bloch vector is in equatorial plane. Now calculate expectation values of  $\hat{\sigma}_i$ :

$$\langle \psi | \hat{\sigma}_x | \psi \rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & e^{-i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ e^{i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.18)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} (e^{i\phi} + e^{-i\phi}) = \cos \phi. \quad (3.19)$$

$$\phi = 0 \implies u = +1, \phi = \pi \implies u = -1.$$

$$\langle \psi | \hat{\sigma}_y | \psi \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & e^{-i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ e^{i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.20)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2i} (e^{i\phi} - e^{-i\phi}) = \sin \phi. \quad (3.21)$$

$$\langle \psi | \hat{\sigma}_z | \psi \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & e^{-i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ e^{i\phi} \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.22)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} (1 - 1) = 0. \quad (3.23)$$

So the Bloch vector is in equatorial plain as thought.

## Lecture 4

- Any qubit can be represented by a point on the Bloch sphere.
- We have two parameters: the polar angle,  $\theta$ ; and the azimuthal angle,  $\phi$ .
- The qubit state vector is defined as

$$|\psi\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} \\ e^{i\phi} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix}. \quad (4.1)$$

In Cartesian coordinates, the qubit state is given by the Bloch vector  $\underline{b} = (u, v, w)$ , with  $\sqrt{u^2 + v^2 + w^2} = 1$ . This Cartesian description allows for

$$\sqrt{u^2 + v^2 + w^2} < 1, \quad (4.2)$$

i.e. point inside the sphere. In the real world, we have decoherence where the effect is to shorten the Bloch vector. We have two types of states:

- Pure states:  $\sqrt{u^2 + v^2 + w^2} = 1$ , on the Bloch sphere, represented by the wavefunction  $|\psi\rangle$ .
- Mixed states:  $\sqrt{u^2 + v^2 + w^2} < 1$ , inside the Bloch sphere.

We cannot describe mixed states by a wavefunction, so we introduce the density matrix.

### 4.1 DENSITY MATRIX FOR A PURE STATE OF A QUBIT

We define the density matrix as:

$$\rho = |\psi\rangle\langle\psi| = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} \\ e^{i\phi} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} & e^{-i\phi} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.3)$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} \cos^2 \frac{\theta}{2} & e^{-i\phi} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} \\ e^{i\phi} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \cos \frac{\theta}{2} & \sin^2 \frac{\theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 + \cos \theta & e^{-i\phi} \sin \theta \\ e^{i\phi} \sin \theta & 1 - \cos \theta \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.4)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 + \cos \theta & \sin \theta \cos \phi - i \sin \theta \sin \phi \\ \sin \theta \cos \phi + i \sin \theta \sin \phi & 1 - \cos \theta \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.5)$$

$$\rho = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 + w & u - iv \\ u + iv & 1 - w \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} (\hat{\sigma}_0 + u\hat{\sigma}_x + v\hat{\sigma}_y + w\hat{\sigma}_z). \quad (4.6)$$

What is the expectation value of  $\rho$  for our wavefunction? If we have a normalised wavefunction,  $\langle\psi|\rho|\psi\rangle = \langle\psi|\psi\rangle\langle\psi|\psi\rangle = 1$ .

$$\langle\psi|\rho|\psi\rangle = \frac{1}{2} (\langle\psi|\sigma_0|\psi\rangle + u\langle\psi|\sigma_x|\psi\rangle + \dots) \quad (4.7)$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} (1 + u^2 + v^2 + w^2) = 1 \quad (4.8)$$

For mixed states,  $\sqrt{u^2 + v^2 + w^2} < 1$ , so this will no longer be the case. We will explore that properly later.

### 4.2 QUBIT ROTATIONS

All unitary operations (that conserve the norm  $\langle\psi|\psi\rangle$ ) can be described as rotations of the Bloch vector. A general rotation by an angle  $\Theta$  about a unit vector  $\underline{n} = (n_x, n_y, n_z)$ . We define the Rotation operator,

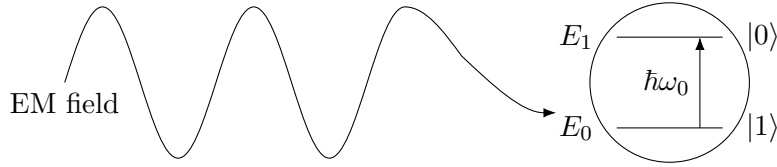
$$\hat{R} = \exp \left( -i \frac{1}{2} \hat{\underline{\sigma}} \cdot \underline{n} \Theta \right) \quad (4.9)$$

$$= \hat{\sigma}_0 \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} - i \hat{\underline{\sigma}} \cdot \underline{n} \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \quad (4.10)$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} - in_z \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} & (-in_x - ny) \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \\ (-in_x + ny) \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} & \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} + in_z \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.11)$$

## Lecture 5

How do we implement rotation on the Bloch sphere? We need to drive the qubit with a resonant (or near-resonant) EM field.



