

Spectroscopic Investigation of a Repetitively-Pulsed Nanosecond Discharge

by

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Chair: John E. Foster



Karrer, M. "Sun 2011-12-08." URL: http://www.flickr.com/photos/michael_karrer/6487199145/. Accessed: August 26, 2013.

What Is a Plasma? (Sun)

4/107
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- Introduction
- Pulsed plasmas and outstanding questions
- Metastable measurements
- Global model
- Emission measurements
- Conclusions

Outline

2/107
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Hunt, P. "Lightning." URL: http://www.flickr.com/photos/michael_karrer/6487199145/. Accessed: Aug. 26, 2013.

What Is a Plasma? (Lightning)

5/107
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Introduction

3/107
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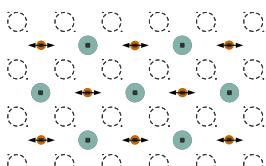
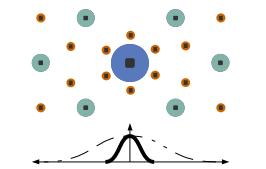


NASA, ESA, and the Hubble Heritage Team. "Star-Forming Region LH 95 in the Large Magellanic Cloud." URL: <http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/entire/p2006055a/>. Accessed: August 27, 2013.

What Is a Plasma? (Interstellar Gases)

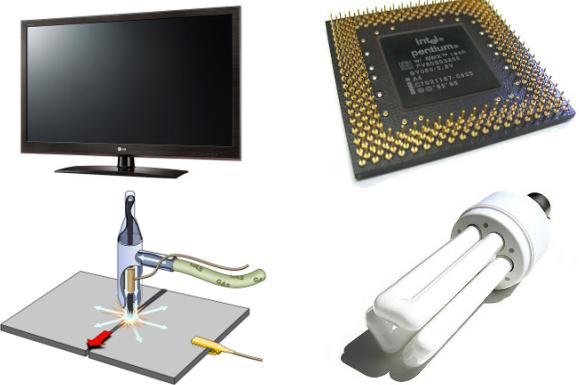
6/107
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- Ionized gas
 - Neutral particles
 - Positive (and negative) ions
 - Electrons
- Exhibits large-scale electrostatic effects
 - Debye shielding
 - Electron oscillations



What Is a Plasma?

7/107
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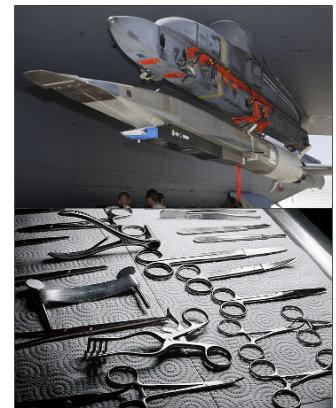


Bowden, M. "A fluorescent light bulb." URL: <http://www.sxc.hu/photo/203835>. Accessed: August 26, 21013.
Shigenz23. "Gas arc welding (TIG & MIG)." URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gas_arc_welding_%28TIG,%26_MIG%29.PNG. Accessed: August 27, 2013.
Schmid, M. "Wasabi-Chips (Micros)." URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wasabi-Chips_%282Migros%29.JPG. Accessed: August 27, 2013.
Volant, L. "LG LV3550 15 R." URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/27048731@N03/5589223946>. Accessed: August 27, 2013.

Applications

8/107
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- Ionization of airflow for MHD generators and energy bypasses



- Sterilization of bacterial, viral, and chemical contaminants

Bellay, C. "X-51A Waverider on B-52 2009." URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:X-51A_Waverider_on_B-52_2009.jpg. Accessed: August 27, 2013.
parfe_apr. "Operation." URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/parfe/2239523465/>. Accessed: August 27, 2013.

Atmospheric-Pressure Plasma Applications

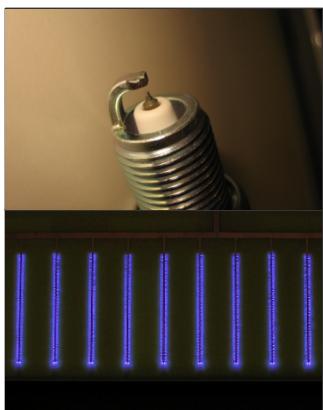
10/107
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- Common in welding, cutting, and arc lighting
- All particle species at approximately the same temperature
 - Electrons
 - Ions
 - Neutrals
- Often several thousand degrees Celsius

Equilibrium Plasmas

11/107
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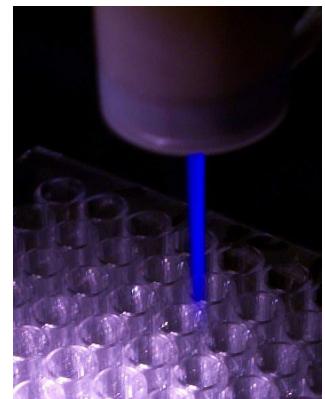


Wong, N. "Tip of a spark plug." URL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/14029705@N00/375024450>. Accessed: August 27, 2013.
Xunjer, "Plasma glow discharge." URL: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Streamwise.JPG>. Accessed: August 27, 2013.

Atmospheric-Pressure Plasma Applications

9/107
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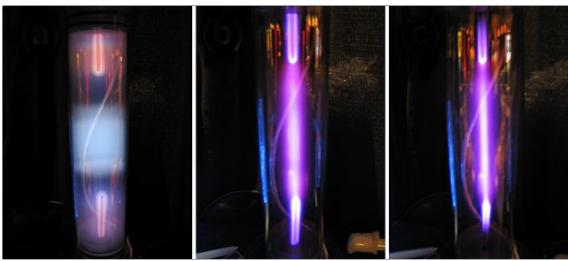
- Modification or enhancement of fuel combustion properties
- Modification of airflow over surfaces without mechanical actuators
- Common in fluorescent lighting and polymer processing.
- Different temperatures for each species
- Often, $T_{\text{neutrals}} \sim T_{\text{ions}} < T_{\text{electrons}}$



Entrop5. "A low temperature plasma jet: Plasma Pencil." URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plasma_Pencil.jpg. Accessed: August 28, 2013.

Non-Equilibrium Plasmas

12/107
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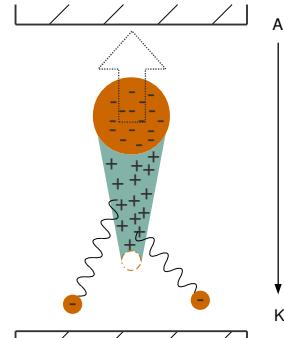
- Increase in pressure → tendency to equilibrate
- Related to ionization instability
- Prevented by careful control of power input

Glow-to-Arc Transition

Wikigan, "Transition from a glow discharge in Argon, to an arc." URL: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Glow2arc.jpg>. Accessed: August 28, 2013.

