

# Areas of Study and Research



The Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory, the Kármán Laboratory of Fluid Mechanics and Jet Propulsion, and the Firestone Flight Sciences Laboratory form the Graduate Aerospace Laboratories, widely known as GALCIT. In this complex are housed the solid mechanics, impact mechanics, and deployable space structures laboratories, the hypersonics and hydrodynamics facilities, the explosion dynamics and detonation physics laboratories, and the Joe and Edwina Charyk Laboratory of Bioinspired Design and Biopropulsion, as well as the various disciplines making up the broad field known as aerospace.

### *Areas of Research*

Aerospace has evolved at Caltech from a field of basic research and engineering, primarily related to the development of the airplane, into a wide discipline encompassing a broad spectrum of basic as well as applied problems in fluid dynamics and mechanics of solids and materials. Educational and research thrusts include the application of mechanics to various aspects of space exploration and to the study of biosystems and biopropulsion. Research at GALCIT has traditionally pioneered exploration of areas that have anticipated subsequent technological demands. This tradition places a high premium on in-depth understanding of fields both closely and remotely related to the behavior of fluids, solids, combustion, materials, and structures, such as physics, applied and computational mathematics, earthquake physics, atmospheric studies, materials science, micro- and optoelectronics, microfluidics, bioinspired design, biomedical devices, and even astrophysics. GALCIT students are known and sought after for their broad yet intense education and for their ability to deal with new and challenging problems.

Major areas of experimental, theoretical, and numerical research currently pursued by aerospace students at Caltech are briefly described below.

- *Physics of Fluids.* Fluid dynamics as a discipline is as much a part of physics as of engineering. Physics of fluids refers to research in areas closer to applied physics than to direct technical applications. Present active research includes studies in gas dynamics and hypervelocity flows, diffraction and focusing of shock waves, detonation waves, shock-induced Rayleigh-Taylor and Richtmyer-Meshkov instabilities, transient supersonic jets, the development of laser-scattering diagnostic techniques for fluid-flow measurements, the study of structures and mechanics in transition and turbulence, studies of two-phase flows and turbulent mixing, and experimental manipulation and control of wall-bounded flows for improved flow characteristics, such as reduction of drag, noise, and structural loading.

- *Physics of Solids and Mechanics of Materials.* Mechanics of materials research involves both the quasi-static and dynamic characterization of the mechanical behavior and failure of solids. In order to understand materials for applications in a wide range of structures germane to aerospace as well as other engineering disciplines, both the physical foundations of that behavior and the mathematical or numerical representation of such behavior needs to be understood. Accordingly, studies involve material response at both the macroscopic (continuum) scales and the micro- and nanoscales. Of interest are the typical engineering metals, multiphase (composite) materials, polymers and ceramics, thin film materials used in microelectronic and optoelectronic applications, soft tissue mechanics of materials, and active materials used in structural actuation and controls. Other areas of active research include the study of highly nonlinear dynamics in solids, multiscale acoustic metamaterials, and nondestructive evaluation/structural health monitoring of structures.
- *Space Technology.* The goal of industrial utilization and exploration of space requires that one addresses a wide range of engineering problems. Examples of research activities include lightweight structures for large aperture systems, in-space manufacturing, material and structural behavior in extreme temperature and radiation environments, spacecraft shielding against hypervelocity impact threats, the mechanics of sample containment for planetary protection, low-g biomechanics, biomimetics of locomotion in planetary atmospheres, hypersonic reentry into planetary atmospheres, in-space propulsion, guidance, navigation and control, and launch-vehicle performance and safety. Opportunities exist for research in collaboration with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.
- *Computational Solid Mechanics.* Computational solid mechanics addresses phenomena ranging from the atomistic scale, e.g., nanoindentation, to the structural scale, e.g., fracture of aircraft or spacecraft components, modeling of large space structures or even dynamic fragmentation phenomena accompanying hypervelocity impact. It provides an indispensable tool for understanding the relation between structure and mechanical properties of materials, for predicting the efficiency of such industrial processes as machining and metal forming, and for assessing the safety of such structures as airplanes, spacecraft, automobiles, and bridges. The goals and objectives of this activity are to provide a state-of-the-art environment for the development of numerical methods in solid mechanics, to provide the computational resources required for large-scale simulations in solid mechanics, and to serve as an instructional facility for advanced courses.
- *Computational and Theoretical Fluid Dynamics.* Many of the fluid dynamics phenomena studied experimentally at GALCIT are

also being investigated by numerical simulation and by theoretical analysis. Present active research areas in computational and theoretical techniques include direct numerical simulation, particle methods for flow simulation, new algorithms and subgrid-scale models for compressible and incompressible flows, large-eddy simulation methods, flows with shocks and driven by shocks, analytical and computational techniques for turbulence structure diagnostics, analysis of turbulent mixing dynamics, high-explosive interactions with deformable boundaries, and detailed chemical reaction kinetics in flames and detonations.

- *Mechanics of Fracture.* An active effort is being made to understand mechanisms in a wide range of fracture problems. Aspects that are studied include quasi-static and dynamic crack growth phenomena in brittle and plastically deforming solids, polymers and advanced composites, as well as fatigue and failure of adhesive bonds. Research areas adjunct to dynamic fracture studies are those of dynamic localization in metals and of failure in frictional interfaces. These include the study of shear rupture phenomena in both coherent and incoherent interfaces. The dynamic failure of modern composite and layered materials and the phenomenon of earthquake rupture growth along geological faults have motivated these studies.
- *Aeronautical Engineering and Propulsion.* Research in the aeronautical engineering area includes studies of airplane trailing vortices and separated flows at high angles of attack. Research work in the propulsion area has centered on the fluid dynamic problems associated with combustion, solid propellant rocket motor instabilities, fluid dynamics and optimization of scram-jets, and pulse detonation engines.
- *Biomechanics of Fluids and Solids.* The kinematics and dynamics of fluid flows in biological systems are studied in experiments, numerical simulations, and theoretical analyses. These flows are often characterized by unsteady vortex dynamics, coupled fluid interactions with flexible material surfaces, non-Newtonian fluid behavior, and, in some cases, compressibility. Areas of active research include animal swimming and flying, cardiovascular fluid dynamics and hemodynamics, the mechanics of morphing/active deformable surfaces for flow control, and biologically inspired design of engineering systems.
- *Technical Fluid Mechanics.* These areas are related to a variety of modern technological problems and, in addition, to the traditional aeronautical problems of drag, wing stall, and shear flow mixing. Additional areas of activity include bluff-body aerodynamics, fluid-structure interaction, turbulent combustion, laminar diffusion flames and their instabilities, explosions, hydrodynamics and two-phase flows, interaction of vorticity with free-surface, cardiac flows, swimming and flying, and active and passive control of transition and turbulence.

Acoustics problems studied include jet noise, combustion noise, and instabilities such as the generation of organ pipe oscillations in large burners of electric generating plants.

- *Fluid Mechanics, Control, and Materials.* The effects of boundary conditions on turbulence characteristics and general flow physics, scaling and controllability, interdisciplinary methods based on developments in materials science and control techniques. Manipulation of canonical and simple model flows to probe fundamental issues of flow physics and control. Development of smart, biomimetic boundaries. Development of practical control and measurement techniques and devices. Experimental study of wall-bounded turbulence for scalability of control from the lab to large-scale applications.
- *Mechanics of Lightweight Space Structures.* Current efforts in the field of next-generation deployable space structures aim to increase reliability and also lower fabrication and assembly costs by moving toward structures that consist of only a small number of separate pieces able to undergo large elastic deformations. These elastic-stored-energy structures return to their original, unstressed configuration when they are released in orbit. The design of these structures requires accurate structural models that incorporate geometry change and contact effects in sufficient detail to capture the actual behavior that is observed in ground tests. Local and global instabilities are often observed during folding/deployment, and their effects can also be very important. Ultimately, validation against space-based experiments will be pursued for a selected number of structural configurations. In parallel to these studies, thermomechanical constitutive models for ultrathin composite materials for these novel deployable space structures are being developed. Extensive studies of the deployment, elastic, and viscoelastic stability of stratospheric balloons are also being conducted.

### *Physical Facilities*

The Graduate Aerospace Laboratories contain a diversity of experimental facilities in support of the programs described above. Low-speed wind tunnels include the John W. Lucas Adaptive Wall Tunnel, the Merrill Wind Tunnel, which can be operated by a single person, and special-purpose flow facilities. Both a high-speed water tunnel (100 feet per second) and a free-surface water tunnel are housed in the hydrodynamics laboratory; they are used for studies of acoustics, laminar-turbulent flow transition, and the structure of turbulent shear flows. Smaller water channels and a tow tank for studies of wave motion and flow visualization are also available. For investigations of high-speed flows, there is a Ludwig tube, a supersonic shear layer facility, and the T5 shock tunnel for studying hypervelocity gas flows up to 7 km/s. Shock tubes and other special facilities are available for the study of

extreme temperatures, shock waves, deflagrations, detonations, acoustics, and combustion at variable pressure conditions. A 40-meter tilting water flume and wave generation facility is available for studies of small-scale, self-propelled vehicle prototypes, fluid dynamic energy conversion, and environmental flow studies.

The solid and structural mechanics laboratories contain standard as well as special testing facilities for research related to aircraft, deployable space structures, and failure/fracture behavior of materials under static and dynamic loads, including three servo-hydraulic facilities, two of which operate on a “tension/torsion” mode, and a nanoindenter. A range of digital and film high-speed cameras offering recording at rates up to 100 million frames per second are available for the study of fast phenomena, such as wave propagation, hypervelocity impact, and the mechanics of static and dynamic fracture. Dynamic testing facilities include specialized electromagnetic loading devices (stored energy ~120 kJ), a drop weight tower, split Hopkinson bars (axial/torsional), and plate impact apparatus. Diagnostic devices include full-field interferometric and high-speed temperature measurements, both for static and dynamic applications. Other specialized facilities include a Class One clean room area that houses microelectronic wafer inspection metrology tools, and the Small Particle Hypervelocity Impact Facility (SPHIF) jointly operated with JPL, which is capable of launching micrometeoroid serogate particles at speeds up to 8 km/s. Facilities are available for scanning microscopy (AFM, STM) and electromechanical characterization of materials.

