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Inventor(s)	Xie; Ruilong et al.

Work function metal patterning for nanosheet CFETs

Abstract

Semiconductor devices, and methods of forming the same, include forming a stack of channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region. The upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer. A first work function metal layer is formed on the channel layers in the lower device region. A height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer. A second work function metal layer is formed on the channel layers in the upper device region.

Inventors: Xie; Ruilong (Niskayuna, NY), Zhang; Chen (Santa Clara, CA), Cheng; Kangguo (Schenectady, NY), Li; Juntao (Cohoes, NY)

Applicant: INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION (Armonk, NY)

Family ID: 1000008765374

Assignee: INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION (Armonk, NY)

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Primary Examiner: Trinh; Michael M

Attorney, Agent or Firm: Tutunjian & Bitetto, P.C.

Background/Summary

BACKGROUND

(1) The present invention generally relates to semiconductor device fabrication, and, more particularly, to the fabrication of nanosheet complementary field effect transistors (CFETs) with improved work function metal patterning.

(2) As device size continues to decrease, and substantial improvements to photolithographic technologies become more difficult to obtain, opportunities for increasing device density become more rare. One approach is to stack devices, in particular in cases where the stacked devices are functionally related. For example, CFETs can use devices of two different polarities, for example an n-type FET and a p-type FET, to handle a single input signal. If the input signal is high, one of the devices is activated, but if the input signal is low, the other of the devices is activated.

(3) However, it is difficult to form stacked CFETs. Different FET structures may be stacked, but all suffer from challenges, for example having poor power efficiency, poor structural stability, and/or difficult fabrication processes.

SUMMARY

(4) A method of forming a semiconductor device includes forming a stack of channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region. The upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer. A first work function metal layer is formed on the channel layers in the lower device region. A height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer. A second work function metal layer is formed on the channel layers in the upper device region.

(5) A method of forming a semiconductor device includes forming a stack of nanosheet semiconductor channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region. The upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer. Lower source/drain regions, having a first conductivity type, are formed on sidewalls of the channel layers in the lower device region. Upper source/drain regions, having a second conductivity type that is different from the first conductivity type, are formed on sidewalls of the channel layers in the upper device region. A first work function metal layer, having the first conductivity type, is formed on the channel layers in the lower device region. A height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer. A second work function metal layer, having the second conductivity type, is formed on the channel layers in the upper device region.

(6) A semiconductor device includes a stack of channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region. The upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer. A first work function metal layer is formed on the channel layers in the lower device region. A height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer. A second work function metal layer is formed on the channel layers in the upper device region.

(7) These and other features and advantages will become apparent from the following detailed

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

(1) The following description will provide details of preferred embodiments with reference to the following figures wherein:

(2) FIG. 1 is a top-down view of a fin and dummy gates for the formation of nanosheet complementary field effect transistors (CFETs) with improved work function metal patterning, that defines cross-sectional planes in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(3) FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing a stack of layers of channel material and two different sacrificial materials, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(4) FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the patterning of a fin from the stack of layers, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(5) FIG. 4 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of dummy gates over the fin, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(6) FIG. 5 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the removal of one set of sacrificial layers to form gaps in the fin, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(7) FIG. 6 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of a dielectric spacer layer in the gaps to separate an upper device region from a lower device region, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(8) FIG. 7 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the anisotropic etch of the fin in areas that are not covered by the dummy gates, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(9) FIG. 8 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of a lower source/drain region, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(10) FIG. 9 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of an isolation layer over the lower source/drain region, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(11) FIG. 10 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of an upper source/drain region, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(12) FIG. 11 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the removal of the dummy gates, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(13) FIG. 12 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of a gate dielectric layer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(14) FIG. 13 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing formation of a first work function metal layer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(15) FIG. 14 is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with

improved work function metal patterning, showing the etch back of the first work function metal layer in the upper device region, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(16) FIG. **15** is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nano sheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing a blocking layer being reformed around the lower device region and the removal of remaining portions of the first work function metal layer from the upper device region, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(17) FIG. **16** is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of a second work function metal layer, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(18) FIG. **17** is a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the formation of nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, showing the formation of conductive contacts, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