13/107
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- Internal field of avalanche comparable to applied field
- Reduces energy transfer to streamer
- “Injected” electrons and photoionization become important

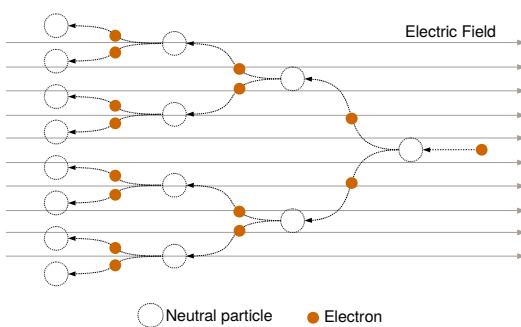


Streamer Discharge

16/107
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Pulsed Plasmas and Outstanding Questions

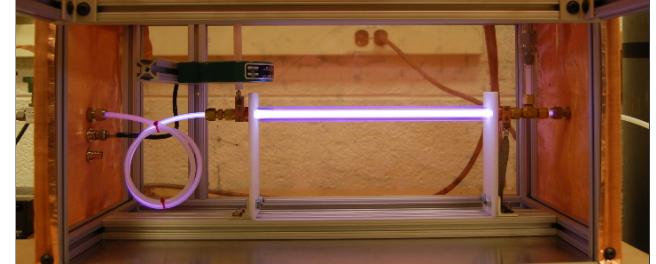
14/107
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- Initial electron from cosmic rays, UV light, previous pulse, ...
- Sufficient electric field → exponential growth

Electron Avalanche

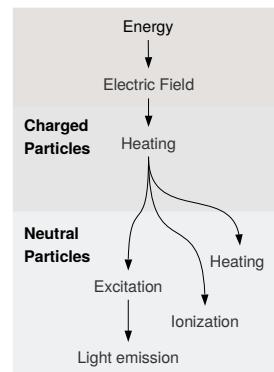
15/107
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- Similar processes to streamer discharge
- Short pulse-widths: 0 – 100 ns
- High voltages: 1 – 100+ kV
- Moderate repetition rates: 1 – 100 kHz

Repetitively-Pulsed Nanosecond Discharge

16/107
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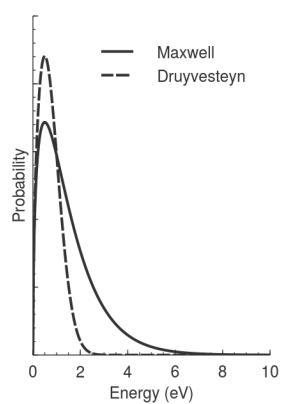


- Energy added to charged particles via electric field
- Fraction of energy heats electrons
- Remainder enters neutral particles through collisions
- How is energy divided?

Questions: Energy Coupling

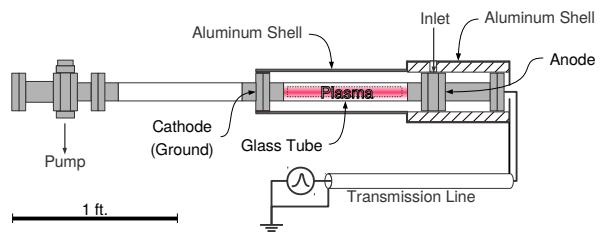
18/107
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- Continuous probability distribution for electron energies
- Analytic expressions and approximate calculations possible
- Assumptions may limit use for RPND



Questions: Electron Energy Distribution

19/107
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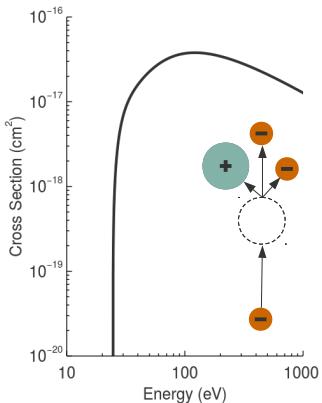


Coaxial-type geometry

- Inner conductor: plasma
- Dielectric: borosilicate vacuum tube, air, and teflon
- Outer conductor: copper and aluminum shells

Discharge Geometry

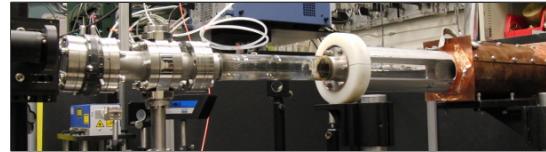
22/107
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- Plasma products determined by cross sections
- Probability to form a product for a given electron energy

Questions: Electron Energy Distribution

20/107
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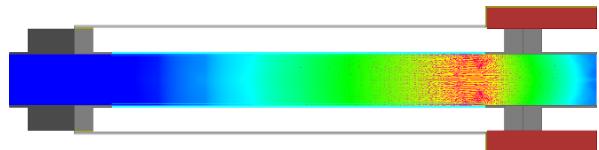
- Ultra-high purity helium: 0.3 – 16.0 Torr
- Rare gas discharges → interesting properties
 - Minimal gas heating
 - UV emissions
- Data available to create detailed population kinetics model
- Voltage pulses: 25 ns FWHM, +6.4 kV, 1.0 kHz

Experimental Setup

23/107
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Experimental Setup

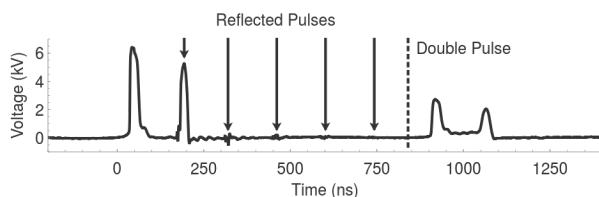
21/107
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- Peak field: 3.8 kV / cm
- Non-uniform field, concentrated near anode-glass interface
- Notable radial component a result of outer conductor

Vacuum Electric Fields

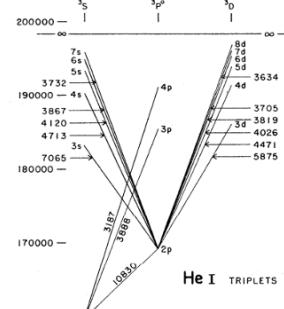
24/107
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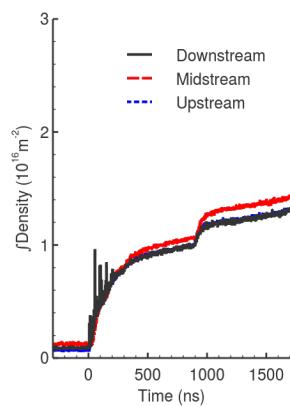
- Impedance mismatch at anode should cause doubling of voltage
- Long (13 m) transmission line used to isolate incident and reflected pulse

Input Waveform

25/107
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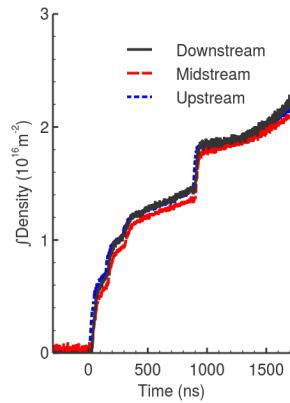
- Observable metastable density before pulse
- Noise present in downstream measurements from pulse
- No significant variation with location



Metastable Densities (Low Pressure)

31/107
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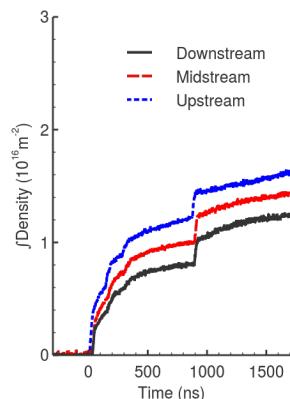
- Reduced pre-pulse density
- Increase in final density
- Reflections cause boost in metastable generation rate



Metastable Densities (Moderate Pressure)

