

# Quantum Physics I Notes

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Lec 1: Superposition Intuition</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Lec 2: Physical Effects explained by Quantum Mechanics but not Classical Mechanics</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Atoms exist . . . . .	2
2.2	Randomness exists . . . . .	2
2.3	Atomic Spectra . . . . .	3
2.4	Photoelectric Effect . . . . .	3
2.4.1	Waves vs Particles . . . . .	3
2.4.2	Light comes in chunks . . . . .	4
2.5	Electron Diffraction . . . . .	4
2.6	Bell's Inequality . . . . .	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Lec 3: The Wave Function</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1	de Broglie Relations . . . . .	5
3.2	Systems in Classical Mechanics vs Quantum Mechanics . . . . .	5
3.3	Quantum Mechanics Postulates . . . . .	5
3.4	The Wavefunction $\Psi(x)$ . . . . .	6
3.5	Normalization of Wavefunctions . . . . .	6
3.6	Plane Waves . . . . .	6
3.7	Superposition of 2 waves . . . . .	7
3.8	Superposition of many waves . . . . .	7
3.8.1	Fourier Transforms for wave functions . . . . .	7
3.9	Wavefunction Examples . . . . .	8
<b>4</b>	<b>Aside: More about Fourier Transforms</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1 Lec 1: Superposition Intuition

- Physical processes in the lab are unpredictable, nondeterminate, random
- Probability forced by observation

**Uncertainty Principle:** For incompatible properties, you cannot have an object w/ defined values for both properties at the same time

- ex. position and momentum
- If one property is determined, the object is in superposition of values for the other property
- Quantum effects negligible for large objects
- Quantum effects only significant for small objects w/ small energies
- ex. atoms, electrons, molecules

# 2 Lec 2: Physical Effects explained by Quantum Mechanics but not Classical Mechanics

1. Atoms exist
2. Randomness exists
3. Atomic Spectra are discrete and have structure
4. Photoelectric effect
5. Electron Diffraction
6. Bell's Poor Inequality

## 2.1 Atoms exist

- $e^-$  orbiting nucleus in Bohr atom is an accelerating charged particle and so emits light (loses energy)
- Thus Bohr atom doesn't work classically because it collapses as the electron spirals around nucleus while releasing energy by radiation

## 2.2 Randomness exists

- Self explanatory

## 2.3 Atomic Spectra

$$\frac{1}{\lambda} = R \cdot \left( \frac{1}{n_1^2} - \frac{1}{n_2^2} \right) \text{ for } n_i \in \mathbb{Z}, n_2 > n_1 \quad (1)$$

- $R$  is the Rydberg constant which depends on the element but is independent of the emission series
- This eqn shows that the atomic spectra are discrete and have structure, but classical mechanics doesn't have discrete energy levels (no energy quantization)

## 2.4 Photoelectric Effect

$V_0$ : Stopping voltage req to stop  $e^-$  from being released by photoelectric effect

$I$ : Current generated in circuit

Prediction	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More intense beam <math>\implies e^-</math> w/ higher KE</li> <li>• <math>V_0 \propto I</math></li> <li>• <math>V_0</math> indep of frequency <math>\nu</math></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same KE regardless of intensity</li> <li>• <math>V_0</math> indep of intensity</li> <li>• <math>V_0 \propto \nu</math></li> </ul>

- Rate of  $e^-$  release depends on intensity
- But for  $\nu < \frac{W}{h}$  (less than critical frequency), no  $e^-$  released regardless of intensity (not enough energy)
- Einstein's explanation: Light comes in chunks with defined energy  $E = h\nu$

$$KE = h\nu - W \quad (2)$$

where  $W$  is the work required to remove the  $e^-$

- Recall  $E = pc$  and  $c = \lambda\nu$

$$\therefore p = \frac{h}{\lambda} \quad (3)$$

- This implies that the discrete packets of light w/ wavelength  $\lambda$  have momentum  $p$  by above eqn (wave-particle duality)

### 2.4.1 Waves vs Particles

- Waves can interfere with themselves (Young's Double Slit)
- Waves are **not localized**; particles are
- An interference pattern (wave) implies that **amplitudes** but intensities do not