(19) FIG. **18** is a block/flow diagram of a method of forming nanosheet CFETs with improved work function metal patterning, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

(20) Embodiments of the present invention provide nanosheet complementary field effect transistors (CFETs) that have improved work function metal patterning. Nanosheet devices are selected herein to provide good power efficiency and structural stability. However, the fabrication of stacked nanosheet CFETs is challenging, due to the difficulty of selectively masking the devices. The close proximity of the upper device to the lower device can cause the masking material to pinch off and incompletely fill the space between the two devices. Then, when the upper device is processed, the incomplete mask can result in damage to the lower device, decreasing device yield. This is due to the relatively large width of nanosheet channels, which makes it difficult for the mask material to fill in completely.

(21) The present embodiments make use of a sacrificial layer between the upper device and the lower device. This sacrificial layer creates a greater distance between the lowest channel layer of the upper device and the highest channel layer of the lower device. The sacrificial layer can then be used to help completely mask the lower device while the upper device is being processed, for example for the deposition of a different work function metal.

(22) Referring now to the drawings in which like numerals represent the same or similar elements and initially to FIG. **1**, a top-down view of a device is shown. This view establishes three different cross-sectional planes: X indicates a cross-sectional view that cuts transversely across a fin **102**, and longitudinally along a gate structure **104**, Y indicates a cross-sectional view that cuts longitudinally along the fin **102**, and transversely across the gate structure **104**, and Z indicates a cross-sectional view that cuts transversely across the fin **102**, between adjacent gate structures **104**. The following figures will show both views, side by side, to illustrate a step-by-step process for forming nanosheet CFETs according to the present embodiments. It should be understood that the present figures are not drawn to a realistic scale, nor are they intended to represent a consistent scale between the figures.

(23) Referring now to FIG. **2**, a cross-sectional view of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs is shown. A stack of semiconductor layers is formed on a semiconductor substrate **202**. The semiconductor layers include channel layers **204**, first sacrificial layers **206**, and second sacrificial layers **208**. It is specifically contemplated that each successive layer may be epitaxially grown from the previous layer, but it should be understood that other methods of deposition may be employed instead. A hardmask layer **211** is formed over the stack from any appropriate hardmask material, such as silicon nitride. The layers define a lower device region **210** and an upper device region **220**, formed from respective sets of channel layers **204**.

(24) The semiconductor substrate **102** may be a bulk-semiconductor substrate. In one example, the bulk-semiconductor substrate may be a silicon-containing material. Illustrative examples of silicon-containing materials suitable for the bulk-semiconductor substrate include, but are not limited to,

silicon, silicon germanium, silicon germanium carbide, silicon carbide, polysilicon, epitaxial silicon, amorphous silicon, and multi-layers thereof. Although silicon is the predominantly used semiconductor material in wafer fabrication, alternative semiconductor materials can be employed, such as, but not limited to, germanium, gallium arsenide, gallium nitride, cadmium telluride, and zinc selenide. Although not depicted in the present figures, the semiconductor substrate **102** may also be a semiconductor on insulator (SOI) substrate.

(25) As noted above, the semiconductor layers may be epitaxially grown from the semiconductor substrate. The terms “epitaxial growth” means the growth of a semiconductor material on a deposition surface of a semiconductor material, in which the semiconductor material being grown has substantially the same crystalline characteristics as the semiconductor material of the deposition surface. The term “epitaxial material” denotes a material that is formed using epitaxial growth. In some embodiments, when the chemical reactants are controlled and the system parameters set correctly, the depositing atoms arrive at the deposition surface with sufficient energy to move around on the surface and orient themselves to the crystal arrangement of the atoms of the deposition surface. Thus, in some examples, an epitaxial film deposited on a {100} crystal surface will take on a {100} orientation.

(26) In embodiments where the semiconductor substrate **102** is formed from silicon, the semiconductor layers can be formed from silicon or silicon germanium, which can be selectively etched with respect to one another, and which have compatible crystal structures. In some embodiments, the channel layers **204** can be formed from silicon, the first sacrificial layers **206** can be formed from silicon germanium at a first germanium concentration, and the second sacrificial layers **208** can be formed from silicon germanium at a second germanium concentration. In some embodiments, the first sacrificial layers **206** may have a germanium concentration of about 35%, and the second sacrificial layers **208** may have a germanium concentration of about 65%, but it should be understood that these concentrations are purely exemplary and should not be considered to be limiting.