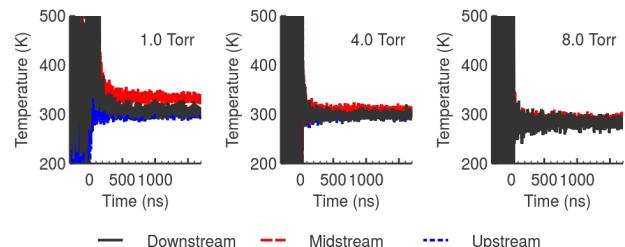
32/107
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- No metastables before pulse
- Overall decline in metastable density
- Reflection effects still observable
- Plasma attenuation with distance from anode



Metastable Densities (High Pressure)

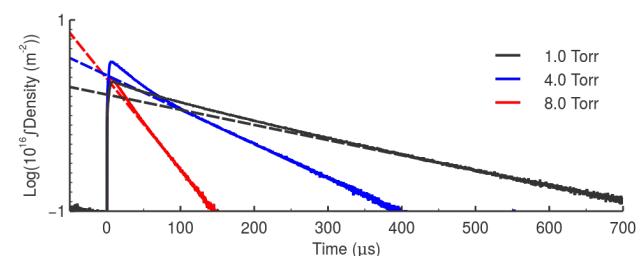
33/107
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- Added benefit of laser-absorption spectroscopy
- Confirms minimal gas heating
- No significant difference from 300 K for all conditions

Temperatures

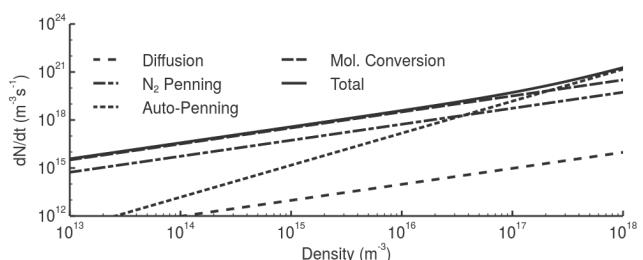
34/107
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- Long-duration measurements reveal loss mechanisms
- Deviation from straight line \rightarrow non-exponential process

Metastable Destruction

35/107
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- Initially dominated by non-exponential processes
 - Superelastic electron collisions
 - Penning ionization between metastables
- Molecular conversion dominates at lower metastable densities
- Pre-pulse metastables only detectable for 4.0 Torr and below

Destruction Processes

36/107
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- Metastable states only persist between pulses at lower pressures
- There is an optimal pressure for metastable generation
- Significant attenuation of plasma occurs at higher pressures
- No detectable gas heating
- Losses initially dominated by superelastic electron collisions and Penning ionization between metastables

Metastable Summary

37/107
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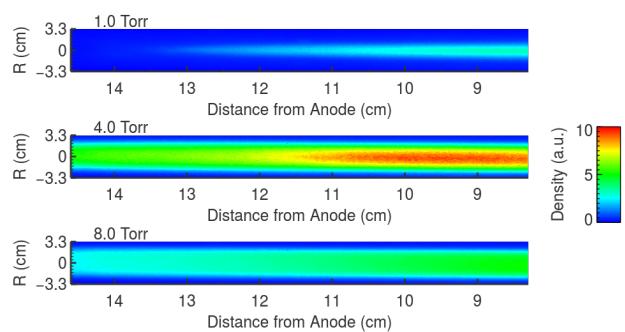
- Assumed spatial dependence (global model)
- Species:
 - Helium, all states $n < 5$
 - Helium ions
 - Electrons
- Reactions:
 - Elastic scattering (Pack)
 - Electron (de-)excitation (380 transitions, Ralchenko 2008)
 - Optical transitions (126 transitions, NIST ASD)
 - Excitation transfer (35 transitions, Dubreuil and Catherinot)
- Assume Maxwell-Boltzmann EEDF based on comparisons with particle-in-cell and two-term expansion results.

Model Parameters

40/107
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Global Model

38/107
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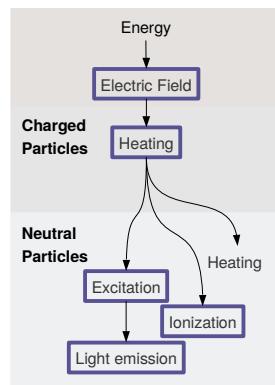
- Variation with pressure, uncertain cause
- Assume uniform radial density distribution, results easily modified for different profiles

Weatherford, B.R., Barnat, E.V., Xiong, Z., Kushner, M., 65th Gaseous Elec. Conf., October 22-26, 2012, Austin, TX.

Spatial Dependence

41/107
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- Metastables only one of many excited states
- Use metastable measurements to infer other properties
 - Electric fields
 - Electron densities and temperatures
 - Excited states



Applying the Metastable Measurements

39/107
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$$\frac{dN_i}{dt} = n_e \left[\sum_{j \neq i} N_j K_{j,i}^e(T_e) - N_i \sum_{j \neq i} K_{i,j}^e(T_e) \right] \text{Electron (de)excitation}$$

$$+ \left[\sum_{j > i} N_j K_{j,i}^o - N_i \sum_{j < i} K_{i,j}^o \right] \text{Radiative transitions}$$

$$+ N_g \left[\sum_{j \neq i} N_j K_{j,i}^a - N_i \sum_{j \neq i} K_{i,j}^a \right] \text{Atomic excitation transfer}$$

Particle Density Equation

42/107
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$$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{3}{2} n_e T_e \right) = \frac{e^2 n_e E(t)^2}{m_e k_m(T_e) N_g}$$

Electric field heating

$$- n_e k_m(T_e) N_g \left(\frac{3m_e}{M} \right) \frac{3}{2} (T_e - T_g)$$

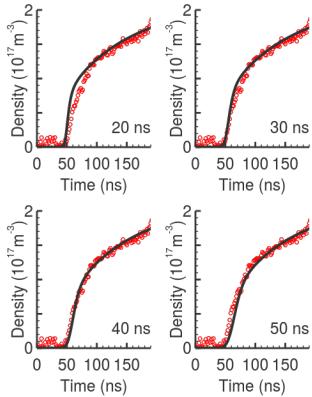
Elastic collisions

$$- n_e \sum_i \sum_{j \neq i} K_{ij}^e N_j \Delta \epsilon_{ij}$$

Inelastic collisions

Electron Energy Equation

43/107
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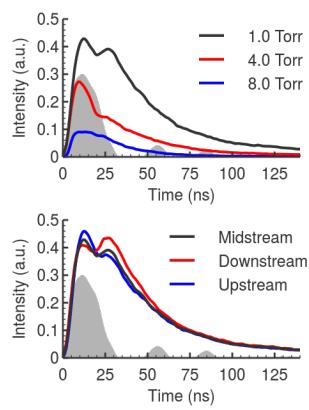


- Assumed electric field applied as a Gaussian pulse
- Free variables: electric field and pulse width
- Best fit obtained with 40 ns pulse-width, but this is longer than applied pulse?