State-of-the-art electronic instrumentation is being developed and used. Extensive use is made of computer systems for real-time control of experiments, for data acquisition, processing, and storage, and for digital image processing. Computational facilities include powerful workstations, on-campus high-performance computing machines, and remote supercomputers such as those generally available at NSF, NASA, and DOE centers. Graphics workstations are available to support research in computational fluid dynamics and solid mechanics.

## **APPLIED AND COMPUTATIONAL MATHEMATICS**

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An interdisciplinary program of study in applied and computational mathematics that leads to the Ph.D. degree is offered by the Computing & Mathematical Sciences department. In addition to various basic and advanced courses taught by the applied and computational mathematics faculty, broad selections are available in mathematics, physics, engineering, and other areas. Students are expected to become proficient in some special physical or non-mathematical field. A subject minor in applied computation is offered jointly with the computer science option.

In addition to the applied and computational mathematics faculty, professors from other disciplines such as mathematics, physics, engineering, and biology supervise research and offer courses of special interest. The applied and computational mathematics group has access to supercomputers and concurrent computers. Library facilities are excellent, comprising all the journals, a complete general library, and a special research library in engineering and applied science.

The present graduate program is one leading mainly to the Ph.D. degree. The curriculum consists of two types of courses: those that survey the methods used in applied and computational mathematics, and those that have a special applied and computational mathematics flavor and represent active research interests of the members of the faculty. Among the latter have been wave motion, perturbation theory, fluid mechanics, optimization, stochastic processes, wavelet analysis, signal processing, numerical analysis, computational electromagnetism, and computational fluid dynamics. Through study outside of applied and computational mathematics, each student is expected to become competent in some special physical or nonmathematical field. In this way, subjects for research appear naturally, and a broad educational program is provided.

The group primarily interested in applied and computational mathematics currently consists of approximately 25 students and eight professors. Also, each year many distinguished visitors come either to present lectures or remain in residence for large parts of the academic year.

#### *Areas of Research*

Research is particularly strong in theoretical and computational fluid mechanics, theoretical and computational materials science, computational electromagnetism, numerical analysis, ordinary and partial differential equations, multi-scale analysis, geometric integration, integral equations, linear and nonlinear wave propagation, water waves, bifurcation theory, perturbation and asymptotic methods, stability theory, variational methods, approximation theory, uncertainty quantification, randomized algorithms, optimization, statistical estimation, computational harmonic analysis, stochastic processes, signal and imaging processing, inverse problems, mathematical biology, large-scale scientific computing, and related branches of analysis.

## **APPLIED MECHANICS**

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### *Areas of Research*

Advanced instruction and research leading to degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in applied mechanics are offered in such fields as elasticity; plasticity; wave propagation in solid media; mechanics of quasi-static and dynamic fracture; dynamics and vibrations; finite element analysis; and stability, control, and system identification of mechanical and structural systems.

Research studies in these areas that illustrate current interests include linear and nonlinear random vibrations of uncertain dynamical systems; structural dynamics and control for earthquake and wind loads; linear and nonlinear problems in static and dynamic elasticity, plasticity, and viscoelasticity; computational mechanics; mechanics of time-dependent fracture; chaotic behavior of dynamical systems; and material instabilities and phase transformations in solids.

### *Physical Facilities*

In addition to the regular facilities in the Division of Engineering and Applied Science, which include extensive computing facilities, certain special facilities have been developed in connection with applied mechanics activities. The vibration laboratory is equipped with a good selection of modern laboratory apparatus and instrumentation for experimental research in shock and vibration, and the earthquake engineering research laboratory contains specialized equipment for vibration tests of buildings, dams, and other structures, and for the recording and analysis of strong-motion earthquakes. The solid mechanics laboratory located in the Graduate Aeronautical Laboratories contains extensive testing equipment for the study of fracture and structural failure. Excellent computing facilities are available through the campus computing network and in the specialized centers of various research groups.

## **APPLIED PHYSICS**

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This option was instituted in 1970 in order to provide an interdisciplinary program for undergraduate and graduate students at Caltech interested in the study of both pure and applied physics. The small size of Caltech, coupled with its strength in the basic sciences and engineering, has made it possible for faculty and students to pursue wide-ranging interests in the application of modern physics to technology. Research efforts in applied physics tend to be driven by both a fundamental understanding of the physical principles underlying applications, devices, or processes and a strong motivation to use this knowledge to invent new



experimental designs, techniques, materials, or technologies. Core and affiliate faculty spanning several divisions on campus participate in instruction and research leading to B.S., M.S., and Ph.D degrees in applied physics.

This program is designed for undergraduate and graduate students who wish to expand their training beyond the study of fundamental physics to include research and development of real-world applications. This program helps develop a solid foundation in physics through introductory courses in classical physics, classical electrodynamics, quantum mechanics, thermodynamics, statistical mechanics, and mathematical physics. More advanced training is provided through course work in solid state physics, electromagnetic wave propagation, opto-electronic materials and devices, transport phenomena in hydrodynamic systems, plasma physics, biological physics, semiconductor principles and devices, quantum electronics, and advanced condensed matter physics including superfluidity, superconductivity, low dimensional electronic systems, and topological insulators.

Students are encouraged early on to develop strong experimental skills for advanced laboratory work, including familiarity with numerical computation for data and image analysis and software packages for instrument automation. There exist many learning opportunities along these lines, from courses in micro-fabrication and advanced physics laboratory work to independent work with various research groups. Undergraduate students in applied physics are therefore often presented with numerous opportunities for developing their research interests into junior or senior thesis projects leading to publication.

### *Physical Facilities*

Research in applied physics covers a broad spectrum of activities distributed across campus. Instructional and research activities of the core faculty are housed in the Thomas J. Watson, Sr., Laboratories of Applied Physics, a 40,000-square-foot building with state-of-the-art research laboratories, a central microfabrication facility, faculty and student offices, and a conference room and instructional classroom, all nestled around a beautiful courtyard with a fountain pool.

Additional research laboratories and faculty and student offices are located in the Harry G. Steele Laboratory of Electrical Sciences, built in 1965 with funds from the Harry G. Steele Foundation and the National Science Foundation. The building, which is connected by an overhead bridge to the Watson Laboratories, conveniently also houses the new Kavli Nanoscience Institute.

## ASTROPHYSICS

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Caltech is one of the world's preeminent centers of astronomical research. This is due to the combination of excellent human resources with premier observational facilities and computational infrastructure. Fundamental discoveries in astronomy and astrophysics are a part of Caltech's past, present, and future.

Students from either the astronomy or the physics options are best prepared to undertake research with faculty in the Cahill Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics. Students from related options such as planetary science, computer science, applied physics, and electrical engineering are also welcome.

### *Areas of Research*

Astronomy and astrophysics are synonymous at Caltech. Caltech scientists and students are involved in many frontier areas of research, and have been known to open new ones. Research techniques include observations, theory, numerical simulation, laboratory astrophysics, and detector development. Projects and groups often bridge between these areas of inquiry.

Topics of current research interest include: observational cosmology and the nature of dark matter and dark energy; studies of the cosmic microwave background; galaxy formation and evolution; quasars and other active galactic nuclei and radio sources; studies of the dynamics and composition of galaxies and clusters; physics and evolution of the intergalactic medium; interstellar matter; local star and planet formation; extrasolar planetary systems; the structure of the Galaxy; globular clusters; stellar abundances; supernovae, gamma-ray bursts, and other types of cosmic explosions and transient phenomena; neutron stars and black holes; accretion disks; digital sky surveys and virtual observatory; numerical general relativity; and many others.

Research in planetary and Solar system astronomy is often pursued in cooperation with groups in the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences. New types of astronomical detectors, that can revolutionize various areas of astronomical research, are developed by groups in physics along with colleagues at JPL.

In addition to maintaining a leading numerical general relativity group, Caltech theorists also use some of the top high-performance computing facilities for simulations of supernova explosions, merging black holes, cosmic structure formation, etc. Caltech played a key role in the development of the Virtual Observatory framework that unifies a growing number of data archives, and is now leading the development of novel tools for knowledge discovery in massive and complex data sets.

### *History and Current Science at Observational Facilities*

Observational astronomy is pursued both from the ground-based sites and from space-based platforms.

Caltech operates, or has access to an unprecedented, comprehensive set of observational facilities, spanning the entire electromagnetic spectrum. Caltech is also playing a key role in opening a new window on the universe, the gravitational wave sky.

Historically, Caltech's pioneering role in astronomy started with Palomar Observatory (about 190 km from campus), funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. The first telescope on the mountain was an 18-inch Schmidt telescope built by Fritz Zwicky, and used to conduct pioneering sky surveys for supernovae, potential planetary hazard asteroids, etc. The 200-inch Hale Telescope, constructed through 1930's and 1940's, has been used to make many historical, fundamental discoveries ever since its commissioning in 1948, including the discovery of quasars, and many studies of stellar populations, galaxies, intergalactic medium, etc., and it continues to produce excellent science. Novel detectors and instruments were developed there, e.g., the first astronomical CCDs and infrared detectors. It is now used for pioneering advances in adaptive optics in addition to optical and infrared spectroscopy. The 48-inch Samuel Oschin Telescope has made possible complete surveys of the northern sky, initially with photographic plates (including the historic POSS-I and POSS-II surveys, now converted to a digital form), and more recently with large format CCD array cameras (NEAT, Palomar-Quest, and Palomar Transient Factory surveys). The 60-inch telescope has been robotized, and is generally used for the monitoring of transient sources.