(27) The germanium concentration in silicon germanium controls how rapidly the layer can be removed under certain etches, making these layers selectively etchable with respect to one another. As used herein, the term “selective” in reference to a material removal process denotes that the rate of material removal for a first material is greater than the rate of removal for at least another material of the structure to which the material removal process is being applied.

(28) Referring now to FIG. 3, a cross-sectional view of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs is shown. The mask layer **211** is patterned using any appropriate process, for example using a photolithographic process or sidewall image transfer. One or more anisotropic etches are then used to etch down into the stack of semiconductor layers, stopping at the semiconductor substrate **202**, to form a fin **302** of stacked semiconductor layers. The anisotropic etches can include, for example, reactive ion etching (RIE). After formation of the fins **302**, the regions around the fins can be replaced with shallow trench isolation (STI) structures **304**. The STI structures can be formed by, e.g., etching trenches into the semiconductor substrate **202**, followed by deposition of an STI material, such as a silicon oxide. After that, the hardmask layer **211** can then be selectively etched away, using any appropriate selective etch. It is specifically contemplated that the fin **302** can be patterned to form nanosheets from the stacked semiconductor layers. As used herein, the term “nanosheet” is used to denote a structure that has a width-to-height ratio on the X cross-section that is at least 2:1.

(29) RIE is a form of plasma etching in which during etching the surface to be etched is placed on a radio-frequency powered electrode. Moreover, during RIE the surface to be etched takes on a potential that accelerates the etching species extracted from plasma toward the surface, in which the chemical etching reaction is taking place in the direction normal to the surface. Other examples of anisotropic etching that can be used at this point of the present invention include ion beam etching, plasma etching or laser ablation.

(30) Referring now to FIG. 4, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. Dummy gates **402** are formed over the fin **302**. A layer of dummy gate material, such as a thin layer of oxide followed by polycrystalline silicon, is deposited over the fins **302**. A hardmask **404** is then formed by any appropriate process, such as a photolithographic process or a sidewall image transfer process. The dummy gates **402** can then be formed by selectively and anisotropically etching the dummy gate material around the hardmask **404**.

(31) Referring now to FIG. 5, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. The second sacrificial layers **208** are selectively etched away, leaving the channel layers **204** and the first sacrificial layers **206**. The resulting gaps **502** separate the lower device region **210** from the upper device region **220**. In embodiments that use silicon germanium for the sacrificial layers, the higher concentration in the second sacrificial layers **208** results in the etch of these layers proceeding much faster than for the first sacrificial layers **206** and the channel layers **204**.

(32) Referring now to FIG. 6, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. Spacer material is conformally deposited to fill the gaps **502** to form middle spacer **602**, bottom spacer **604**, and dummy gate spacers **606**. The spacer material can be masked and anisotropically etched, as appropriate, to preserve the dummy gate spacers **606** while removing the spacer material from the sidewalls of the fins **302**. It is specifically contemplated that the spacer material can be distinct from the material of the hardmasks **404**, and that the two materials may be selectively etchable with respect to one another. For example, one material may be formed from silicon nitride, while the other may be formed from SiOCN.

(33) Referring now to FIG. 7, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. The fins **302** are etched away in the regions between the dummy gates, leaving the bottom spacer **604** in that region intact. A series of selective anisotropic etches can be used to remove the different layers. The first sacrificial layers **206** can be recessed relative to the channel layers **204**, and inner spacers **702** can be formed in the recesses.

(34) The formation of inner spacers **702** can be performed in a variety of ways. In some embodiments, a selective etch can be used to recess the first sacrificial layers **206**. A layer of dielectric material, such as silicon nitride, can then be conformally deposited to fill the recesses, and material outside the protection of the recesses can be isotropically etched away. In other embodiments, a condensation process can be used to selectively oxidize the end surfaces of the first sacrificial layers **206**, which draws silicon out of silicon germanium to form silicon dioxide.

(35) Referring now to FIG. 8, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. Lower source/drain regions **802**, for the lower device **210**, are epitaxially grown from sidewalls of the channel layers **204**. After the epitaxial material is grown, any epitaxial material formed over top nanosheets is etched back, below the height of the middle spacer **602**. Additionally, the epitaxial material can be masked and etched down to the underlying STI **304** for the portion where it is not needed.