- Classical particles can pass through either top or bottom slit
- Passing classical particles through double slit leads to 2 peaks near the 2 openings
- $e^-$  can interfere with themselves (wave behaviour) in double slit
- Each  $e^-$  takes superposition of the possible paths; We don't know if it took the top or bottom path
- An  $e^-$  is neither strictly a particle nor strictly a wave

### 2.4.2 Light comes in chunks

- Light has an energy and momentum

$$E = h\nu \quad (4)$$

$$p = \frac{h}{\lambda} \quad (5)$$

## 2.5 Electron Diffraction

- Bragg's Law

$$\frac{1}{\lambda} = \frac{n}{2d \sin \theta} \quad (6)$$

$$p = \frac{h}{\lambda} \quad (7)$$

## 2.6 Bell's Inequality

- For 3 binary properties A, B, C, **Bell's Inequality** states

$$N(A, \overline{B}) + N(B, \overline{C}) \geq N(A, \overline{C}) \quad (8)$$

where  $N(X, Y)$  is the number of objects with properties X and Y

- $e^-$  have 3 binary properties (angular momentum about x-, y-, and z-axes)
- However, it violates Bell's Inequality

$$N(\uparrow_0, \downarrow_\theta) + N(\uparrow_\theta, \downarrow_{2\theta}) \leq N(\uparrow_0, \downarrow_{2\theta}) \quad (9)$$

- Can't add probabilities classically with basic addition

## 3 Lec 3: The Wave Function

### 3.1 de Broglie Relations

$$\begin{aligned} E &\sim \hbar & E &= h\nu \\ p &= \hbar k & p &= \frac{h}{\lambda} \end{aligned} \tag{10}$$

$$\hbar = \frac{h}{2\pi} \quad \omega = 2\pi\nu \quad k = \frac{2\pi}{\lambda} \tag{11}$$

$\omega$  : angular frequency [rad/s]

$k$  : wavenumber [rad/m]

### 3.2 Systems in Classical Mechanics vs Quantum Mechanics

- In **Classical Mechanics**, an object's state is fully defined by its position and momentum vectors  $\{\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p}\}$
- All other properties can be found using  $\mathbf{x}$  and  $\mathbf{p}$
- ex. energy  $E(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p})$  and angular momentum  $\mathbf{L}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{p})$
- But in **Quantum Mechanics** (real life), there is uncertainty (Uncertainty Principle)

$$\Delta \mathbf{x} \Delta \mathbf{p} \gtrsim \hbar \tag{12}$$

### 3.3 Quantum Mechanics Postulates

1. The state of a quantum object is **completely** specified by a wavefunction  $\Psi(x)$
2.  $\mathbb{P} = |\Psi(x)|^2$  determines the probability density that the object in state  $\Psi(x)$  will be found at  $x$ 
  - i.e. probability that upon measurement, the object is found at position  $x$
3. Given two possible wavefunctions (or states) of a quantum system corresponding to distinct wavefunctions  $\Psi_1(x)$  and  $\Psi_2(x)$ , the system can **also** be in a **superposition** of  $\Psi_1(x)$  and  $\Psi_2(x)$

$$\Psi(x) = \alpha \Psi_1(x) + \beta \Psi_2(x) \quad \alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{C} \tag{13}$$

such that  $\Psi(x)$  is properly normalized

- Wavefunction can be expressed as a linear combination of 2 possible wavefunctions (superposition)
- i.e. superposition of 2 quantum states results in another valid quantum state

### 3.4 The Wavefunction $\Psi(x)$

- Wavefunction  $\Psi(x)$  is a complex function and **must** be single valued and continuous
- The probability  $|\Psi(x)|^2$  is always real and nonnegative
- Probability density means

$$\mathbb{P}(x, x + dx) = \mathbb{P}(x)dx = |\Psi(x)|^2 dx \quad (14)$$

- Units of wavefunction are  $[\Psi(x)] = \frac{1}{\sqrt{L}}$
- Recall that for complex numbers,

$$|\beta|^2 = \beta^* \beta \quad (15)$$

$$|e^{i\alpha}|^2 = e^{i\alpha} e^{-i\alpha} = 1 \quad (16)$$

### 3.5 Normalization of Wavefunctions

- Probability must be **normalized** such that the sum of probabilities is 1 over an interval