Pulse-width

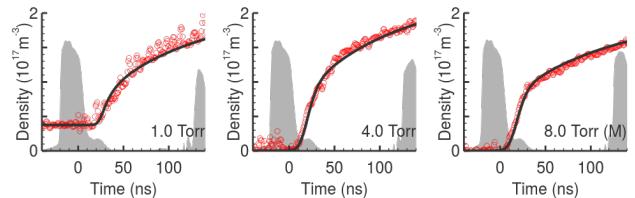
44/107
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- Optical emissions showed evidence of return stroke
- Double peak at several pressures
- Second peak most intense closest to ground electrode
- Excitation period effectively longer than 25 ns



Evidence for Return Stroke

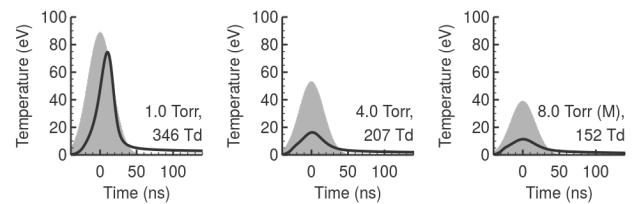
45/107
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- Good agreement for most cases—trends and magnitudes were consistent
- Largest discrepancies at 1.0 Torr
 - Initial rise too fast
 - Radiative cascade too slow
 - Extended excitation?

Metastable Matching

46/107
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- Peak fields consistent with other studies
- 1.0 Torr fields well into range where two-term expansion solutions performed better
- 1.0 Torr temperatures are not reasonable

Peak Fields and Electron Temperatures

47/107
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- Created and applied global model of RPND
- Observed evidence of extended excitation period
- Simulations able to reproduce metastable density dynamics
- Temperatures and fields at 1.0 Torr suggest potential violation of underlying assumptions

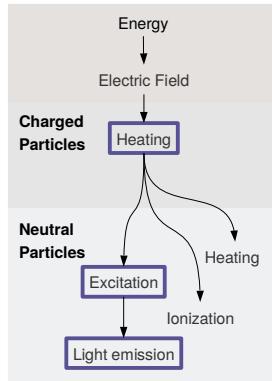
Summary of Simulation Results

48/107
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Emission Measurements

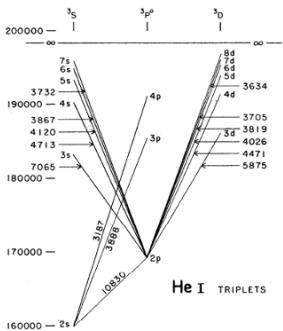
49/107
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- Simulations based on metastable densities
 - Optical emissions spectroscopy can check other excited states
 - Can reveal other phenomena
 - May be able to estimate electron temperature



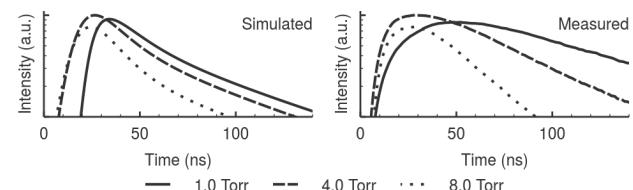
Corroborating Simulations

50/107
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- Observed transitions in visible (triplet and singlet)
 - Calibrated relative intensities with tungsten lamp
 - Same conditions as absorption spectroscopy

51/107
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- Relative peak heights and timing similar, distinctly different in shape
 - Measurements suggest pressure-dependent de-excitation process
(Penning ionization of impurities?)
 - Long emission lifetime suggest an extended excitation process
 - Beam-like electrons
 - Persistent electric field

Extended Excitation ($3^1D \rightarrow 2^1P^o$, 668 nm)

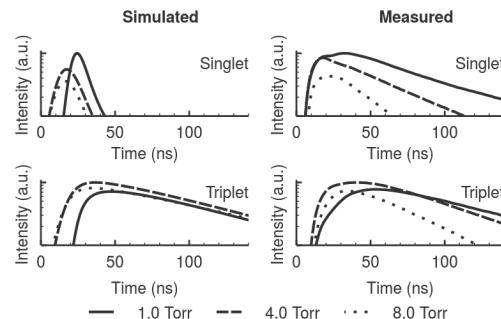
52/107
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Pressure (Torr)	Trapping Factor	Effective Lifetime (s)
1.0	8,773	1.549×10^{-5}
4.0	38,031	6.715×10^{-5}
8.0	78,837	1.392×10^{-4}

Lifetime increase for $3^1P \rightarrow 1^1S$
transition

Radiation Trapping

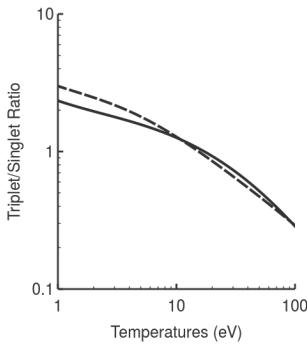
53/107
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- Verify by comparison of 389 nm and 501 nm
 - If radiation trapping affects system, measured lifetime of 501 line should be greater than simulation

Radiation Trapping

54/107
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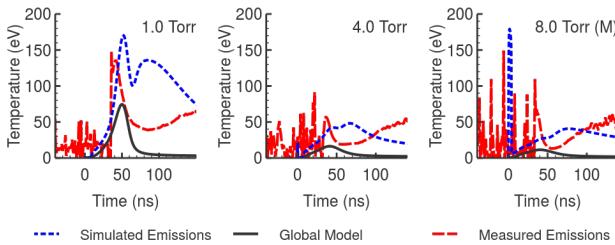


- Can be used to estimate electron temperature
- Assumes
 - Electron-ground excitation only
 - Radiative losses
- Maxwell-Boltzmann distribution

$$\frac{I_{i,j}}{I_{i',j'}} = \frac{\lambda_{i',j'} A_{i,j} \sum A_{i'} K_{0,i}(T_e)}{\lambda_{i,j'} A_{i',j'} \sum A_i K_{0,i'}(T_e)}$$

Coronal Model

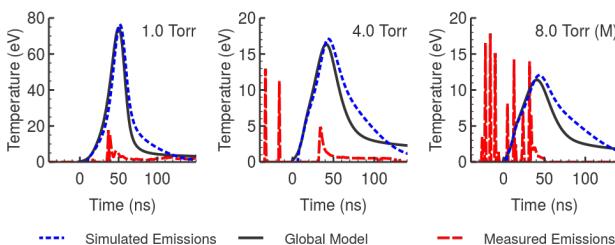
55/107
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- Poor match with simulated and measured emissions
- Possible need to include n = 5 states
- Collisional redistribution of n = 4 states potentially a factor

Ratio 1: 4^3S → 2^3P / 4^1D → 2^1P

56/107
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- Coronal model and global model: consistent
- Application limited by signal-to-noise ratio
- Likely not a Maxwellian temperature
- May still be useful as a measure of mean electron energy

Ratio 2: 4^3S → 2^3P / 3^1S → 2^1P

57/107
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- Global model captures some features of RPND population kinetics
- Missing physics
 - Extended excitation (distribution or field related?)
 - Radiation trapping
- $4^3S \rightarrow 2^3P^o / 3^1S \rightarrow 2^1P^o$ ratio may be useful indicator of electron energy in helium RPND

Summary of Emission Measurements

58/107
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Conclusions

- Developed laser-absorption spectroscopy system and analysis software
- Obtained detailed measurements of metastable dynamics in a helium RPND
- Created a global model code for helium plasmas
- Used code to infer plasma parameters from metastable density information
- Measured optical emissions of the RPND
- Found several additional phenomena that are potentially important in the description of the RPND

Summary of Work

59/107
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- Excited states only persist at lower pressures, what ensures consistent breakdown?
- Unexpectedly long excitation period, even accounting for return stroke
 - Slowing of beam-like electrons
 - Radiation trapping
 - Persistent electric fields
- May be possible to employ simple line ratio diagnostics for estimates of mean electron energy