(36) The lower source/drain regions **802** can be doped in situ during epitaxial growth, or by an ion implantation process. The dopants used for the lower source/drain regions **802** will belong to a first dopant conductivity type. As used herein, the term “conductivity type” denotes a dopant region being p-type or n-type. As used herein, “p-type” refers to the addition of impurities to an intrinsic semiconductor that creates deficiencies of valence electrons. In a silicon-containing substrate, examples of p-type dopants, i.e., impurities, include but are not limited to: boron, aluminum, gallium and indium. As used herein, “n-type” refers to the addition of impurities that contributes free electrons to an intrinsic semiconductor. In a silicon containing substrate, examples of n-type dopants, i.e., impurities, include but are not limited to antimony, arsenic and phosphorous. In some embodiments, the lower source/drain regions **802** may therefore be either n-type or p-type.

(37) Referring now to FIG. 9, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. An isolation layer **902** is deposited to a height that exceeds the height of the

middle spacer layer **602**, while leaving the channel layers **204** of the upper device region **220** exposed. The isolation layer **902** can be formed from any appropriate dielectric material, for example silicon dioxide or a low-k dielectric material. As used herein, the term “low-k” refers to a material that has a dielectric constant k that is lower than the dielectric constant of silicon dioxide. Low-k materials can be used to minimize parasitic capacitances. One way to form **902** is to overfill the space with **902** first, CMP, and recess to the level, such that top nanosheets are revealed while bottom epitaxial material is still covered by **902**.

(38) Referring now to FIG. **10**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. Upper source/drain regions **1002** are epitaxially grown from exposed sidewalls of the channel layers **204** in the upper device region **220**. Additional dielectric material is deposited around the upper source/drain regions **1002**, for example formed from the same material as the isolation layer **902**, to extend the isolation layer **1004**. The dielectric material can then be polished down to the level of the hardmasks **404** using, e.g., a chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) process.

(39) CMP is performed using, e.g., a chemical or granular slurry and mechanical force to gradually remove upper layers of the device. The slurry may be formulated to be unable to dissolve, for example, the dummy gates **402**, resulting in the CMP process's inability to proceed any farther than that layer.

(40) Whereas the lower source/drain regions **802** were formed from a first conductivity type, the upper source/drain regions **1002** may be formed from a second, opposite conductivity type. In this manner, a CFET can be formed, for example with a p-type FET on the bottom and an n-type FET at the top.

(41) The upper source/drain regions **1002** can be patterned and etched, with some lateral displacement between the position of the lower source/drain regions **802** and the upper source/drain regions **1002**. This leaves room for the formation of conductive contacts, down through the isolation layer **1004**, to reach the lower source/drain regions **802**.

(42) Referring now to FIG. **11**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. The dummy gates **402** are selectively etched away, followed by the first sacrificial layers **206**. The latter etch in particular can be performed with a selective isotropic etch, which removes the sacrificial material from between the channel layers **204**. This forms a gap **1102** where the sacrificial layers were, including space between vertically adjacent channel layers **204**.

(43) Referring now to FIG. **12**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. A gate dielectric **1202** is formed in the gaps **1102**, for example by a conformal deposition process. The gate dielectric **1202** adheres to the surfaces of the channel layers **204**, including in the spaces between the channel layers **204**. In some embodiments, the gate dielectric layer **1202** may be chamfered, by partially filling the gaps **1102** with a sacrificial material and etching back the portions of the gate dielectric material that remain exposed. The sacrificial material can then be etched away.

(44) The gate dielectric **1202** can be formed from any appropriate dielectric material, but it is specifically contemplated that a high-k dielectric material may be used. As used herein, the term “high-k” refers to a material that has a dielectric constant k that is greater than the dielectric constant of silicon dioxide. Examples of high-k dielectric materials include but are not limited to metal oxides such as hafnium oxide, hafnium silicon oxide, hafnium silicon oxynitride, lanthanum oxide, lanthanum aluminum oxide, zirconium oxide, zirconium silicon oxide, zirconium silicon oxynitride, tantalum oxide, titanium oxide, barium strontium titanium oxide, barium titanium oxide, strontium titanium oxide, yttrium oxide, aluminum oxide, lead scandium tantalum oxide, and lead zinc niobate. The high-k material may further include dopants such as lanthanum and aluminum.