The qubit is like an oscillator we can drive. EM field:

$$\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E}_0 \cos(\phi_L - \omega t), \quad (5.1)$$

where  $\phi_L$  is the laser phase. We could include any phase offset. We assume the qubit is at  $\underline{r} = 0$ , and  $\phi = 0$  at  $t = 0$ , so  $\phi_L = \underline{k} \cdot \underline{r}$ . This then depends on the relative position of the qubit and field. Note that since there is always some  $\delta r$  uncertainty in position of the qubit, this gives rise to a range of phase  $\phi_L$  which can influence the qubit behaviour, e.g. phonons are solid vibrating all the time  $\rightarrow$  phase is changing. Hence inside the sphere for the qubit and not on the sphere. We can try to reduce this by lowering temperatures. Other notation:

$$\Delta = \omega - \omega_0, \quad (5.2)$$

where  $\omega_0$  is the qubit frequency,  $\omega$  the field frequency, and  $\Delta$  is defined as the qubit-field detuning. If the qubit is subject to an external field, the coefficients  $a$  and  $b$  may become functions of time, and we should write the qubit state vector in the form

$$|\psi(t)\rangle = a(t)|0\rangle e^{-iE_0 t/\hbar} + b(t)|1\rangle e^{-iE_1 t/\hbar}. \quad (5.3)$$

The time dependence of the coefficients  $a$  and  $b$  depends on the interaction between the qubit and the EM field. We can use the Schrodinger equation:

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |\psi\rangle = (\mathcal{H}_0 + \mathcal{H}') |\psi\rangle. \quad (5.4)$$

Previously we just had  $\mathcal{H}_0$  which describes the qubit, but now we add  $\mathcal{H}'$  which is the perturbation due to the EM field. Typically, this interaction is of the form

$$\mathcal{H}' = -\underline{\hat{d}} \cdot \underline{\mathcal{E}}, \quad = -d\mathcal{E}_0 \cos(\phi_L - \omega t), \quad (5.5)$$

where  $\underline{\hat{d}} = -e\underline{\hat{r}}$  is the electric dipole operator. and we can also define the Rabi frequency in Hz as

$$\Omega = -\frac{d\mathcal{E}_0}{\hbar}, \quad (5.6)$$

$$\mathcal{H}' = \hbar\Omega \cos(\phi_L - \omega t). \quad (5.7)$$

The Rabi frequency is a measure of the coupling between the field and the qubit. If the field is put on and left on, then the state will oscillate between  $|0\rangle$  and  $|1\rangle$  at the Rabi frequency. Subbing the perturbation, we get two equations for  $a$  and  $b$ :

$$i\dot{a}(t) = \frac{1}{2}\Omega e^{-i\phi_L} e^{i\Delta \cdot t} b, \quad i\dot{b}(t) = \frac{1}{2}\Omega e^{i\phi_L} e^{-i\Delta \cdot t} a. \quad (5.8)$$

These equations have an explicit time dependence. To deal with this, we can go into a rotating frame using a substitution:

$$\tilde{a} = a e^{-it \cdot \Delta/2}, \quad \tilde{b} = b e^{it \cdot \Delta/2}. \quad (5.9)$$

This is so that we spin at the same frequency as the qubit and since we are interested in the relative phase of the field and qubit, this makes sense. The Schrodinger equation for the interaction between a qubit and an oscillatory EM field is

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} |\psi\rangle = \mathcal{H}_{int} |\psi\rangle, \quad (5.10)$$

where for the vector for of the state vector, the **interaction Hamiltonian** is a  $2 \times 2$  matrix:

$$\mathcal{H}_{int} = \frac{\hbar}{2} \begin{pmatrix} \Delta & \Omega e^{-i\phi_L} \\ \Omega e^{i\phi_L} & -\Delta \end{pmatrix}, \quad (5.11)$$