In the 1990's, funded mainly by the Keck Foundation, Caltech and University of California constructed two 10-m telescopes on Mauna Kea, Hawaii. The W. M. Keck Observatory produced many recent discoveries in the fields of galaxy formation and evolution, intergalactic medium, extrasolar planets, cosmic gamma-ray bursts, etc. Caltech is now a partner in the development of the Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT), the first of the next generation of extremely large optical/infrared telescopes.

At much longer wavelengths, Caltech operates the Owens Valley Radio Observatory (OVRO) in a radio-quiet location about 400 km from Pasadena, near Big Pine, California. Its facilities include a 40-meter telescope, a five-element interferometer for solar studies, and a 5.5-meter telescope dedicated to observations of polarized radio emission from the galaxy. These facilities operate at meter wavelengths. The Combined Array for Research in Millimeter-wave Astronomy (CARMA) is a joint project between Caltech, the University of California, the University of Illinois, the University of Maryland, and the University of Chicago. It consists of 23 antennas located in an isolated area in the Inyo mountains. The high-precision telescopes are used at millimeter wavelengths to: map the distribution of interstellar gas and dust around evolved

stars and in star-forming regions of our own and other galaxies, study the SZ distortions of the cosmic microwave background, and enable detailed studies of the sun and planetary atmospheres.

The Chajnantor Observatory, at an altitude of 5,080 m in the Chilean Andes, is the site of the Cosmic Background Imager, which is used for cosmic microwave background (CMB) studies, and will also be the site of the QU Imaging Experiment (QUIET) and the Clover experiment, both of which aim at very high sensitivity polarized microwave background studies. Caltech astronomers have also conducted CMB studies with balloon-borne instruments in Antarctica, and with space missions, currently the Planck.

The Caltech 10-meter Submillimeter Observatory, located on Mauna Kea, Hawaii, was completed in 1986 and has been engaged in the study of the chemistry and physics of planets and cool regions of the interstellar medium. For the future, Caltech is a major partner in the development of CCAT, a proposed 25-m telescope for submillimeter astronomy, to be located at 5,600 m altitude on Cerro Chajnantor in northern Chile. CCAT will combine high sensitivity, a wide field of view, and a broad wavelength range to provide an unprecedented capability for deep, large-area, multi-color submillimeter surveys and targeted studies.

On the space observations front, Caltech hosts NASA's Spitzer Science Center (SSC) and Infrared Processing and Analysis Center (IPAC), which are principal national archives for astronomy. Caltech scientists lead or actively participate in a number of astrophysics missions, currently including the Spitzer Space Telescope, the GALEX ultraviolet mission (now operated by Caltech), and the recent NuSTAR hard X-ray mission. There are also close connections with Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), that designs and operates a number of NASA's scientific missions. Finally, Caltech astronomers are major users of the Hubble Space Telescope, Chandra, Fermi, Herschel, Planck, etc.

Back on the ground, Caltech is a major partner in the development and operation of the world's first gravitational wave observatory, Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO). Exciting new discoveries are expected as we open this new window on the universe.

## **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE**

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The Institute offers an interdisciplinary program of study in neuroscience, psychology, economics, and political science that leads to the Ph.D. degree. The program seeks to train students to do interdisciplinary work at the intersection of the natural and social sciences. At present, members from the biology, computation and

neural systems, social sciences, and humanities groups participate in research and training in this area.

#### *Areas of Research*

This program is characterized by interdisciplinary research at the frontier of neuroscience, psychology, economics, and political science. Examples of research topics of interest include the following:

- Computational and neurobiological foundations of simple decision making in animals and humans.
- Computational and neurobiological basis of economic and political decision making.
- Affective neuroscience.
- Neurobiological basis of social behavior in human and animal models.
- Neurobiological basis of moral judgment and decision making.
- Applications of neuroscience to economics and political science.

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#### *Physical Facilities*

Research in this area is carried out in multiple laboratories spanning a wide range of experimental techniques—from behavioral experiments to single unit neurophysiology. Researchers also have access to two state-of-the-art facilities: the Caltech Brain Imaging Center, which contains various human and animal brain scanners, and the Social Science Experimental Laboratory, which contains state-of-the-art facilities for conducting behavioral economic experiments of group and market interactions.

## **BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOPHYSICS**

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Biochemistry and molecular biophysics has been established as an interdisciplinary program, at the interface of biology, chemistry, and physics, that seeks to understand the chemistry of life. Thus, biochemists and molecular biophysicists study the atomic structure and folding of biopolymers; their interactions with each other and with small molecules; and the roles of particular biopolymers and biopolymer assemblies in cellular physiology. The basic building block of life is the cell; the intellectual focus of modern biochemistry and molecular biophysics is to understand how individual parts interact to give cells their wide spectrum of functions. In particular, biochemistry and molecular biophysics addresses the principles through which the individual components of cells combine in an orderly self-association to produce their form, their function, and their dynamic behavior.

#### *Areas of Research*

General areas of research represented within the option include signal transduction, cell cycle, DNA and RNA structure and

#### *Areas of Study and Research*

metabolism, control of gene transcription during development, electron transport proteins and bioenergetics, biological catalysis, macromolecular structure, membrane proteins, and biotechnology and biomolecular engineering. More specific examples of biological phenomena currently under study include the transduction of signals received by cell surface receptors into an appropriate response, as in chemotaxis or transmission of signals across synapses in the nervous system; the replication of DNA; the biochemical networks that control initiation and termination of cell division; the controlled transcription of DNA sequences in the genome into RNA and the processing of this RNA into mRNA and the subsequent translation into protein; the molecular mechanisms controlling the differentiation of precursor cells into specialized cells such as neurons, lymphocytes, and muscle cells; the mechanisms by which synaptic transmission in the brain is regulated during thinking and the formation of memories; the processes, driven by fundamental principles of chemical bonding and molecular energetics, by which a given linear sequence of amino acids folds into a specific three-dimensional structure in the appropriate cellular environment; how electrons move within a cell to accomplish the many redox reactions necessary for life; how light is harvested by pigments and is perceived in vision; the function of integral membrane proteins in energy and signal transduction processes; and the mechanisms by which enzymes both efficiently and specifically catalyze biochemical interconversions. This fundamental understanding of the molecular basis of biological processes provides a powerful base for the development of applications in medicine, including biotechnology and rational drug design, and in the chemical industry, where nucleic acids, proteins, and their analogs are now being used in the development of chemical systems for novel applications, and where mutagenesis and selection systems are used to produce novel materials.

## BIOENGINEERING

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Bioengineering research at Caltech focuses on the application of engineering principles to the design, analysis, construction, and manipulation of biological systems, and on the discovery and application of new engineering principles inspired by the properties of biological systems.

### *Areas of Research*

■ *Biodevices* (Burdick, Hajimiri, Heath, Ismagilov, Pine, Roukes, Siapas, Tai, Yang)

BioNEMS, BioMEMS, laboratories-on-a-chip including microfluidic systems, neural networks, microscopes, and diagnostics, novel measurement principles, neural interfaces and prostheses.

■ *Bioimaging* (Fraser, Gharib, Guo, Meyerowitz, Pierce, Yang)  
Biophotonics, advanced imaging technologies, computational image analysis, noninvasive biomedical imaging, single-molecule technologies, flow-field imaging technologies, in situ amplification.

■ *Bioinspired Design* (Gharib, Hajimiri, Ismagilov, Murray, Tirrell)  
Engineering physiological machines, engineering self-powered technologies, control systems, synthetic heteropolymers, and self-healing circuits and systems.

■ *Biomechanics* (Bhattacharya, Gharib, Guo, Phillips, Roukes)  
Molecular and cellular biophysics, cardiovascular mechanics, muscle and membrane mechanics, physiology and mechanics of flapping flight, multicellular morphodynamics, cell-biomaterial interactions.

■ *Biomedical Engineering* (Burdick, Davis, Fraser, Gharib, Hajimiri, Heath, Ismagilov, Pierce, Roukes, Siapas, Yang)  
Neural prosthetics, molecular imaging during surgery, BioNEMS diagnostics, on-chip diagnostic laboratories, nanoparticle drug delivery, locomotion rehabilitation, and portable point-of-care diagnostic devices.

■ *Cell and Tissue Engineering* (Elowitz, Fraser, Gharib, Guo, Ismagilov, Tirrell)  
Multicellular morphodynamics, principles of feedback between tissue mechanics and genetic expression, nonnatural protein biomaterials, cell-biomaterial interactions, developmental patterning.

■ *Molecular Programming* (Murray, Pierce, Rothemund, Winfree)  
Abstractions, languages, algorithms, and compilers for programming nucleic acid function, molecular information processing, molecular complexity theory, free energy landscapes, metastable systems, self-assembly across length scales, algorithmic self-assembly, synthetic molecular motors, in vitro and in vivo nucleic acid circuits.

■ *Synthetic Biology* (Arnold, Elowitz, Ismagilov, Murray, Pierce, Rothemund, Tirrell, Winfree)  
Principles of biological circuit design, genetic circuits, protein engineering, noncanonical amino acids, nucleic acid engineering, rational design, directed evolution, metabolic engineering, biofuels, biocatalysts, elucidation of systems biology principles using synthetic systems.

■ *Systems Biology* (Doyle, Elowitz, Guo, Heath, Ismagilov, Lester, Meyerowitz, Murray, Phillips, Sternberg)  
Roles of circuit architecture and stochasticity in cellular decision making, feedback, control, and complexity in biological networks, multicellular morphodynamics, principles of developmental circuitry including signal integration and coordination, spatial patterning, and organ formation, principles of feedback between tissue mechanics and genetic expression, neural development, and disease.

## BIOLOGY

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Recent dramatic progress in our understanding of the nature of life has revolutionized the science of biology. Applications of the methods, concepts, and approaches of modern mathematics, physics, chemistry, and information science are providing deep insight into basic biological problems such as the manner in which genes and viruses replicate themselves; the control of gene expression in cells; the regulation of cellular activity; the mechanisms of growth and development; and the nature and interactions of nerve activity, brain function, and behavior. Qualified experimental and computational biologists will find opportunities for challenging work in basic research as well as in medicine and in biotechnology.