(45) Referring now to FIG. **13**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of

nanosheet CFETs are shown. A first work function metal layer **1302** is conformally deposited in the gap **1102**, particularly in the spaces between the channel layers **204**. Notably, the first work function metal layer **1302** need not necessarily pinch off in the spaces between the channel layers **204**, and additional conductive material may be filled into any remaining gaps in such embodiments.

(46) The first work function metal layer **1302** may be formed from either a p-type or n-type work function metal. As used herein, a “p-type work function metal” is a metal that effectuates a p-type threshold voltage shift. In one embodiment, the work function of the p-type work function metal layer ranges from 4.9 eV to 5.2 eV. As used herein, “threshold voltage” is the lowest attainable gate voltage that will turn on a semiconductor device, e.g., transistor, by making the channel of the device conductive. The term “p-type threshold voltage shift” as used herein means a shift in the Fermi energy of a p-type semiconductor device towards a valence band of silicon in the silicon containing substrate of the p-type semiconductor device. A “valence band” is the highest range of electron energies where electrons are normally present at absolute zero. In one embodiment, a p-type work function metal layer may be formed from titanium nitride, titanium aluminum nitride, ruthenium, platinum, molybdenum, cobalt, and alloys and combinations thereof.

(47) As used herein, an “n-type work function metal” is a metal layer that effectuates an n-type threshold voltage shift. “N-type threshold voltage shift” as used herein means a shift in the Fermi energy of an n-type semiconductor device towards a conduction band of silicon in a silicon-containing substrate of the n-type semiconductor device. The “conduction band” is the lowest lying electron energy band of the doped material that is not completely filled with electrons. In one embodiment, the work function of the n-type work function metal layer ranges from 4.1 eV to 4.3 eV. In one embodiment, the n-type work function metal layer is formed from at least one of titanium aluminum, tantalum nitride, titanium nitride, hafnium nitride, hafnium silicon, or combinations thereof. It should be understood that titanium nitride may play the role of an n-type work function metal or a p-type work function metal, depending on the conditions of its deposition.

(48) The conductivity type of the first work function metal layer **1302** is selected to match the conductivity type of the lower source/drain region **802**. Thus, if the lower source/drain region **802** is doped with a p-type dopant, then a p-type work function metal is selected for the first work function metal layer **1302**. Similarly, if the lower source/drain region **802** is doped with an n-type dopant, then an n-type work function metal layer is selected.

(49) Referring now to FIG. **14**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. A first sacrificial layer **1402** can be deposited around the first work function layer **1302** and then etched back. The height of the sacrificial layer can be at a level around the height of the middle spacer **602**. The exposed portions of the first work function metal layer **1302** can then be etched back using an isotropic etch. The etch is stopped to prevent overetching the material in the lower device region **210**, which results in some work function metal remaining between the channel layers **204** of the upper device region **220**.

(50) The first sacrificial layer **1402** may be an organic planarizing layer (OPL) and can include an organic polymer that, when exposed to electromagnetic (EM) radiation, changes chemically to be removable by a developing solvent. Examples of organic polymers may include polyacrylate resin, epoxy resin, phenol resin, polyamide resin, polyimide resin, unsaturated polyester resin, polyphenylenether resin, polyphenylenesulfide resin, or benzocyclobutene. More generally, the first sacrificial layer **1402** may be formed from any organic polymer and a compound having a molecular structure that can attach to the molecular structure of the organic polymer. The first sacrificial layer **1402** may, for example, be applied using spin coating technology or a flowable CVD process.

(51) Referring now to FIG. **15**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. The first sacrificial layer **1402** is selectively removed, for example by ashing the OPL material, and a second sacrificial layer **1502** is formed. The second sacrificial layer **1502** has a height at least as high as the bottom surface of the middle spacer **602**. The portions of

the first work function material that remained between the channel layers **204** of the upper device region **220** can then be selectively removed using an aggressive isotropic etch, without damaging the first work function metal layer **1302** in the lower device region **210**.