Synthesis of Results

61/107
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Questions

- Address temporal evolution of metastable density profile (Abel inversion) → wall effects
- Incorporate additional physics (Penning ionization of impurities, radiation trapping, etc.) in present global model.
- Employ different EEDF models to better match excited state dynamics
- Move to a 0D Monte-Carlo simulation of RPND to avoid EEDF issues
-

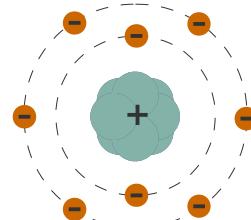
Future Work

62/107
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Backup Slides

Acknowledgements

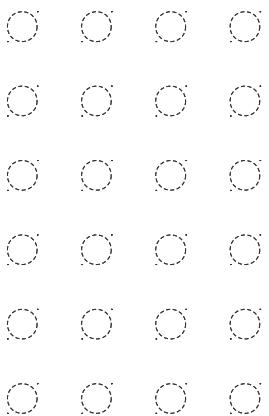
63/107
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- Positively-charged nucleus
- Orbited by negatively-charged electrons
- Overall, electrically neutral

Bohr Atom

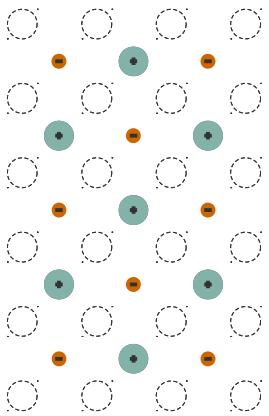
66/107
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- Consider an atomic gas
- Many neutral atoms with random motion
- No electrical interaction

Gas

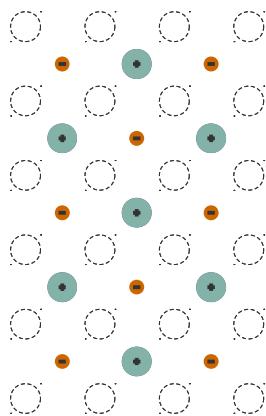
67/107
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- Add energy to gas
 - Electricity
 - Shock
 - Light
- Electrons separate from atoms
- Collection of neutral atoms, (positive) ions, and (negative) electrons
- What makes a plasma?

Ionized Gas

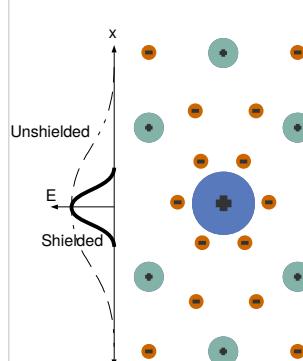
68/107
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Ionized Gas

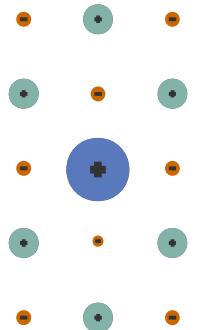
70/107
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- Electrons move to shield charge
- Similar for positive and negative perturbation
- Electric field falls off quickly
- $\lambda < L, n\lambda^3 \gg 1$

Debye Length

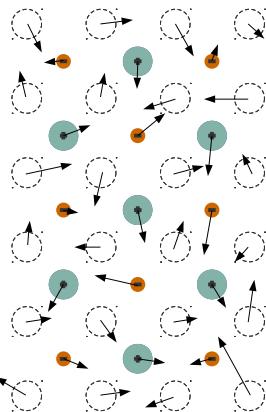
71/107
Sep 4, 2013



Consider what happens with an electrical perturbation.

Perturbation

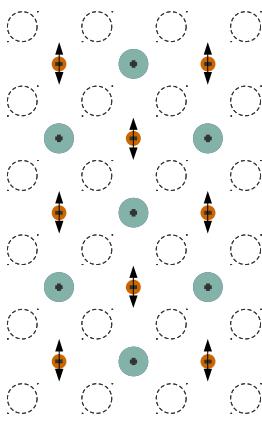
69/107
Sep 4, 2013



- Random collisions with neutral particles
- Neutral collisions can still determine properties of ionized gas
- Electric interactions should be dominant in plasma

Neutral Particle Interactions

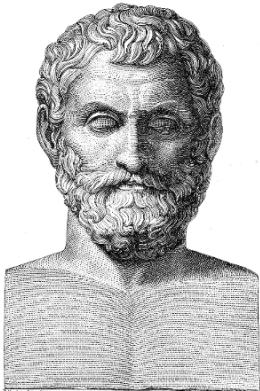
72/107
Sep 4, 2013



- Electrons possess natural oscillation frequency
- Characteristic of electrical interaction
- $\omega_p > \nu$

Charged-Particle Oscillations

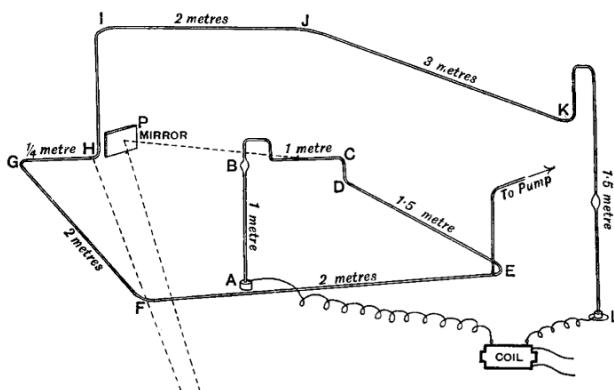
73/107
Sep 4, 2013



Walls, E. et al. "Illustrerad verldshistoria upgivnen av E. Walls. Volume I." (1875).
Stotesbury, H. "J. J. Thomson." Popular Science, Vol. 58 (1899).

Early History

74/107
Sep 4, 2013



J. J. Thomson, "Notes on Recent Researches in Electricity and Magnetism," Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, 1893.

First Pulsed Plasma Measurements

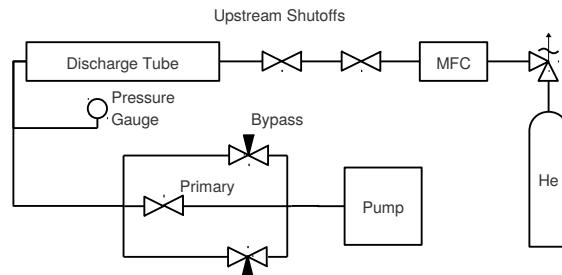
75/107
Sep 4, 2013

- Normally controlled by boundaries which limit gas flow out of plasma

1. Discharge causes gas heating
2. Results in local rarefaction
3. Increases reduced electric field
4. Increases ionization rate and power deposition
5. Results in increased gas heating