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{a} \\ \tilde{b} \end{pmatrix} = \frac{\hbar}{2} \begin{pmatrix} \Delta & \Omega e^{-i\phi_L} \\ \Omega e^{i\phi_L} & -\Delta \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \tilde{a} \\ \tilde{b} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (5.12)$$

We can also write  $\mathcal{H}_{int}$  in terms of the spin matrices. Note that we have the detuning on the diagonals (like  $\hat{\sigma}_z$ ) and to get the exponential, we need cos and sin terms:

$$\mathcal{H}_{int} = \frac{\hbar}{2} [\Delta \hat{\sigma}_z + \Omega (\cos \phi_L \hat{\sigma}_x + \sin \phi_L \hat{\sigma}_y)], \quad (5.13)$$

where  $\hat{\sigma}_y$  contains the imaginary values necessary for the exponents. Consider zero detuning, i.e.  $\Delta = 0$ ,  $\omega_0 = \omega$ , and  $\phi_L = 0$ :

$$i\dot{a} = \frac{1}{2}\Omega b, \quad i\dot{b} = \frac{1}{2}\Omega a. \quad (5.14)$$

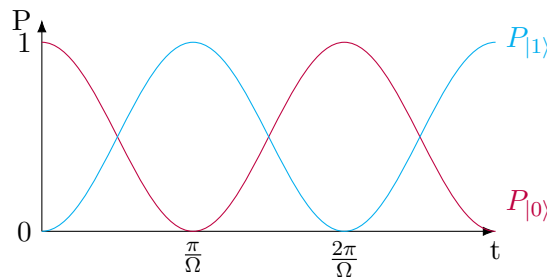
Taking time derivatives again:

$$i\ddot{a} = \frac{1}{2}\Omega \dot{b} = -\frac{i}{4}\Omega a \implies \ddot{a} = -\frac{1}{4}\Omega^2 a. \quad (5.15)$$

For  $a(0) = 1, b(0) = 0$ ,  $a = \cos\left(\frac{\Omega t}{2}\right)$ . Getting probabilities:

$$P_{|0\rangle} = |a|^2 = \cos^2\left(\frac{\Omega t}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{2}(1 + \cos \Omega t), \quad (5.16)$$

$$P_{|1\rangle} = |b|^2 = \sin^2\left(\frac{\Omega t}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{2}(1 - \cos \Omega t), \quad (5.17)$$



$\theta = \frac{\Omega t}{2}$  is the rotation angle. The effect of the resonant EM field is to drive the qubit from  $|0\rangle \rightarrow |1\rangle$  and back at  $\Omega$  frequency.

The qubit follows a line of longitude.  $\phi_L$  determines the direction in the  $xy$  plane about which we rotate, i.e. can change which longitude line we travel around. Derive rotation matrix  $\hat{R}$  from the interaction Hamiltonian:

$$|\psi(t)\rangle = e^{-i\mathcal{H}_{int}t/\hbar} |\psi(0)\rangle = \hat{R} |\psi(0)\rangle. \quad (5.18)$$

To find the rotation matrix, we rewrite the interaction in the form:

$$\hat{R} = e^{-i\mathcal{H}_{int}t/\hbar} = e^{-(i/2)\hat{\sigma}\cdot\hat{n}\Theta}, \quad \Theta = t\sqrt{\Omega^2 + \Delta^2}. \quad (5.19)$$

We had defined  $\mathcal{H}_{int}$  as

$$\mathcal{H}_{int} = \frac{\hbar}{2} [\Delta\hat{\sigma}_z + \Omega (\cos \phi_L \hat{\sigma}_x + \sin \phi_L \hat{\sigma}_y)], \quad (5.20)$$

so using this in  $\hat{R}$  above, we can determine  $\hat{n}$  to be

$$\hat{n} = \frac{1}{\Theta} \begin{pmatrix} \Omega \cos \phi_L & \Omega \sin \phi_L & \Delta \end{pmatrix}. \quad (5.21)$$

## Lecture 6

From normalisation we define  $\Theta = t\sqrt{\Omega^2 + \Delta^2}$ , with the quantity in brackets known as the *effective Rabi frequency*. Substituting the unit vector  $\hat{n}$  above into the rotation matrix:

$$\hat{R} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} - in_z \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} & (-in_x - n_y) \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \\ (-in_x + n_y) \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} & \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} + in_z \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \end{pmatrix} \quad (6.1)$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} - i\frac{\Delta}{\Theta} \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} & -i\frac{\Omega}{\Theta} e^{i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \\ -i\frac{\Omega}{\Theta} e^{-i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} & \cos \frac{\Theta}{2} + i\frac{\Delta}{\Theta} \sin \frac{\Theta}{2} \end{pmatrix}. \quad (6.2)$$