(52) Referring now to FIG. **16**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. A second work function metal layer **1602** is conformally deposited, filling the spaces between the channel layers **204** of the upper device region **220**. Because the effect of the work function metals is achieved by contact with the channel, electrical contact between the first work function metal layer **1302** and the second work function metal layer **1602** is permissible. The second work function metal layer **1602** can be chamfered by filling in a sacrificial material, etching back exposed portions of the second work function metal, and removing the sacrificial material. The material of the second work function metal layer **1602** is selected to match the conductivity type with the upper source/drain regions **1002**, and to have an opposite conductivity type as compared to the conductivity type of the first work function metal layer **1302**.

(53) Referring now to FIG. **17**, a set of cross-sectional views of a step in the fabrication of nanosheet CFETs are shown. A gate contact **1702** is formed over the second work function metal layer **1602**. Vias are formed in the isolation layer **1004** and conductive material is deposited to form lower source/drain regions **1704** and upper source/drain regions **1706**. These contacts can be formed from any appropriate conductive material. Exemplary conductive materials may include, e.g., tungsten, nickel, titanium, molybdenum, tantalum, copper, platinum, silver, gold, ruthenium, iridium, rhenium, rhodium, cobalt, and alloys thereof. Alternatively, a doped semiconductor material may be used, such as, e.g., doped polysilicon.

(54) It is to be understood that aspects of the present invention will be described in terms of a given illustrative architecture; however, other architectures, structures, substrate materials and process features and steps can be varied within the scope of aspects of the present invention.

(55) It will also be understood that when an element such as a layer, region or substrate is referred to as being “on” or “over” another element, it can be directly on the other element or intervening elements can also be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being “directly on” or “directly over” another element, there are no intervening elements present. It will also be understood that when an element is referred to as being “connected” or “coupled” to another element, it can be directly connected or coupled to the other element or intervening elements can be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being “directly connected” or “directly coupled” to another element, there are no intervening elements present.

(56) The present embodiments can include a design for an integrated circuit chip, which can be created in a graphical computer programming language, and stored in a computer storage medium (such as a disk, tape, physical hard drive, or virtual hard drive such as in a storage access network). If the designer does not fabricate chips or the photolithographic masks used to fabricate chips, the designer can transmit the resulting design by physical means (e.g., by providing a copy of the storage medium storing the design) or electronically (e.g., through the Internet) to such entities, directly or indirectly. The stored design is then converted into the appropriate format (e.g., GDSII) for the fabrication of photolithographic masks, which typically include multiple copies of the chip design in question that are to be formed on a wafer. The photolithographic masks are utilized to define areas of the wafer (and/or the layers thereon) to be etched or otherwise processed.

(57) Methods as described herein can be used in the fabrication of integrated circuit chips. The resulting integrated circuit chips can be distributed by the fabricator in raw wafer form (that is, as a single wafer that has multiple unpackaged chips), as a bare die, or in a packaged form. In the latter case, the chip is mounted in a single chip package (such as a plastic carrier, with leads that are affixed to a motherboard or other higher level carrier) or in a multichip package (such as a ceramic carrier that has either or both surface interconnections or buried interconnections). In any case, the chip is then integrated with other chips, discrete circuit elements, and/or other signal processing devices as part of either (a) an intermediate product, such as a motherboard, or (b) an end product.

The end product can be any product that includes integrated circuit chips, ranging from toys and other low-end applications to advanced computer products having a display, a keyboard or other input device, and a central processor.

(58) It should also be understood that material compounds will be described in terms of listed elements, e.g., SiGe. These compounds include different proportions of the elements within the compound, e.g., SiGe includes $\text{Si.sub.xGe.sub.1-x}$ where x is less than or equal to 1, etc. In addition, other elements can be included in the compound and still function in accordance with the present principles. The compounds with additional elements will be referred to herein as alloys.

(59) Reference in the specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment”, as well as other variations thereof, means that a particular feature, structure, characteristic, and so forth described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. Thus, the appearances of the phrase “in one embodiment” or “in an embodiment”, as well as any other variations, appearing in various places throughout the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment.