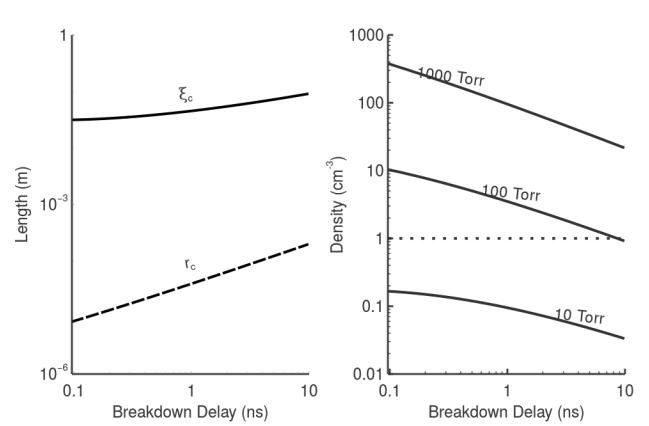
Ionization Instability

76/107
Sep 4, 2013



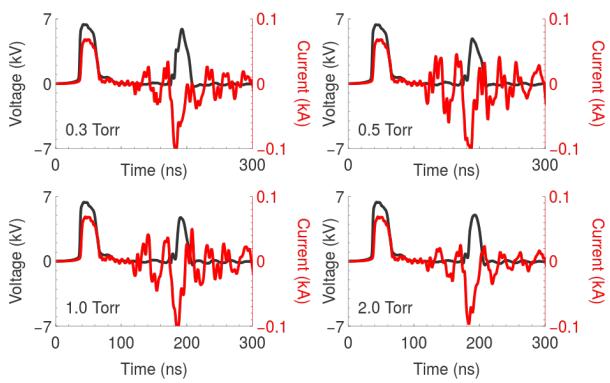
Pumping System

77/107
Sep 4, 2013



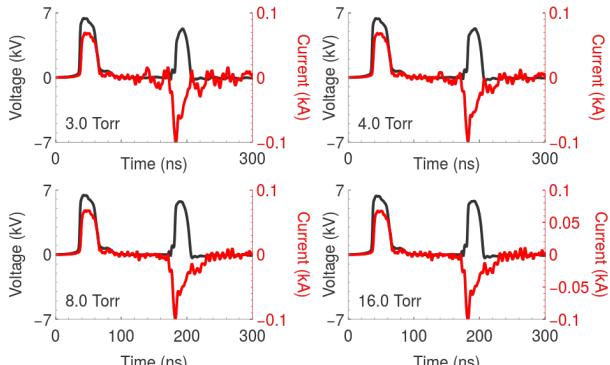
Homogeneous Streamers

78/107
Sep 4, 2013



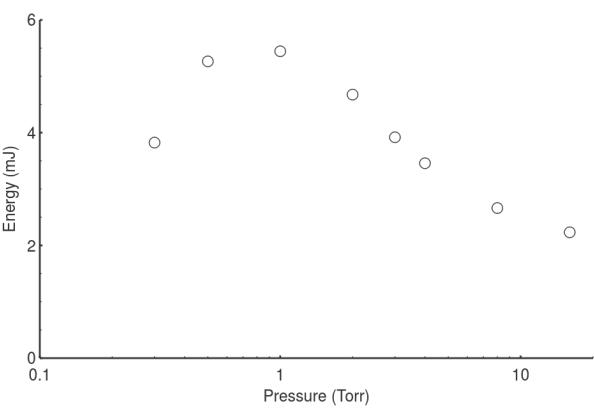
Waveforms 1

79/107
Sep 4, 2013



Waveforms 2

80/107
Sep 4, 2013



Energy Coupling

81/107
Sep 4, 2013

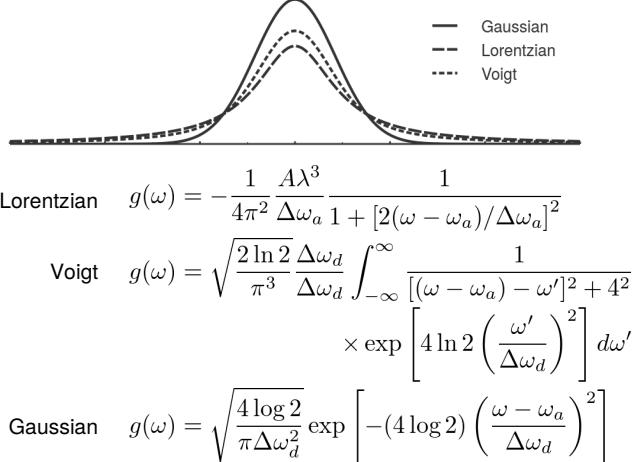
$$\Delta N = \Delta N_0 \frac{1}{1 + W\tau_{\text{eff}}} = \Delta N_0 \frac{1}{1 + I/I_{\text{sat}}}$$

$$W = \frac{\sigma I}{h\nu} \quad \rightarrow \quad I_{\text{sat}} = \frac{h\nu}{\sigma\tau_{\text{eff}}}$$

$$I_{\text{sat}} = \frac{2\sqrt{2}h_{21}}{\sigma\tau} = 0.45 \text{ mW} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$$

Two-Level Saturation

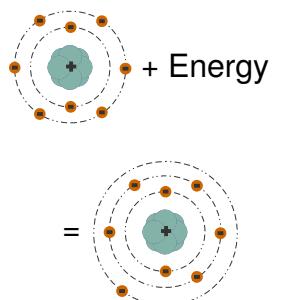
82/107
Sep 4, 2013



Lineshapes

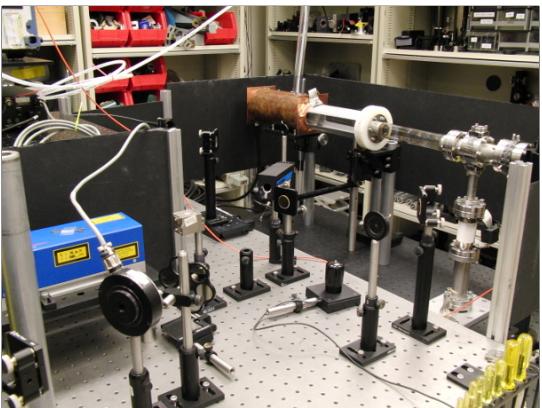
83/107
Sep 4, 2013

- Energy added to atom
 - Collisions
 - Absorption of light
- One or more electrons to higher orbit → excited atom
- Excited state can emit photon to reach lower energy state
 - Occurs with a specific rate