Because of the eminent position of the California Institute of Technology in both the physical and biological sciences, students at the Institute have an unusual opportunity to be introduced to modern biology.

### *Areas of Research*

Research (and graduate work leading to the Ph.D. degree) is chiefly in the following fields: biochemistry, biophysics, cell biology, developmental biology, genetics, genomics and computational biology, immunology, molecular biology, neurobiology, and structural biology. Biochemical methodology plays an important role in many of these fields, and there is extensive interaction with related programs in biochemistry within the Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, including the biochemistry and molecular biophysics option.

The programs in cellular, molecular, and developmental biology are based upon approaches derived from biochemistry, biophysics, and genetics that offer new possibilities for expanded insight into long-standing problems. Neurobiology is a major area of emphasis within the Division of Biology. A comprehensive program of research and instruction in neurobiology has been formulated to span from molecular and cellular neurobiology to the study of animal and human behavior, including the computational modeling of neural processes.

A geobiology option is described in the geological and planetary sciences section.

### *Physical Facilities*

The campus biological laboratories are housed in seven buildings: the William G. Kerckhoff Laboratories of the Biological Sciences, the Gordon A. Alles Laboratory for Molecular Biology, the Norman W. Church Laboratory for Chemical Biology, the Mabel and Arnold of Behavioral Biology, the Braun Laboratories in Memory of Carl F and Winifred H Braun, the Beckman Institute, and the Broad Center for the Biological Sciences. They contain



classrooms and undergraduate laboratories, as well as research laboratories where both undergraduate and graduate students work in collaboration with faculty members. Special facilities include rooms for the culturing of mutant types of *Drosophila*, a monoclonal antibody production facility, a fluorescence-activated cell sorter facility, scanning and transmission electron microscopes, a confocal microscope facility, a magnetic resonance imaging center, a transgenic mouse facility, a high throughput sequencing and microarray analysis facility, and a protein expression and purification center.

About 50 miles from Pasadena, in Corona del Mar, is the William G. Kerckhoff Marine Laboratory. This laboratory provides facilities for research in cellular and molecular biology using marine animals, and for collecting and maintaining these animals.

## BIOTECHNOLOGY

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Biotechnology is a growing area of interdisciplinary research with a long tradition at Caltech. It includes a wide range of research opportunities in the Division of Biology, the Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, and the Division of Engineering and Applied Science. Areas of emphasis include the development and application of new methods and instruments for studying a spectrum of biological problems ranging from the structure, function, and chemistry of key macromolecules such as proteins and DNA to the imaging of cellular processes or the complex problems of neural systems. Other programs focus on the creation, study, and use of novel microorganisms and proteins, combining classical and molecular genetic approaches with modern chemistry and engineering science. New challenges in data analysis and molecular modeling bring together research in biology and chemistry with computer science and applied and computational mathematics. Research in these areas leading to the Ph.D. may be pursued by entry into one of the relevant graduate options in the divisions listed above. The interdisciplinary nature of biotechnology often includes course work and research collaborations that embrace more than one division. Each graduate option specifies the emphasis of the educational program and its degree requirements.

Excellent facilities for biotechnology research are available in each of the participating divisions. For example, the Beckman Institute provides extraordinary resources for development and application of new instruments and methods.

## CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

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The chemical engineering faculty teach and conduct research on fundamental chemical, biological, and transport processes and their application in understanding, designing, and controlling a broad spectrum of complex chemical, biochemical, and environmental processes. The faculty and students utilize their analytical skills and laboratory resources to study diverse processes and to synthesize new materials. The combination of engineering principles, chemistry, biology, physics, and mathematics that characterizes chemical engineering at Caltech enables students and faculty to contribute to the solution of a wide range of critical problems and to aid in creating new areas of science and technology.

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### *Areas of Research*

Many different research areas are offered to students seeking the degrees of Master of Science or Doctor of Philosophy in chemical engineering. Particular research fields emphasized in the department include the following:

- *Biological Design and Engineering.* Engineering of proteins and metabolic pathways by computational and laboratory evolution approaches. Biocatalysis for sustainable “green” production of pharmaceuticals and specialty chemicals. Engineering organisms to convert biomass to fuels and chemicals.
- *Fluid Mechanics and Transport Processes.* Mechanics of polymeric liquids, microstructured fluids, colloidal dispersions, and suspensions and granular media. Transport in heterogeneous media.
- *Polymer Physics and Chemistry.* Molecular understanding of polymer melt rheology. Optical properties of polymer blends. Dynamic modeling of polymer structure and rheology. Synthesis of tailored polymers by chemical and biological means.
- *Biomaterials.* Synthesis and properties of organic materials designed for use in living systems. Therapeutic modification of existing systems.
- *Cellular Engineering.* Quantitative analysis and redesign of molecular events governing cell behavior.
- *Catalysis and Biocatalysis.* Synthesis of molecular sieves and organic-inorganic hybrid materials. Synthesis of inorganic membranes for gas separations and catalysis. Biological routes to the synthesis of chemicals.
- *Complex networks of reactions, cell, and organisms.* Studies of microbial communities in environment and interactions of microbial communities with their human host.
- *Microfluidics.* Science of single molecules, crystals, and cells. Fundamental studies of fluid flow and interfacial phenomena. Applications to diagnostic and therapeutic problems in Global Health.

- *Electronic Materials and Devices.* Plasma processing of semiconductors, pattern etching and deposition. Modeling and simulation of pattern-dependent effects. Chemical reaction dynamics of plasma-surface interactions.
- *Microplasmas.* Sources of reactive radicals and ions at high pressures. Microreactors for gas conversion/pollutant destruction. Synthesis of nanocrystals. VUV-excimer radiation emitters.
- *Nanotechnology.* Aerosol synthesis of nanoparticles for microelectronic and photovoltaic applications. Nanoprobes, nanomechanics, nanofluidics. Crystallization in carbon nanotube cavities. Synthesis and characterization of quantum dots and nanostructural materials. Environmental consequences of nanotechnology.
- *Environmental Chemical Engineering.* Physics and chemistry of atmospheric gases and aerosols, bioaerosols, climate change.
- *Aerosols and Colloids.* Nucleation and growth of particles. Particle formation and reactions. Structure and properties of colloidal dispersions. Aerosol and colloidal particle characterization.
- *Applied Mathematics and Computational Physics.* Supercomputer applications in fluid mechanics and environmental modeling. Concurrent computing. Asymptotic analyses of transport processes.
- *Physics of Complex Fluids.* Structures, phase transitions, and dynamics of polymers, liquid crystals, surfactant solutions, and suspensions.
- *Materials for Energy Technologies.* Electrochemistry of fuel cells. Ion transport through solids. Design of thermoelectric materials.

### *Physical Facilities*

The chemical engineering laboratories, mainly housed in the Eudora Hull Spalding Laboratory of Engineering and the Warren and Katharine Schlinger Laboratory for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, are well equipped. The facilities include experimental reactors, computational facilities, NMR spectrometers, and numerous special research equipment for molecular simulations, DNA synthesis, and electronic, optical, and chemical measurements.

## **CHEMISTRY**

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Caltech offers exciting opportunities for study and research at the frontiers of chemical science. With approximately 30 faculty, the chemistry program provides depth in the traditional areas of chemistry—organic and inorganic chemistry, chemical physics, theoretical chemistry, and chemical biology. Research areas include chemical synthesis and catalysis, chemical dynamics and reaction

mechanisms, biochemistry, bioinorganic, bioorganic, and biophysical chemistry, and materials chemistry. Chemical research at Caltech is also highly interdisciplinary, mirroring the increasing importance of molecular understanding in many fields of science. Active interactions exist between chemistry and other disciplines at Caltech, especially applied physics, biology, chemical engineering, environmental science, geological and planetary sciences, and materials science. Major initiatives are fostering broad collaborations in energy and environment, molecular medicine, and nanomaterials.

Teaching is an important component of the chemistry option. Caltech has trained generations of chemists who have become leaders in academia, industry, and government, through undergraduate and graduate programs that are designed to encourage the greatest possible amount of freedom, creativity, and flexibility.

### *Areas of Research*

Caltech has a long and continuing reputation for excellence in fundamental chemistry in molecular structure and the nature of chemical bonding. Much of the current research in chemistry is directed at establishing and manipulating the mechanisms of reactions of fundamental chemical and biological significance.

Programs in chemical physics emphasize studies of molecular dynamics and structure using techniques that include femtosecond lasers, molecular beams, ultra-high sensitivity spectroscopy, and mass spectrometry, while novel methods such as ultrafast electron diffraction and force-detected magnetic resonance are being developed and applied to systems of increasing complexity. Interdisciplinary research includes the development of powerful approaches to fabricate, assemble, and utilize nanometer-scale structures; spectroscopy and fundamental chemical mechanisms of reactions in Earth and planetary atmospheres, star formation, and interstellar chemistry; the dynamics of phase transitions; and novel methods in mass spectrometry.

Catalysis by transition metals represents a central area of research in the inorganic and organometallic areas. Current research interests include the uses of transition metal complexes as homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysts for polymer synthesis, solar energy conversion and storage, and methane and water oxidation. Reactions of molecules on surfaces are an important focus, especially on semiconductors. Research in bioorganic and bioinorganic chemistry includes the chemical basis of synaptic transmission by ion channels; investigations of molecular recognition and sequence-specific ligand binding to DNA; DNA-mediated charge transport; and design of artificial transcription activators.

Chemical synthesis, a key part of much of the research described above, is the primary research goal of several groups, and includes projects aimed at the synthesis of complex organic molecules of importance in biology and human medicine. These efforts include development of new and synthetically useful chemical

transformations mediated by novel organic and transition metal-based catalysts. The division has an exceptional program in polymer science, with emphasis on the development of strategies and methodologies for the synthesis of designed polymers using chemical- and biological-based approaches.