(60) It is to be appreciated that the use of any of the following “/”, “and/or”, and “at least one of”, for example, in the cases of “A/B”, “A and/or B” and “at least one of A and B”, is intended to encompass the selection of the first listed option (A) only, or the selection of the second listed option (B) only, or the selection of both options (A and B). As a further example, in the cases of “A, B, and/or C” and “at least one of A, B, and C”, such phrasing is intended to encompass the selection of the first listed option (A) only, or the selection of the second listed option (B) only, or the selection of the third listed option (C) only, or the selection of the first and the second listed options (A and B) only, or the selection of the first and third listed options (A and C) only, or the selection of the second and third listed options (B and C) only, or the selection of all three options (A and B and C). This can be extended, as readily apparent by one of ordinary skill in this and related arts, for as many items listed.

(61) The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of example embodiments. As used herein, the singular forms “a,” “an” and “the” are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms “comprises,” “comprising,” “includes” and/or “including,” when used herein, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components and/or groups thereof.

(62) Spatially relative terms, such as “beneath,” “below,” “lower,” “above,” “upper,” and the like, can be used herein for ease of description to describe one element's or feature's relationship to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the FIGS. It will be understood that the spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation in addition to the orientation depicted in the FIGS. For example, if the device in the FIGS. is turned over, elements described as “below” or “beneath” other elements or features would then be oriented “above” the other elements or features. Thus, the term “below” can encompass both an orientation of above and below. The device can be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations), and the spatially relative descriptors used herein can be interpreted accordingly. In addition, it will also be understood that when a layer is referred to as being “between” two layers, it can be the only layer between the two layers, or one or more intervening layers can also be present.

(63) It will be understood that, although the terms first, second, etc. can be used herein to describe various elements, these elements should not be limited by these terms. These terms are only used to distinguish one element from another element. Thus, a first element discussed below could be termed a second element without departing from the scope of the present concept.

(64) Referring now to FIG. 18, a method of forming nanosheet CFETs is shown. Block 1802 forms a stack of semiconductor layers on a semiconductor substrate 202. The semiconductor layers include channel layers 204, first sacrificial layers 206, and second sacrificial layers 208, and it is

specifically contemplated that the stack may be formed by epitaxially growing each new layer from the top surface of the previous layer. Block **1804** masks and anisotropically etches the stack of layers to form a fin **302**. Block **1806** forms STI regions around the fin **302**, for example by forming trenches in the semiconductor substrate **202** and then filling the trenches with an electrically insulating material.

(65) Block **1808** forms dummy gates **402** over the fins **302**. Block **1810** etches away the second sacrificial layers **208** using a selective isotropic etch, and then block **1812** forms spacer layers **602** and **604** in the gaps in the resulting fins **302**. Block **1813** forms spacers **606** on the sidewalls of the dummy gates **404**, for example in the same deposition process that forms the intra-fin spacers. Block **1814** anisotropically etches the fin **302** in the exposed regions around the dummy gates **402** and the dummy gate sidewall spacers **606**. Block **1815** recesses the first sacrificial layers **206** and forms inner spacers **702** in the recesses.

(66) Block **1816** forms lower source/drain regions **802**, for example by epitaxially growing these structures from the exposed side surfaces of the channel layers **204**. The resulting structure can be etched back to the lower device region **210**, and can furthermore be patterned to an appropriate shape. Block **1818** forms an isolation layer over and around the lower source/drain regions **802**. Block **1820** forms upper source/drain regions **1002**, for example by epitaxial growth from the exposed side surfaces of the channel layers **204** in the upper device region **220**. Block **1822** extends forms additional isolation layer **1004** to cover the upper source/drain regions **1002**. In some embodiments, these source/drain regions can be doped in situ or by ion implantation, and the dopant conductivity types of the respective source/drain regions may be opposite to one another.

(67) Block **1824** etches away the dummy gate **1824**, thereby exposing the surfaces of the channel layers **204**. Block **1826** forms a gate dielectric layer **1202** by conformal deposition on these exposed surfaces. Block **1828** deposits a first work function metal layer **1302** over, around, and between the channel layers **204** and the middle spacer **602**. Block **1830** forms a first sacrificial layer **1402** around the fins **302**, and block **1832** then partially etches back the first work function metal layer **1302**. The first sacrificial layer **1402** is removed in block **1834** and is replaced with second sacrificial layer **1502**, which protects the first work function metal layer **1302** from subsequent etches. Block **1836** fully etches away remaining first work function metal from between the channel layers **204** in the upper device region **220**. Block **1838** then forms second work function metal layer **1602** over, around, and between the channel layers **204** of the upper device region **220**. Block **1840** forms contacts to finish the device.