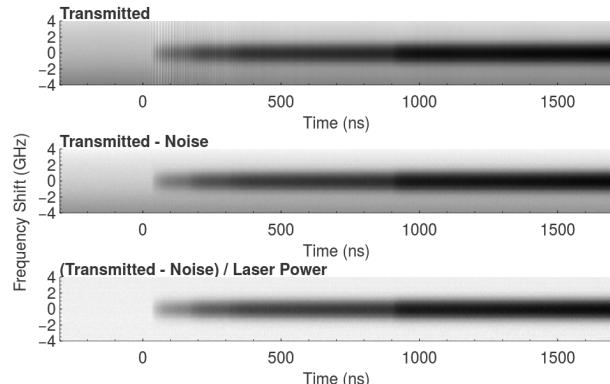
Excited States of Helium

84/107
Sep 4, 2013



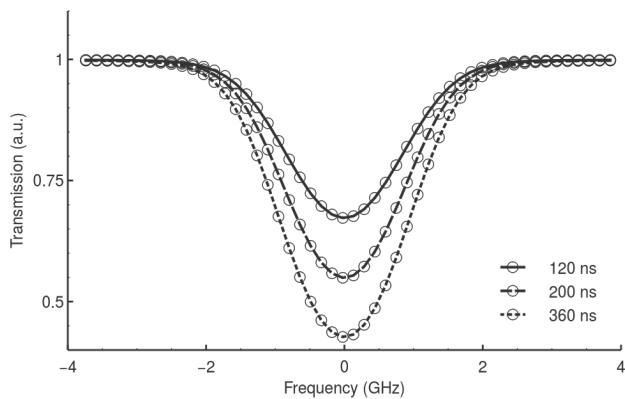
Laser-Absorption Spectroscopy Setup

85/107
Sep 4, 2013



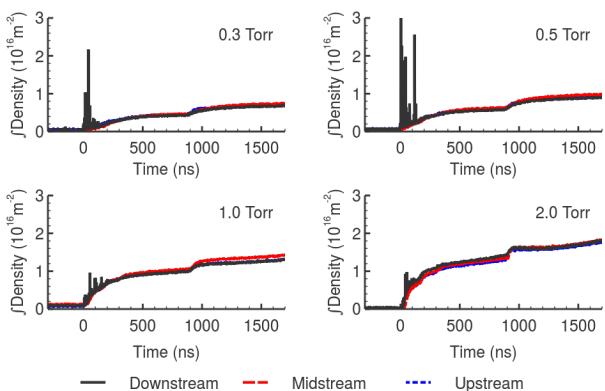
Spectral Post-Processing

86/107
Sep 4, 2013



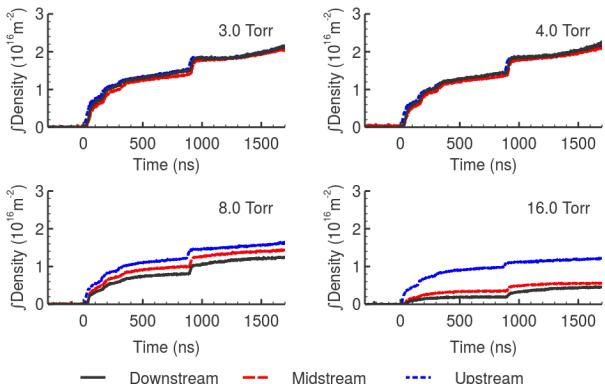
Absorption Spectra Matching

87/107
Sep 4, 2013



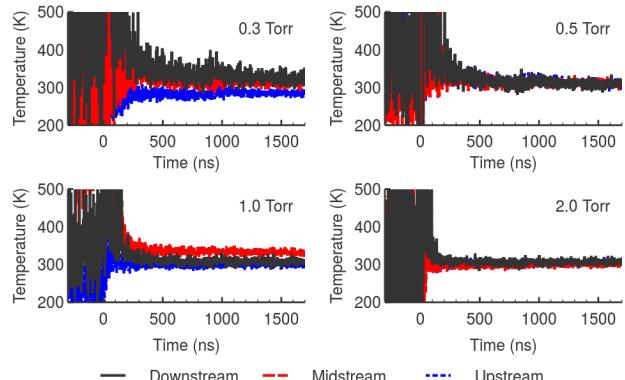
Metastables 1

88/107
Sep 4, 2013



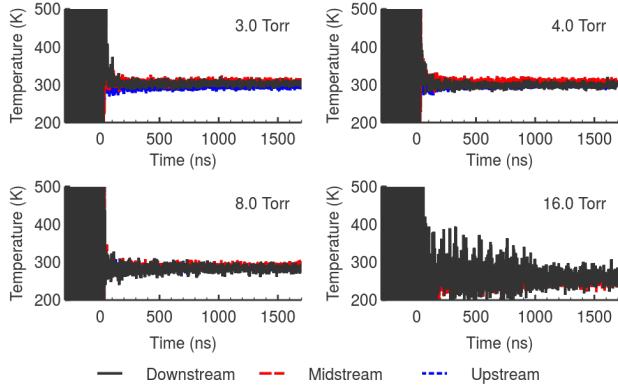
Metastables 2

89/107
Sep 4, 2013



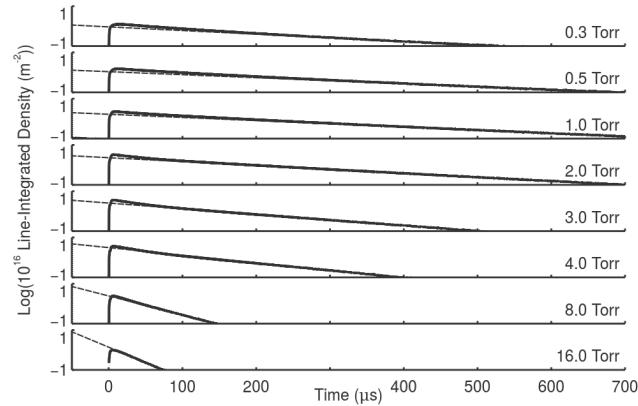
Temperatures 1

90/107
Sep 4, 2013



Temperatures 2

91/107
Sep 4, 2013



Metastable Decay

92/107
Sep 4, 2013

$$\frac{\partial f_\alpha}{\partial t} + \vec{v} \cdot \nabla f_\alpha + \frac{q_\alpha}{m_\alpha} (\vec{E} + \vec{v} \times \vec{B}) \cdot \nabla_v f_\alpha = \left(\frac{\partial f_\alpha}{\partial t} \right)_{\text{coll}}$$

- Describes the evolution of the distribution function for a particle α
- 7 independent variables
- Simple equilibrium solutions possible
 - Maxwell-Boltzmann
 - Druyvesteyn
- Generally difficult to solve otherwise

Boltzmann Equation

93/107
Sep 4, 2013

$$\frac{\partial n_\alpha}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (n_\alpha \vec{u}_\alpha) = G_\alpha - L_\alpha.$$

- Boltzmann equation can be converted into moments by integrating over velocity space
- Introduces particle density n and mean fluid velocity, u
- G – source terms
- L – loss terms

First Moment: Continuity Equation

94/107
Sep 4, 2013

$$m_\alpha n_\alpha \left[\frac{\partial \vec{u}_\alpha}{\partial t} + (\vec{u}_\alpha \cdot \nabla) \vec{u}_\alpha \right] = q_\alpha n_\alpha (\vec{E} + \vec{u}_\alpha \times \vec{B}) - \nabla \cdot \vec{\Pi} + \vec{f}_{\text{coll}}$$

- Second momentum obtained by multiplying by velocity and integrating over velocity space
- Describes changes in fluid velocity over space
- Introduces pressure tensor Π .
- \vec{f}_{coll} expresses change in momentum due to collisions

Second Moment: Conservation of Momentum

95/107
Sep 4, 2013

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} \left(\frac{3}{2} p_\alpha \right) + \nabla \cdot \frac{3}{2} (p_\alpha \vec{u}_\alpha) + p_\alpha \nabla \cdot \vec{u}_\alpha + \nabla \cdot \vec{q}_\alpha = \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \left(\frac{3}{2} p_\alpha \right) \Big|_{\text{coll}}$$

- Third momentum obtained by multiplying by energy and integrating over velocity space
- Energy expressed in terms of pressure, p
- RHS includes energy losses and gains resulting from collisions

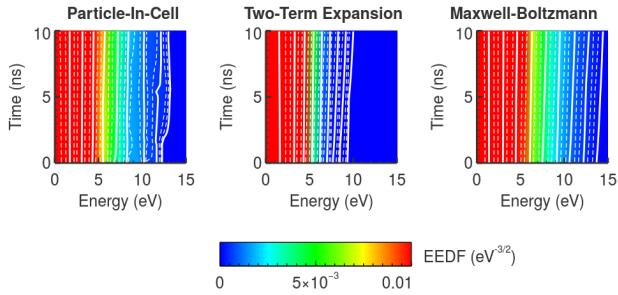
Third Moment: Conservation of Energy

96/107
Sep 4, 2013

- Must assume an EEDF for reaction rates
- Baseline: 0D particle-in-cell (XPDP1)
- Two approaches considered:
 - Maxwell-Boltzmann distribution
 - Solutions of two-term expansion of Boltzmann equation (BOLSIG+)