The theoretical chemistry program ranges from fundamental studies of electron transfer to excited states and reaction dynamics of small molecules, to simulations of biological systems and materials. In these studies, theoretical techniques are being developed to provide detailed understanding of electron transfer processes, proton transfer reactions, energy randomization processes within molecules, and the dynamics of reacting systems. Computer simulations are addressing ever more complex systems, ranging from metals and superconductors to soft materials and biomolecules.

Research in biochemistry and molecular biology within the chemistry division exists within the larger framework of biochemical studies at Caltech, and includes crystallographic and spectroscopic analyses of macromolecule structures; studies on the design, folding, and stability of macromolecules; the mechanisms of enzyme catalysis and allosteric transitions; interactions between proteins and nucleic acids; macromolecular assemblies mediating replication, transcription, and protein biosynthesis; the mechanism and functional role of protein glycosylation; and mechanisms of ion and electron transport in biological membranes.

#### *Physical Facilities*

The laboratories of chemistry consist of eight units providing space for about 25 research groups, including 300 graduate students and postdoctoral research fellows. Crellin and Gates laboratories house several research groups, the divisional instrumentation facilities, and the divisional administrative offices. Synthetic research groups occupy the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Laboratory of Chemical Synthesis and Church laboratories. The Braun Laboratories and the Broad Center for the Biological Sciences house biochemical groups and are shared with the Division of Biology. The Arthur Amos Noyes Laboratory of Chemical Physics is one of the major research facilities for chemical physics and inorganic chemistry and is adjoined by the Clifford S. and Ruth A. Mead Memorial Undergraduate Chemistry Laboratory. Chemistry groups recently joined several chemical engineering colleagues in the new Warren and Katharine Schlinger Laboratory for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. A number of resource centers serving researchers of the division are located in the Beckman Institute.

## CIVIL ENGINEERING

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Civil engineering includes the research, development, planning, design, and construction associated with the infrastructure of the built environment. Dealing with the function and safety of such facilities as buildings, bridges, pipelines, dams, power plants, and harbors, it is concerned with the protection of the public against natural hazards such as earthquakes, winds, floods, landslides, water waves, and fires.

Recent advances in technology, the escalation of urban problems, and the exploration of space have broadened the applications of civil engineering, increasing the scope of research. New problems have presented special challenges to the civil engineer well-trained in the fundamentals of his or her profession. For this reason, in the advanced study of civil engineering at the Institute, the application of fundamental scientific principles and mathematics is emphasized for the solution of engineering problems.

### *Areas of Research*

Graduate work leading to advanced degrees lies chiefly in the following fields: structural engineering and structural dynamics; earthquake engineering; applied mechanics; geotechnical engineering; aerospace structures; and environmental engineering (see also environmental science and engineering). In the past few years, graduate students and members of the faculty have pursued a variety of research programs, including the analysis of structures subjected to earthquakes and other dynamic loadings; optimal performance-based structural design; system identification and control of structures; structural health monitoring; the use of finite element methods for structural analysis; seismic risk and structural reliability; earthquake early warning systems; mechanics of soil and other granular materials; and mechanics of space structures. Students whose interests are in environmental problems may enroll for graduate degrees in either civil engineering or environmental science and engineering.

### *Physical Facilities*

Civil engineering activities are housed in two buildings: the Franklin Thomas Laboratory, which contains the earthquake engineering research laboratory and the vibration laboratory; and the W. M. Keck Engineering Laboratories, which contains the environmental science and engineering laboratories. Excellent computing facilities are available through the campus computing network and in the specialized computing centers of various research groups. Seismic instrumentation networks include the Southern California Seismic Network and the Community Seismic Network.

What does the brain compute? How does it do it? And why? Faculty and students in the CNS option study how information is acquired and processed by the brain. They are also interested in designing machines that are adaptable, intelligent, and autonomous. The unifying theme of the program is the study of the relationship between the physical structure of a computational system (synthetic or natural hardware), the dynamics of its operation and its interaction with the environment, and the computations that it carries out.

Areas of interest include coding and computation in networks of neurons, sensory systems (vision, audition, olfaction), learning and memory, control and motor behavior, and planning and decision making. Thus, CNS is an interdisciplinary option that benefits from, and integrates, multiple traditional areas of expertise: molecular, cellular, neural, and systems biology, electrical and mechanical engineering, computer science, psychology, and cognition, applied mathematics, and physics.

Faculty in the program belong to the Division of Biology, Division of Engineering and Applied Science, Division of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy, and Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences. They have an interest in developing conceptual frameworks and analytical approaches for tackling seemingly disparate problems that share a common deep structure at the computational level. Students in the program will partake of a wide-ranging curriculum that will promote a broad understanding of neurobiology, sensory psychology, cognitive science, computational hardware and software, and information theory.

### *Areas of Research*

Areas of research include the neuron as a computational device; the theory of collective neural circuits for biological and machine computations; algorithms and architectures that enable efficient fault-tolerant parallel and distributed computing; learning theory and systems, pattern recognition, information theory, and computational complexity; computational modeling and analysis of information processing in biochemical and neural networks; the design and use of synthetic macromolecules as computational devices; light and magnetic resonance imaging of cell lineages, cell migrations, and axonal connections in the forming nervous system; learning, plasticity, and memory; experimental and modeling studies of localization and recognition by sensory systems (vision, olfaction, audition) in insects and vertebrates on the basis of electrophysiology, psychophysics, and functional imaging techniques; multiunit recordings in behaving animals; neuroprosthetic devices and recording methods in animals and humans; imaging and stimulation

### *Areas of Study and Research*

of cortical areas in humans and other primates using functional MRI, TMS, and tDCS; decision making, attention, awareness, emotion, and consciousness in the primate brain using a combination of neurophysiological, psychophysical, and computer modeling techniques; cognitive psychology; and the study of evolution in natural and artificial systems.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE

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Although computing is a ubiquitous tool in all areas of study and research at Caltech, computer science focuses on the theory and technology of computation itself: it is truly the study of information, and of the structures that communicate, store, and process information. Whether these structures are expressed in hardware and called machines, in software and called programs, or in nature or society, the fundamental concepts are similar. Students of the computer science option within the Computing & Mathematical Sciences department at Caltech do not specialize along traditional lines that divide hardware and software, systems and applications, or theory and experiment. Rather, a unified approach to the design and analysis of computing structures is taken both in courses and in research.

Unlike the study of physical and natural sciences, the objects of study by computer scientists are artificial systems; that is, structures that are purposefully designed, taking into account physical limitations of the real world and fundamental requirements of the computation itself. Thus, design assumes a role equal in importance to analysis and is a term found frequently in the curriculum and research. Design is not only a creative activity but is also formal and systematic. Managing the great complexity of useful systems requires a representation of computations amenable to both mathematical treatment and implementation.

### *Areas of Research*

Research and advanced courses leading to the Ph.D. degree in computer science are concentrated in the following areas: VLSI systems; quantum and molecular computation; computer architecture; parallel and distributed computation; theory of computation; information theory; machine learning and computational finance; computer vision; computer graphics; discrete differential geometry; computer-aided design; and networking. Research projects frequently involve work in several of these areas, with both theoretical and experimental aspects, as well as connections with such fields as mathematics, physics, biology, economics, and electrical engineering. Crosscutting themes include:

- *Physical Implementation of Computations.* Computations must ultimately be implemented in some physical medium (e.g., semiconductor electronics, DNA self-assembly, quantum states of



elementary particles, molecular electronics). Developing robust disciplines, abstractions, and methodologies that allow the design of reliable computing substrates has been a focus of the option since its inception. Caltech has been a leader in the early development, engineering, and design of very large scale integrated (VLSI) circuits. Beyond VLSI, efforts are under way to understand quantum, biomolecular, and molecular electronic substrates as possible media for future computing machines. As was the case with semiconductor electronics, Caltech computing can draw on the world-class expertise of its biology, physics, and chemistry departments as it tackles the many challenging opportunities that these new substrates present.

- *Systematic Design.* A key theme in the Caltech computer science option is the systematic design of systems at all levels. This theme shows up in the design of numerical algorithms for physical simulation and computer graphics, design of concurrent and distributed systems, abstractions for physical computing substrates, design of learning systems, design of programming languages, automated optimization of computations for both software and hardware implementation, as well as control and optimization of networks. The success of computer systems has allowed the building of systems of unprecedented scale and complexity. These systems can only be understood and managed if we carefully contain the complexity involved. We can only hope to create and optimize efficient computing artifacts by systematically defining and exploring their design space. This does not say that system design is not a creative endeavor, but rather that careful design allows us to expose the places where creativity is most needed, and to carefully assess the impact of new ideas and techniques.
- *Concurrency.* The physical world is highly parallel. Caltech computer science has embraced concurrency as a fundamental feature of computing systems from its inception. Within the option, parallelism is a theme at all levels, from physical circuits through tightly coupled, concurrent multiprocessors, through distributed systems, up to Internet-wide computing systems and beyond. Disciplines and systematic design for defining and managing the potentially complex interactions in parallel systems is a key focus.
- *Robust Modeling of Physical Systems.* Caltech computer science also has a unique focus in developing rigorous and robust models of the physical world. These models are mathematically and physically sound, often derived from differential geometric principles, and serve as a basis for computer graphics and vision research, as well as the simulation of mechanical, optical, and biological systems.
- *Theory.* A key component of systematic design is a strong theoretical understanding, which provides a basis for synthesis, analysis, and verification. The theory of computation focuses on deep mathematical problems, many of which have substantial

technological impact. Theory is not relegated to a single group at Caltech, but rather forms an integral part of all disciplines. As such, it has a strong connection to actual practice in each domain. Theory in computer science at Caltech also includes traditional areas such as complexity algorithms, theories of numerical computation, optimization, probability, and game theory.