(68) Having described preferred embodiments of work function metal patterning for nanosheet CFETs (which are intended to be illustrative and not limiting), it is noted that modifications and variations can be made by persons skilled in the art in light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that changes may be made in the particular embodiments disclosed which are within the scope of the invention as outlined by the appended claims. Having thus described aspects of the invention, with the details and particularity required by the patent laws, what is claimed and desired protected by Letters Patent is set forth in the appended claims.

Claims

1. A semiconductor device, comprising: a stack of channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region, wherein the upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer; a first work function metal layer on the channel layers in the lower device region, wherein a height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer; a second work function metal layer on the channel layers in the upper device region; lower source/drain regions on sidewalls of the channel layers in the lower device region; upper source/drain regions on sidewalls of the channel layers in the upper device region; an isolation layer around the lower source/drain regions and the upper source/drain regions; and a

- bottom spacer between the lower source/drain regions and an underlying substrate, wherein the isolation layer makes contact with a side surface of the bottom spacer.
2. The semiconductor device of claim 1, further comprising a gate dielectric layer on the channel layers and on the dielectric spacer layer.
 3. The semiconductor device of claim 2, wherein the gate dielectric layer and the dielectric spacer layer are formed from different dielectric materials.
 4. The semiconductor device of claim 1, wherein the upper source/drain regions are patterned, such that at least a portion of the lower source/drain regions has no overlying epitaxial material.
 5. The semiconductor device of claim 1, wherein the channel layers are each nanosheet semiconductor layers.
 6. The semiconductor device of claim 1, wherein the first work function metal layer has a first conductivity type, and the second work function metal layer has a second conductivity type, different from the first conductivity type.
 7. A semiconductor device, comprising: a stack of channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region, wherein the upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer; a first work function metal layer on the channel layers in the lower device region, wherein a height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer; a second work function metal layer, on the channel layers in the upper device region, that extends down into the lower device region and contacts the first work function metal layer; lower source/drain regions on sidewalls of the channel layers in the lower device region; upper source/drain regions on sidewalls of the channel layers in the upper device region; an isolation layer around the lower source/drain regions and the upper source/drain regions; and a bottom spacer between the lower source/drain regions and an underlying substrate, wherein the isolation layer makes contact with a side surface of the bottom spacer.
 8. The semiconductor device of claim 7, further comprising a gate dielectric layer on the channel layers and on the dielectric spacer layer.
 9. The semiconductor device of claim 8, wherein the gate dielectric layer and the dielectric spacer layer are formed from different dielectric materials.
 10. The semiconductor device of claim 7, wherein the upper source/drain regions are patterned, such that at least a portion of the lower source/drain regions has no overlying epitaxial material.
 11. The semiconductor device of claim 7, wherein the channel layers are each nanosheet semiconductor layers.
 12. The semiconductor device of claim 7, wherein the first work function metal layer has a first conductivity type, and the second work function metal layer has a second conductivity type, different from the first conductivity type.
 13. A semiconductor device, comprising: a stack of nanosheet semiconductor channel layers, including an upper device region and a lower device region, wherein the upper device region is separated from the lower device region by a dielectric spacer layer; a first work function metal layer on the channel layers in the lower device region and having a first conductivity type, wherein a height of the first work function metal layer does not rise above the dielectric spacer layer; a second work function metal layer, on the channel layers in the upper device region and having a second conductivity type different from the first conductivity type, that extends down into the lower device region and contacts the first work function metal layer; lower source/drain regions on sidewalls of the channel layers in the lower device region; upper source/drain regions on sidewalls of the channel layers in the upper device region, patterned such that at least a portion of the lower source/drain regions has no overlying epitaxial material; an isolation layer around the lower source/drain regions and the upper source/drain regions; and a bottom spacer between the lower source/drain regions and an underlying substrate, wherein the isolation layer makes contact with a side surface of the bottom spacer.
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