EEDF Assumption

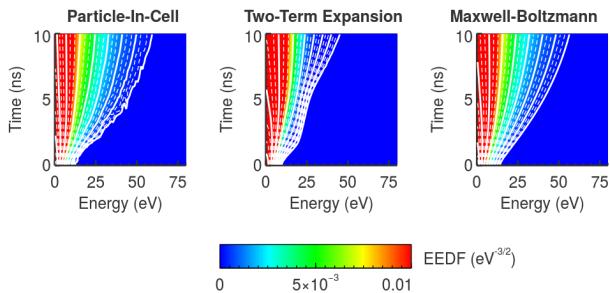
97/107
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- Both approaches show reasonable agreement with particle-in-cell
- Two-term: less high-energy electrons
- Maxwell-Boltzmann: more high-energy electrons

EEDF Comparisons (10 Td)

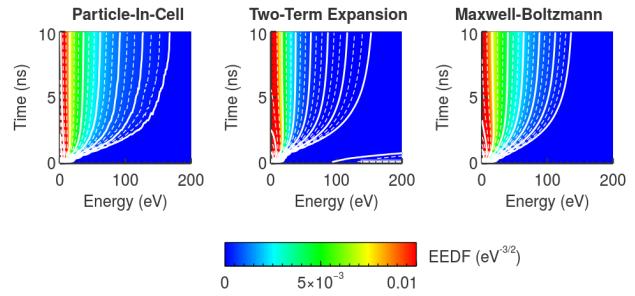
98/107
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- Unexpected contour variations in two-term expansion solutions
- Better agreement between Maxwell-Boltzmann and particle-in-cell

EEDF Comparisons (100 Td)

99/107
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- Particle-in-cell: more 100 eV+ electrons than other results
- Two-term expansion solution best match this behavior
- Beginning of beam-like behavior?

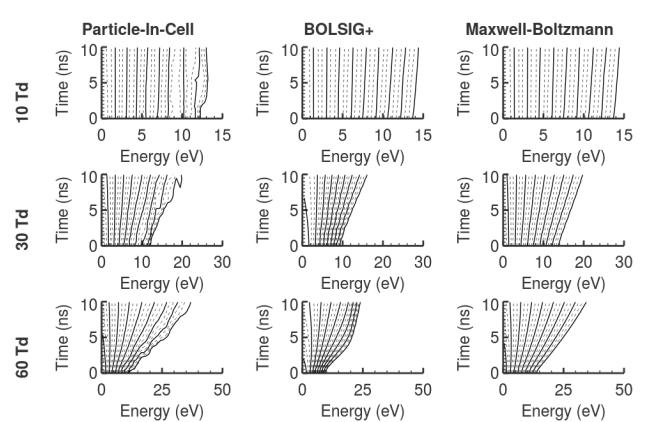
EEDF Comparisons (300 Td)

100/107
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- < 100 Td: Maxwell-Boltzmann gives best agreement with particle-in-cell
- > 100 Td: BOLSIG+ gives best agreement with particle-in-cell
- Primary discrepancy in the number of high energy electrons: Particle-in-cell > BOLSIG+ > Maxwell-Boltzmann
- Better overall agreement led to use of Maxwell-Boltzmann distribution

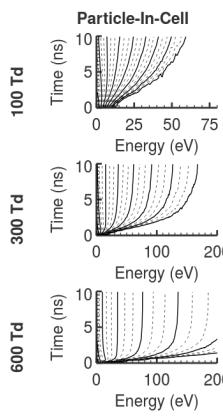
EEDF Comparison Summary

101/107
Sep 4, 2013



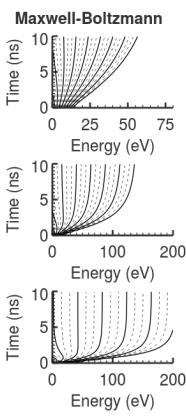
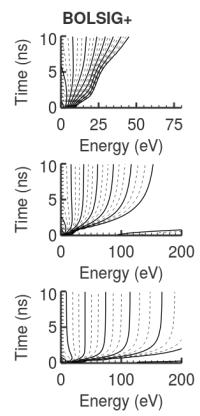
EEDF Contours 1

102/107
Sep 4, 2013



EEDF Contours 2

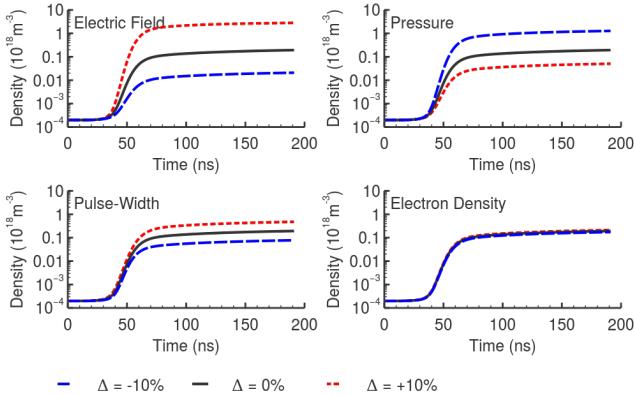
103/107
Sep 4, 2013



- Pressures: 0.3 – 16.0 Torr
- Spex HR460 monochromator, 0.88 nm bandpass
- 1,200 grooves/mm
- Photomultiplier tube, maximum 3.0 ns rise time
- Relative intensities calibrated with tungsten blackbody lamp

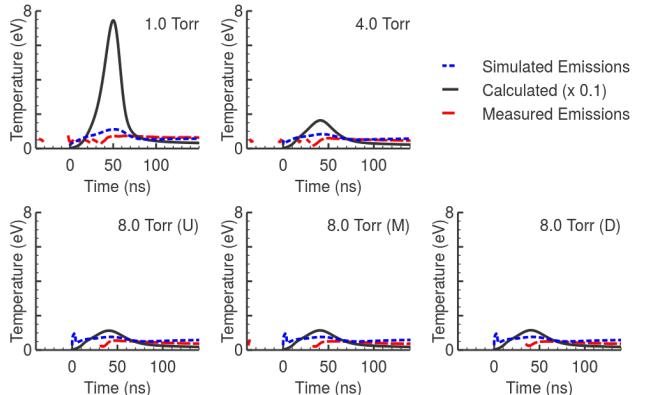
Emission Detection

106/107
Sep 4, 2013



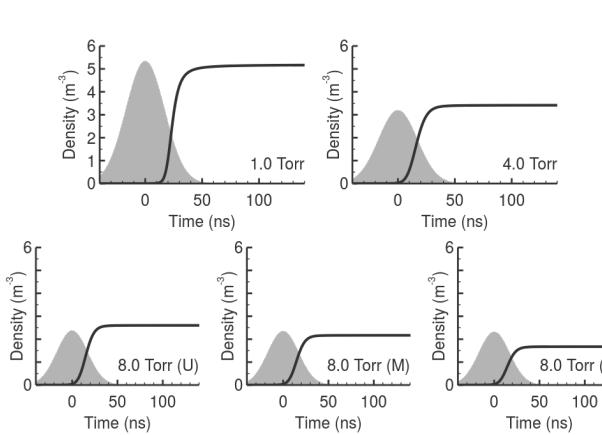
Perturbation Results

104/107
Sep 4, 2013



Boltzmann Plots

107/107
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Electron Density Estimates

105/107
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