- *Interdisciplinary Research.* Computation enables better control and understanding of the physical world—two ubiquitous themes at Caltech. Computer simulations, modeling, and analysis are now key enablers, allowing all fields of science to advance rapidly. Modern mechanical and aeronautical systems are enabled by vast computational processing for sensing and control. Furthermore, insights into computational management of information helps us understand information processing issues in natural systems (e.g., cells and neurons) and build hypothetical models that advance our understanding of natural cognition. Economic analyses play an important role in the design of computing systems and, in addition, research on information systems impacts business and economics. These relations provide many opportunities for scholars in computer science to work closely with colleagues throughout Caltech. The Information Science and Technology (IST) initiative facilitates and promotes such interdisciplinary research (see <http://www.ist.caltech.edu>).

#### *Physical Facilities*

The computer science option has excellent computing facilities ranging from high-performance workstations to multiprocessors and supercomputers. The Computing & Mathematical Sciences department maintains a large computer lab open to students and offers a large collection of software for a wide range of applications. Students have easy access to state-of-the-art equipment. The Institute libraries maintain a large collection of journals in computer science and related fields.

## **CONTROL AND DYNAMICAL SYSTEMS**

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Some of the most exciting interactions between mathematics and engineering are occurring in the area of analysis and control of uncertain, multivariable, and nonlinear dynamical systems. While changing technology has made control and dynamical systems theory increasingly relevant to a much broader class of problems, the interdisciplinary nature of this area means that it no longer has a natural home exclusively or even primarily within any one of the traditional engineering disciplines. The CDS option, as part of the

Computing & Mathematical Sciences department, is designed to meet the challenge of educating students both in the mathematical methods of control and dynamical systems theory and their applications to problems in engineering and science.

Faculty and students in CDS are active in a number of research areas. The primary theoretical areas of research include stochastic and nonlinear dynamical systems, multiscale modeling, optimal and decentralized control, system identification and estimation theory, Bayesian modeling and analysis, uncertainty quantification, and communications and information theory. Active applications include networking and communication systems, embedded systems and formal verification, robotics and autonomy, molecular and systems biology, integrative biology, human physiology, economic and financial systems, computing systems, physics of fluids, quantum mechanics, seismology and earthquake engineering, and space systems.

## **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING**

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Electrical engineering at Caltech emphasizes both electronics and systems. Closely allied with computation and neural systems, applied physics, bioengineering, computer science, and control and dynamical systems, it offers students the opportunity for study and research, both theoretical and experimental, in a wide variety of subjects, including wireless systems, quantum electronics, modern optics, biophotonics, MEMS/NEMS, solid-state materials and devices, power electronics, energy systems, control theory, nanoscale systems, signal processing, data compression, and communications.

### *Areas of Research and Physical Facilities*

Substantial experimental laboratory facilities, housed mainly in the Moore Laboratory of Engineering, are associated with each of the research fields described on the following pages.

#### ■ *Quantum Electronics and Optical Communication (Yariv)*—

Research in this group is addressing the fundamental issues of the interaction of atomic systems and coherent electromagnetic, usually optical, fields and the application of the resulting understanding to demonstrating, in the laboratory, devices and systems central to optical data transmission. Current projects involve slow-light propagation in coupled-resonator systems and semiconductor laser phase control by electronic means, and new generation of swept-frequency lasers for optical radar and imaging. The group is heavily involved in micro- and nano-processing technologies to fabricate the relevant devices. The group has maintained a long tradition of spawning optical communication companies.

### *Areas of Study and Research*

- *Communications and Signal Processing* (Effros, Hassibi, Ho, Low, Vaidyanathan)—Theoretical and computer experimental work in a wide range of information, communication, and signaling problems. Current research emphases are in error control coding, modulation, and capacity calculations for channels that occur in communication networks, multiuser mobile and cellular radio, and deep-space communications; network communications, including multicasting, distributed operation, network security; access, spectral sharing, dynamic channel allocation, and multiuser detection in wireless systems; multiple-antenna systems and space-time codes; information content and data compression; applications of neural networks to communication and signal processing problems; traffic modeling, routing, congestion control, network architecture, and energy efficiency of computing and information systems; and design and simulation of single-rate and multirate digital filters and filter banks to minimize the number of computational operations for a given accuracy. Digital filter banks, subband coding, wavelet transforms, multidimensional multirate signal processing. Possibilities exist for joint work with microsystems, wireless communication, digital signal processing, and data compression.
- *Control* (Doyle)—Theoretical research is conducted in all aspects of control, with emphasis on robustness, multivariable and nonlinear systems, and optimal control. Theoretical developments are tested using the latest in computer and experimental facilities in a wide variety of application areas. Opportunities on campus, at Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, with industrial sponsors, and at NASA laboratories include control problems associated with large flexible space structures, refinery systems, flight control, robotics, control of unsteady flows, and various other aerospace and process control applications.
- *Wireless Sensing and Communications* (Hajimiri)—Circuits and system design for wireless communication using integrated circuit technology, fully integrated silicon-based millimeter-wave circuits and phased array transceivers, novel modulation techniques using integrated electromagnetic structures, high-frequency integrated power generation, equalization for wireline communications, and multimode reconfigurable systems. This area of research also includes analysis and design of communication building blocks, such as monolithic low-noise amplifiers (LNA), active and passive mixers, local oscillators and frequency synthesizers, frequency dividers and multipliers, power amplifiers, integrated filters, intermediate frequency amplifiers, and baseband digital signal processing.
- *Learning Systems and Computational Finance* (Abu-Mostafa)—The Learning Systems Group at Caltech studies the theory, algorithms, and applications of automated learning. The theory

of learning uses mathematical and statistical tools to estimate the information (data and hints) needed to learn a given task, and the computational aspects of learning. The algorithms deal with learning mechanisms in different models, such as neural networks, and different learning protocols. The applications of learning are very diverse. The group has emphasized computational finance applications, where learning is used in financial forecasting, risk analysis, and derivative pricing. Other recent applications include pattern recognition and medical diagnosis.

- *Smart Grids and Energy Supplies* (Chandy, Doyle, Low, Rutledge, Wierman)—All aspects of smart grids, including analysis, design, and deployment of information and communication technologies in power networks, integration of renewable and distributed generation, power flow analysis and optimization, demand response, electricity market design, and energy efficiency of data centers. Emphasis is on the interplay between theory, algorithms, prototyping, and experimental studies to maximize their potential impact. Assessment of future supplies of oil, gas, and coal, and the implications for alternative energy sources for future climate.
- *MEMS/NEMS Sensors and Actuators* (Tai, Choo)—We exercise VLSI, MEMS, and nanotechnologies to build miniature devices. Current research projects have a lot of biomedical applications, including integrated biochips, microfluidic chips, cancer chips, stem-cell chips, bloodcount chips, smart skins, neuroprobes, retinal implants and spinal cord implants, etc. Hands-on fabrication of high-level integration is specially emphasized for our students in the Caltech MEMS laboratory.
- *Digital Signal Processing* (Hassibi, Vaidyanathan)—Theoretical and computer-oriented work on a wide variety of problems in digital signal processing. Multirate systems and filter banks, wavelets, filter design, quantization in signal processors, adaptive signal processing, statistical signal processing, robust filtering, multidimensional multirate systems, and wavelet transforms. Digital filter banks, digital communication systems, multidimensional multirate signal processing. Image processing, digital halftoning, and denoising. Compressive sensing and applications, sparse signal recovery and applications.
- *Computational Vision* (Perona)—Theoretical and experimental research on the computational principles underlying vision processes. Psychophysics and modeling of the human visual system. Theory and applications of computer vision. Current emphasis on visual object recognition; vision-based human-machine interfaces; perception and modeling of human and animal behavior. Areas of collaboration include learning theory, computer graphics, neurophysiology, psychology, applied probability, robotics, geometry, and signal processing.
- *Nanofabrication and Design of Ultrasmall Devices* (Scherer, Choo)—High-resolution lithography and dry etching allow the miniaturization of structures to below 10 nanometers. Using these tech-

niques, ultrasmall optical, magnetic, and fluidic structures can be constructed. Current research includes the design and fabrication of nanocavity lasers; photonic-crystal waveguides and modulators; nanomagnet arrays; nonmechanical oscillators; and microfluidic pumps, valves, and networks on biochips.

- *Distributed Information Systems* (Bruck)—Research on synthetic and natural distributed information systems, including information systems in storage and communications (the synthetic part) and the development of abstractions for the analysis and design of biological regulatory networks (the natural part). The information systems work includes developing efficient array codes for increased reliability of RAID storage systems, schemes for representing information in magnetic recording and optical communications, and methods for representing and protecting information in flash memories. The mathematics of biology-related work includes the development of a calculus for representing computation in gene regulatory networks: for example, demonstrating for the first time that an approximate general computation can be achieved using a finite set of chemical reactions, provided that they operate in a stochastic manner. Past projects include the RAIN (Reliable Array of Independent Nodes) project. The RAIN technology resulted in a spin-off company called Rainfinity (acquired in 2005 by EMC), which focused on software products for the management of network information systems.
- *Network Information Theory* (Effros)—Theoretical analysis and practical design of algorithms for efficiently representing and communicating information in network systems. Current work focuses on the development of computational tools for bounding the performance of large network systems. Tools useful to these investigations include information theory, probability theory, graph theory, optimization, and signal processing. Possible areas of collaboration include networking, distributed computing, communications, wireless communications, controls, and digital signal processing.
- *Integrated Circuits* (Emami, Hajimiri)—Analysis, design, simulation, verification, and testing of integrated circuits for various applications, such as high-speed and wireless communications, wireless local-area networks, highly stable frequency sources, distributed integrated circuit design techniques for ultrahigh speed silicon-based circuits, system and circuit design for multi-band systems, single-chip spectrum analyzers, performance limitation of A/D and D/A data converters, and robust circuit-design techniques. Projects also include millimeter-wave silicon-based circuits and arrays, self-healing circuits, high frequency power generation in CMOS, analysis and design of distributed circuits, multimode reconfigurable systems, as well as modeling of the effect of substrate and supply noise in large