This is known as the **Rabi solution**. We consider the first of 3 special cases:

Case 1:  $\Delta = 0$ , i.e. on resonance. The Rabi solution reduces to

$$\hat{R} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\Omega t}{2} & -ie^{i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Omega t}{2} \\ -ie^{-i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Omega t}{2} & \cos \frac{\Omega t}{2} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.3)$$

which corresponds to a rotation about a vector in the equatorial plane in the Bloch sphere. For  $\Delta = 0$ , we often use notation  $\hat{R}(\theta, \phi_L)$  where  $\theta = \frac{\Omega t}{2}$  is the rotation angle and  $\phi_L$  determines the direction in the  $xy$  plane about which we rotate. For an atom initially in state  $|0\rangle$ , i.e.

$$|\psi(0)\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} = |0\rangle, \quad (6.4)$$

and an interaction of duration  $t$ , the Rabi solution gives

$$|\psi(t)\rangle = \hat{R}|\psi(0)\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\Omega t}{2} \\ -ie^{-i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Omega t}{2} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a(t) \\ b(t) \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.5)$$

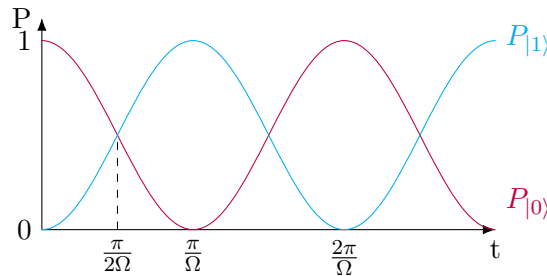
$$a(t) = \cos \frac{\Omega t}{2}, \quad b(t) = -ie^{-i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Omega t}{2}, \quad (6.6)$$

and we get the populations in states  $|0\rangle, |1\rangle$  from

$$P_{|0\rangle} = |a(t)|^2 = \cos^2 \frac{\Omega t}{2}, \quad (6.7)$$

$$P_{|1\rangle} = |b(t)|^2 = \sin^2 \frac{\Omega t}{2}, \quad (6.8)$$

which are the **Rabi oscillations**. The population oscillates between the two states at the Rabi frequency,  $\Omega$ . The Rabi frequency is proportional to the field amplitude, i.e. the square root of the field intensity.



Another interesting case is when there is no interaction ( $\Omega = 0$ ) but the field and the qubit have a different frequency  $\Delta \neq 0$ , i.e. *free evolution rotations*. In this case, the rotation matrix is

$$\hat{R} = \begin{pmatrix} \exp(-i\frac{\Delta t}{2}) & 0 \\ 0 & \exp(i\frac{\Delta t}{2}) \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.9)$$

which corresponds to a rotation about the  $z$ -axis in the Bloch sphere. We use this matrix to describe the free evolution in a *Ramsey interferometer*.

## 6.1 SINGLE QUBIT ROTATIONS

The Rabi solution describes how a near-resonance EM field may be used to drive the qubit from any initial state to any final state. Refer to this operation as a **single-qubit rotation** or **single-qubit gate**. Three useful interactions come from the times you pulse, e.g. as above the  $\frac{\pi}{2}$ -,  $\pi$ -, and  $2\pi$ -pulse. For all except the **Hadamard gate**, we use resonant driving  $\Delta = 0$ .

►  $\frac{\pi}{2}$ -pulse (particularly useful):

For a  $\frac{\pi}{2}$  pulse, we choose the EM field intensity and the pulse duration such that  $\Omega t = \frac{\pi}{2}$ . This corresponds to a rotation of  $90^\circ$  on the Bloch sphere which could take us from pole to equator, i.e. a qubit initially in  $|0\rangle$  or  $|1\rangle$  is excited  $\rightarrow$  an equal superposition on the equator (or start on the equator and rotate to a pole). Substituting  $\Omega t = \frac{\pi}{2}$  in the Rabi solution, we obtain

$$|\psi(t_{\pi/2})\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -ie^{i\phi_L} \\ -ie^{-i\phi_L} & 1 \end{pmatrix} |\psi(0)\rangle. \quad (6.10)$$