$$\int_{All} \mathbb{P}(x)dx = \int_{All} |\Psi(x)|^2 dx = 1 \quad (17)$$

- If wave function is not normalized, then use

$$\mathbb{P}(x) = \frac{|\Psi(x)|^2}{\int_{All} |\Psi(x)|^2 dx} \quad (18)$$

### 3.6 Plane Waves

- de Broglie says a particle with energy  $E \sim \hbar\omega$  and momentum  $p = \hbar k$  has a plane wave wavefunction
- General plane wave:

$$\Psi(x) = e^{i(kx - \omega t)} \quad (19)$$

- Note: plane wave is a complex function (need to remember that there is an imaginary component)
- But not all wavefunctions are plane waves; some are well localized

### 3.7 Superposition of 2 waves

- Using the rule  $|\beta|^2 = \beta^* \beta$ , the probability with superposition is:

$$\mathbb{P} = |\alpha\Psi_1 + \beta\Psi_2|^2 = (\alpha^*\Psi_1^* + \beta^*\Psi_2^*)(\alpha\Psi_1 + \beta\Psi_2) \quad (20)$$

$$= |\alpha|^2|\Psi_1|^2 + |\beta|^2|\Psi_2|^2 + \alpha^*\Psi_1^*\beta\Psi_2 + \alpha\Psi_1\beta^*\Psi_2^* \quad (21)$$

$$= \mathbb{P}_1 + \mathbb{P}_2 + \alpha^*\Psi_1^*\beta\Psi_2 + \alpha\Psi_1\beta^*\Psi_2^* \quad (22)$$

where  $\alpha^*\Psi_1^*\beta\Psi_2 + \alpha\Psi_1\beta^*\Psi_2^*$  are the **interference terms**

- The first term in the interference terms is the conjugate of the 2<sup>nd</sup> term
- Therefore the interference term is real but not necessarily nonnegative, so the overall probability will still be real
- Note: Superposition principle and interpretation of probability as  $|\Psi(x)|^2$  gives correction to classical probability (the interference terms)
- Shows that probabilities don't add as they do classically in Bell's Inequality (i.e. probability of both is **not** the sum of the individual probabilities)

**Wavefunctions add; probabilities do not**

### 3.8 Superposition of many waves

- As you add more plane waves to a superposition, the wavefunction and probability distribution become more localized (i.e.  $\Delta x$  decreases)
- For lots of plane waves, get a very narrow probability distribution and wavefunction
- There will be very few peaks, so particle is very likely to be found at those positions:  $\Delta x \sim \text{small}$
- But that requires a superposition of many momenta (each plane wave has a different  $\lambda$  and  $p = \frac{h}{\lambda}$ ) so  $\Delta p \sim \text{large}$  as required by the Uncertainty Principle

#### 3.8.1 Fourier Transforms for wave functions

**Theorem 1.** *Any well behaved  $f(x)$  can be built by superimposing enough plane waves  $e^{ikx}$*

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \tilde{f}(x) e^{ikx} dk \quad (23)$$

where  $\tilde{f}(x)$  gives the amplitude of the plane wave with wavelength  $\lambda = \frac{2\pi}{k}$

- Every mode has a definite wavelength  $\lambda = \frac{2\pi}{k}$

- Note: Fourier Transform coefficients of  $x$  are all equivalent
- Can use Inverse Fourier Transform to get  $\tilde{f}(x)$  from  $f(x)$

$$\tilde{f}(k) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-ikx} dx \quad (24)$$

- Physics Version: any  $\Psi(x)$  can be expressed as the superposition of states with definite momentum  $p = \hbar k$

$$\Psi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \tilde{\Psi}(x) e^{ikx} dk \quad (25)$$

- The Fourier Transform associates a magnitude and phase for each possible wave vector
- Note: if the wavefunction is well localized to a position, the Fourier Transform is not well localized ( $\therefore$  not having definite momentum)
- Similarly, if there is definite momentum, position is not well defined, but the Fourier Transform will have a single peak (position very localized)

### 3.9 Wavefunction Examples

## 4 Aside: More about Fourier Transforms