- integrated circuits and design techniques to minimize their effect, examination of integrated passive structures and their fundamental performance limits, and noise modeling in amplifiers, mixers, and oscillators. More information can be found at <http://www.chic.caltech.edu> and <http://www.mics.caltech.edu/>
- *Networking* (Doyle, Ho, Low, Wierman)—Control and optimization of communication and cyber-physical networks such as the Internet and power networks. Current research focuses on fundamental issues in network architecture; network coding, including management and security issues; network storage; and green IT.
  - *Wireless Communications* (Hassibi)—Theoretical research on link, system, and network aspects of wireless communications. Current areas of interest include time-varying channel modeling; capacity computations for wireless channels; channel estimation, identification, and equalization; multiple-antenna systems and diversity techniques; space-time codes; modulation techniques; channel access and spectral sharing through various TDMA, FDMA, CDMA, and hybrid techniques; multiuser detection and interference cancellation; dynamic channel allocation; models and performance analysis of wireless networks; ad hoc networks; signal processing for wireless. The research encompasses various areas of information theory, coding theory, stochastic processes, statistical and adaptive signal processing, and network theory.
  - *Biophotonics* (C. Yang)—Experimental research on imaging and extraction of information from biological targets through the use of light. Current areas of interest include optofluidics, needle endoscopy, phase conjugation-based turbidity suppression, optical coherence tomography, multiphoton imaging, quadrature homodyne interferometry, and microscopy. More information can be found at <http://www.biophot.caltech.edu>.
  - *Mixed-Signal Engineering* (Emami)—Design and implementation of high-performance analog and digital circuits for wireline and optical data communications, chip-to-chip and on-chip signaling, clock generation and distribution, synchronization, and equalization. Low-power, high-bandwidth analog-to-digital and digital-to-analog converters. Circuits and micro-electronics for biomedical applications such as neural implants, sensing systems and drug delivery. Tools and design methodologies for mixed-signal circuits and systems, with the emphasis on modeling and understanding of the fundamental limits and physical properties.
  - *Integrated Biosensors* (Hajimiri)—Use of integrated circuits for novel detection techniques of biological matters using various sensing modes (e.g., electrical, magnetic, optical) and leveraging the complexity of silicon-based integrated circuits to create state-of-the-art sensitivity for such sensors for a variety of bio-

molecules, such as DNA and proteins. This area also includes analysis of the dynamics and kinetics of such sensors for a variety of applications, including microarrays, point-of-care sensors, and other medical equipment.

## **ENERGY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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The useful transformation of energy from one form to another drives the engine of civilization. Access to plentiful, inexpensive, and environmentally benign resources would free nations to pursue their greatest human and economic potential. In the modern era, the appetite for energy is convoluted, with a recognition of diminishing fossil fuel resources and of dramatic negative impacts on global climate. The interdisciplinary program in Energy Science and Technology (EST) aims to foster revolutionary methods of harnessing carbon-free energy sources while advancing related technologies in carbon sequestration and further drawing connections to policy and economic considerations. The program brings together traditional topics in thermodynamics and kinetics with modern topics in biomolecular engineering, charge and mass transport, and photoelectrochemistry. Faculty and students in the EST program are drawn from a broad range of academic options, including materials science, chemistry, applied physics, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, and environmental science and engineering. Areas of emphasis reflect this breadth of disciplines and include photovoltaics, photoelectrochemical cells, biofuels, fuel cells, batteries, thermoelectrics, hydrogen generation and storage, and nuclear energy.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

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Research and teaching in the ESE program span the large scales of global climate variations, the local scales of urban air pollution, and the microscales of microbial ecosystems. Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the ESE program, it unites scientists and engineers from Caltech's Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences, Division of Engineering and Applied Science, and Division of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. Jointly they address, for example, how climate has varied in the past and how it may change in the future, how biogeochemical cycles and chemical reactions control the composition of the atmosphere and local air quality as well as the Earth's global energy balance, and how more efficient and effective ways of producing biofuels or remediating toxic waste can be found. The methods employed in research pro-



jects include laboratory studies of fundamental chemical and biological processes; field studies of microbial ecology and of atmospheric chemistry; and computational and theoretical studies of chemical and physical processes on molecular to global scales.

Students enter the ESE program with diverse backgrounds, from the basic sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology to applied science and engineering fields. The curriculum emphasizes interdisciplinary knowledge and is broad, yet it is flexible so that different backgrounds and focus areas can be accommodated.

### *Areas of Research*

- ***Atmospheric Chemistry and Air Pollution.*** Atmospheric chemistry affects the composition of the atmosphere, properties of clouds, and local air quality. Research areas include cloud chemistry, aerosol chemistry and physics, trace gas photochemistry, and emission sources and transport and reaction pathways of organic species. The methods employed include laboratory studies of aerosol formation and of chemical reactions in the atmosphere; field campaigns with aircraft operated by ESE faculty; satellite missions carried out in collaboration with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory; and theoretical and modeling studies of tropospheric chemistry and the carbon cycle.
- ***Environmental Chemistry and Technology.*** Environmental chemistry and technology research in ESE addresses fundamental questions in heterogeneous atmospheric chemistry (e.g., chemistry of clouds, fogs, and haze aerosols), in aquatic chemistry, in oxidation and reduction chemistry and technology, in semiconductor photocatalysis, and in hydrogen production from sunlight via electrochemical water splitting.
- ***Dynamics of Climate.*** Climate dynamics research in ESE addresses fundamental questions about how Earth's climatic features are maintained, how they have varied in the past, and how they may change in the future. Research includes the large-scale dynamics of the atmosphere and oceans, the hydrologic cycle and how it responds to climate changes, monsoon dynamics, and the dynamics of the Southern Ocean. Methods employed include theoretical and modeling studies, analyses of observational data, and field campaigns to collect oceanographic data.
- ***Biogeochemistry and Climates of the Past.*** Biogeochemical research in ESE finds application at scales ranging from microbial ecosystems to the global carbon cycle. Current research interests include the marine carbon cycle and its geochemical record in organic matter and carbonate minerals; microbial recycling of nutrients and carbon; and development and use of geochemical proxies for understanding the ancient environment, including its climate.
- ***Environmental Microbiology.*** Microorganisms are the primary drivers of global biogeochemical cycles and represent the most abundant and diverse forms of life on Earth. They catalyze crit-

ical biological transformation processes such as nitrogen fixation, oceanic primary productivity, and methane cycling. Microbial ecosystem research within ESE is focused on understanding microbial processes in terrestrial, marine, and extreme ecosystems. Research areas span a range of topics and field sites, including the study of lignocellulose degradation by termite gut microbiota, anaerobic cycling of carbon, nitrogen, and sulfur in microbial mats and sediments, and methane cycling in the ocean.

### *Physical Facilities*

ESE laboratories and facilities are housed in the Linde + Robinson Laboratory for Global Environmental Science and in other nearby buildings of Caltech's Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences. The laboratories are equipped with a wide variety of state-of-the-art instruments.

- The *Environmental Analysis Center (EAC)* houses analytical instrumentation, for research that ranges from analyzing pollutants in groundwater to dating fossils. Its equipment includes instruments for electrochemistry, plasma emission mass spectrophotometry, gas chromatography, high-performance liquid chromatography, fluorescence spectroscopy, infrared spectrometry, gas chromatography–mass spectrometry, total organic carbon analysis, and electrophoresis and electrical particle size analysis. Scientists from across the Institute use the EAC for cutting-edge analytical studies.
- The *Atmospheric Chemistry and Aerosol Laboratory* is designed for studies of the photochemical reactions of gaseous and particulate pollutants. In two reaction chambers (28 m<sup>3</sup> each)—the first of their kind when they were built—the chemical reactions that produce urban smog and atmospheric particles are investigated under precisely controllable conditions. They have revealed how the particles that make up smog form in the atmosphere. Research results obtained with them have been instrumental in designing effective air quality policies. They continue to be invaluable in studies of air pollution.
- The *High-Precision Spectroscopy Laboratory* is housed in a quiet room—a room with specially designed acoustic and electromagnetic insulation. Acoustic foam blocks sound waves and copper cladding around the entire room blocks electromagnetic waves. The noise-free environment allows us to achieve exquisite precision in laser measurements of radiative properties of greenhouse gases, aerosols, and atmospheric trace constituents: the properties of single molecules can be measured. The measurements are the basis for climate models and for planning satellite missions to measure the composition of the atmosphere from space.
- In the *Laboratory for Atmospheric Chemical Physics*, the interactions of light with molecules in the atmosphere are investigated

to elucidate how pollution forms and to measure the atmospheric concentration of aerosols and greenhouse gases.

Techniques are developed for the global monitoring of the atmosphere from mobile ground-based laboratories and from space-based instruments.