To simplify the matrix, we can choose a particular laser phase, e.g.  $\phi_L = \frac{\pi}{2}$ , so:

$$\hat{R}(\theta, \phi_L) = \hat{R}\left(\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.11)$$

and acting on our initial state  $|\psi(0)\rangle = |0\rangle$ ,

$$|\psi(t_{\pi/2})\rangle = \hat{R}\left(\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}\right) |\psi(0)\rangle \quad (6.12)$$

$$= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (6.13)$$

$$= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|0\rangle - |1\rangle), \quad (6.14)$$

which is a superposition between  $|0\rangle$  and  $|1\rangle$ . This corresponds to a rotation around the  $y$  axis, ending up in the  $-x$  direction, i.e. the expectation value  $\langle \hat{\sigma} \rangle = -1$ . If we apply an arbitrary phase  $\phi_L$  to  $|1\rangle$ , we find

$$|1\rangle \rightarrow \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (-ie^{i\phi_L} |0\rangle + |1\rangle). \quad (6.15)$$

For  $\phi_L = 0$ , we would rotate around the  $x$  axis and end up along  $y$ . So the laser phase sets the vector in the  $xy$  plane that we rotate around. If we had started with a superposition, e.g. in Eq (6.14), it carries on to the  $|1\rangle$  state if we apply the same  $\hat{R}(\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2})$ :

$$\hat{R}\left(\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}\right) \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = - \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (6.16)$$

So  $2 \frac{\pi}{2}$  pulses are equivalent to a  $\pi$ -pulse and takes us from  $|0\rangle \rightarrow |1\rangle$ . We shouldn't be concerned about the '-1' as when we take the modulus this global phase disappears.

►  $\pi$ -pulse: For  $\Omega t_\pi = \pi$ ,

$$|\psi(t_\pi)\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -ie^{i\phi_L} \\ -ie^{-i\phi_L} & 0 \end{pmatrix} |\psi(0)\rangle, \quad (6.17)$$

$$|0\rangle \rightarrow -ie^{-i\phi_L} |1\rangle, \quad |1\rangle \rightarrow -ie^{i\phi_L} |0\rangle. \quad (6.18)$$

For  $\phi_L = 0$  and  $\phi_L = \frac{\pi}{2}$  respectively, the rotation matrix is

$$\hat{R}(\pi, 0) = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ -i & 0 \end{pmatrix}; \quad \hat{R}\left(\pi, \frac{\pi}{2}\right) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (6.19)$$

Except for the sign change, this is equivalent to a '*bit-flip*' or *NOT gate*.

►  $2\pi$ -pulse: For  $\Omega t_{2\pi} = 2\pi$ , we have

$$\hat{R}(2\pi, \phi_L) = \begin{pmatrix} -1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} = -\hat{\sigma}_0, \quad (6.20)$$

so it effectively just multiplies the entire wavefunction by  $-1$ , which is a global phase factor (and property of spin- $\frac{1}{2}$  particles) that can be useful in gate operations. In the case of two qubits, if one of them picks up a  $-1$ , then it does become significant as they are entangled and we can now detect this.

## 6.2 HADAMARD GATE

The application of two successive  $\frac{\pi}{2}$ -pulses inverts the state. However, it is also useful to have a pulse that takes us into a superposition and back to the same state. This is a **Hadamard gate** or **Hadamard transform**. The Hadamard operator is

$$\mathcal{H} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.21)$$

and the application of two of these leave the state unchanged, i.e.  $\mathcal{H}^2 = \hat{\sigma}_0$  (as long as nothing happens in-between applying them). There are different ways to implement a Hadamard. One os to set  $\Delta = \Omega$ , in which case the Rabi solution becomes

$$\hat{R} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t - \frac{i}{\sqrt{2}} \sin \frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t & -\frac{i}{\sqrt{2}} e^{i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t \\ -\frac{i}{\sqrt{2}} e^{-i\phi_L} \sin \frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t & \cos \frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t + \frac{i}{\sqrt{2}} \sin \frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.22)$$

and if we set  $\frac{\Omega}{\sqrt{2}}t = \frac{\pi}{2}$  and  $\phi_L = 0$ , we obtain

$$\hat{R} = -\frac{i}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (6.23)$$

so  $\hat{R}$  is the Hadamard up to some global factor which can be ignored. The Hadamard is a rotation around some  $45^\circ$ ; applying twice brings us back to the start.