- In the *Environmental Chemistry and Technology Laboratory*, collimated sunlight from the Linde + Robinson solar telescope is focused into photolysis reactors, where artificial photosynthesis processes are developed to convert water and carbon dioxide into energetic fuels. Additionally, the chemical nature of the air-water interface is studied, and new technologies are developed for storing electric energy in novel lithium-air batteries and for treating water, for example, by photovoltaically powered electrolysis or ultrasonically induced cavitation.
- The *Geochemistry Clean Room* is designed for trace metal analysis in an entirely metal-free environment. It has air cleansed of almost all particles, to be able to measure with high precision tiny traces of metals and radioactive isotopes found in ocean water and embedded in corals and in stalagmites. These measurements reveal information about how climate has varied in Earth's past and how carbon cycles between the biosphere, the atmosphere, and the oceans. The Clean Room is supported by a plasma mass spectrometry instrument room that contains two multi-collector instruments and a quadrupole instrument. The facility also contains a wet chemistry laboratory for the processing and analysis of environmental samples.
- The *Biogeochemistry Laboratories* provide capabilities for analyzing the structure, abundance, and isotopic composition of organic materials in environmental samples, ranging from organisms to sediments to rocks. Instrumentation includes gas chromatograph-mass spectrometers, isotope-ratio mass spectrometers with capabilities for bulk and compound-specific analysis, a spectroscopic water isotope analyzer, and a combustion elemental analyzer.
- In the *Environmental Microbiology Laboratories*, the diversity and metabolic activities of microorganisms from terrestrial and marine ecosystems are characterized through cultivation, microscopic imaging, metagenomics, and molecular and isotopic analysis. Instrumentation includes anaerobic chambers, platforms for performing microfluidics-based analyses of the nucleic acid contents of environmental single cells, capillary sequencers, quantitative PCR, epifluorescence microscopes, and CAMECA secondary ion mass spectrometers (7f Geo and nanoSIMS 50L) available through the Center for Microanalysis. Additionally, Caltech collaborates with the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Interdisciplinary Remotely Piloted Aircraft Studies (Monterey, California). This center operates research aircraft for atmosphere science studies, including a Twin Otter

aircraft that carries state-of-the-art instruments to measure atmospheric aerosol and cloud properties in situ. Faculty, students, and staff in the ESE program also have access to the supercomputer facility of the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences, where they carry out simulations of dynamical processes in the atmosphere and oceans and of chemical reactions and transport processes affecting atmospheric chemistry.

## **GEOLOGICAL AND PLANETARY SCIENCES**

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Students and faculty in the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences study Earth and the planets to understand their origin, constitution, and development, and the effect of the resulting physical and chemical environments on the history of life and on humanity. The approach to these problems relies strongly on the basic sciences. Programs of study and research are pursued in environmental science and engineering, geology, geobiology, geochemistry, geophysics, and planetary science. The curriculum is flexible so that students with degrees in biology, chemistry, engineering, or physics may carry out graduate work within the division, and interdisciplinary studies are encouraged.

Southern California provides an excellent natural laboratory for the study of geology, tectonics, and earthquakes. Current advances in understanding the dynamic motions of Earth's interior have opened new opportunities for the study of crustal motions and earthquakes. Historic records of seismic activity are put into long-term perspective by studies of surface and bedrock geology. The dynamics and geometry of crustal movements are studied on local, regional, and global scales in order to understand the evolution of continents, subduction zones, and mid-ocean ridges. The division maintains active field programs in diverse areas in North America and throughout the world.

The events that shaped Earth can be identified by studying the structure of rocks and their chemical and isotopic compositions. The absolute chronology of Earth and solar system history can be established by measurements of radioactive isotopes. These geological events have been intimately associated with the origin and evolution of life on Earth. The field of geobiology uses both geological and genetic evidence to examine the impact of life on Earth and the impact of geological conditions on biology. The field of geochemistry includes studies of radiogenic and stable isotopes, petrology, chemical oceanography, and atmospheric chemistry. These tools are applied to the origins of igneous and metamorphic rocks, evidence of past climate change, tracing anthropogenic influences on Earth, and the structure of planetary interiors. The comparative study of the other planets—their atmospheres, sur-

faces, and internal structures—is important in our understanding of Earth and its place in the cosmos. The early history of the solar system can be approached by studies of extraterrestrial materials, including lunar samples, interplanetary dust grains, and meteorites.

### *Physical Facilities*

The division is housed in four adjacent buildings, which are well equipped for modern instruction and laboratory work. They contain several seminar rooms and a library as well as student and faculty offices. Numerous computers are distributed throughout the division, including a facility for geographic information systems and remote sensing. Many efforts within the division-related geodetic, geological, and seismological investigation and monitoring of plate boundary regions are coordinated through the Caltech Tectonics Observatory. The division operates a 512-node (4096-core) supercomputer used by students and faculty for Earth and planetary science studies. Rock and mineral collections and sample preparation areas are available. There are modern laboratories equipped with a scanning electron microscope and electron microprobe; a variety of plasma-source, gas-source, thermal emission, and secondary ion mass spectrometers; tunable laser spectrometers; high-temperature furnaces and high-pressure apparatus including piston-cylinder, multi-anvil, diamond anvil, and shock-wave facilities. Our most advanced analytical tools are operated by our Center for Cosmochemical and Geochemical Microanalysis.

Cooperation with other departments on campus, such as materials science and environmental science and engineering, provides access to additional instrumentation for sample preparation and analysis.

A laboratory for molecular geobiology specializes in the culturing and the biochemical and genetic study of anaerobic bacteria. A sensitive magnetometer facility is designed for the study of both biomagnetism and paleomagnetism. The Seismological Laboratory, housed in the GPS division, operates the Southern California Seismic Network jointly with the U.S. Geological Survey. The network records and analyzes real-time earthquake data from more than 380 seismic stations located across Southern California. Data from the network are available for research via the Southern California Earthquake Data Center.

The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA's lead center for planetary exploration, is located seven miles from campus and is administered by the Institute. Students and faculty participate in JPL activities through joint research, instrument development, mission operations, and data analysis. In addition, Caltech owns and operates several optical and radio observatories that are used partly for planetary research. Active programs of planetary studies are pursued at the Owens Valley Radio Observatory, Palomar Mountain, and the Keck Telescopes and, in the near future, the Thirty-Meter Telescope project.

## **HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**

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The program in history and philosophy of science is devoted to the study of the historical evolution and philosophical underpinnings of the physical and biological sciences. Work in history and philosophy of science may be pursued as an undergraduate option, a graduate minor, or on a course-by-course basis.

Historical research in the program includes the origins of experimental practice, the social and institutional contexts of science, the origins and applications of quantitative methods, specific developments since antiquity in physics, biology, and chemistry, as well as biographical and comparative studies. Philosophical research in the program deals with issues in causation, explanation, scientific inference, the foundations of probability and decision theory, philosophy of mind, psychology and neuroscience, and scientific fraud and misconduct.

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## **HUMANITIES**

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English at Caltech spans the major periods of American and British writing. Students can pursue interests ranging from Shakespeare and a survey of drama to romantic and modern poetry; from early fiction to the postmodern novel.

History at Caltech examines the Western and non-Western past to understand the evolution of culture, science, institutions, and behavior. Courses span the medieval, Renaissance, and modern periods; the United States, Europe, and Asia; and special topics such as radicalism and demography. In certain courses, quantitative methods drawn from the social sciences are applied to historical studies.

Philosophy is concerned with the most fundamental issues involving the nature of the world and of human knowledge, values, and judgment. At Caltech, particular emphasis is placed on philosophy of the natural and social sciences, scientific inference, moral and political philosophy, and philosophy of mind, psychology, and the neurosciences. Members of the faculty have a variety of other interests, including philosophical logic, moral psychology, and the history of philosophy.

Courses in English, film history, and philosophy are given at both introductory and advanced levels.

A variety of courses in classical and modern European languages and in music and art history are available. Art history classes make use of the resources of the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and other museums in the area.

### *Areas of Research*

The English faculty, interested in new approaches to studying their subject, engage in research into the relationships between literature and the pictorial arts, literature and history, and the material production of literature.

Research in history covers a wide range of historical fields and methodologies. Topics include an examination of the development of racial attitudes and behavior in the 19th-century United States; the history of the physical and biological sciences and of science in relationship to society; history and film; and political and economic development in early modern Europe. A number of faculty carry out research and teaching in the interrelated subjects of science, ethics, and public policy.

Research in philosophy includes work in philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, history of philosophy, ethics, the evolution of cognition, and political philosophy.

## **INDEPENDENT STUDIES PROGRAM**

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Independent studies offer an educational alternative for undergraduates whose goals cannot be satisfied with a normal undergraduate option. The student gathers a three-person faculty committee, representing at least two divisions of the Institute, and chooses his or her own scholastic requirements under this committee's supervision. Approval must also be obtained from the Curriculum Committee, a standing committee of the faculty. The independent studies program has no facilities of its own. Areas of study and research may be selected from any part of the Institute. (For a complete description, see page 250.)

## **INFORMATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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Information science and technology (IST) is a multidivisional research area that includes participants from the biology, chemistry and chemical engineering, engineering and applied science, humanities and social sciences, and physics, mathematics and astronomy divisions. Areas of emphasis include networking and distributed systems, neuromorphic engineering and sensory-based machines, quantum computation and communications, molecular electronics and biochemical computing, biological circuit design, information flow in economic and social systems, and mathematical foundations of information.

### *Physical Facilities*

IST is mainly centered around the Annenberg Center for Information Science and Technology and the Moore Laboratory. Research centers associated with IST include the Lee Center for Advanced Networking, the Center for Neuromorphic Systems Engineering, the Center for Biological Circuit Design, the Center for the Mathematics of Information, the Center for the Physics of Information, and the Social and Information Science Laboratory.

## **MATERIALS SCIENCE**

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Materials scientists study relationships between the properties of materials and their internal structure, and how this structure can be controlled. The field of materials science at the California Institute of Technology emphasizes fundamental issues in metals, oxides, semiconductors, ceramics, and composites. Additional faculty in electrical engineering, applied physics, and chemistry are also concerned with semiconductors and superconductors. Work in polymers is carried out in aerospace engineering, chemistry, and chemical engineering.

### *Areas of Research*

The current areas of research by the materials science faculty include a wide variety of nontraditional materials, many far removed from their equilibrium thermodynamic states. Examples of such materials include metallic glasses, metal-matrix composites, energy-storage materials, nanostructured materials, proton-conducting solid acids and perovskites, and materials for electronic devices. The physical characteristics of interest span a wide range of mechanical, thermodynamic, electrical, magnetic, and electrochemical properties. Materials science is a cross-disciplinary field, and graduate students in the materials science option can perform their thesis research with a supervisor or cosupervisor in a different option at Caltech.

### *Physical Facilities*

Research by the faculty, graduate students, and a few advanced undergraduates is conducted in the W. M. Keck Laboratory, the Steele Laboratory, and frequently in the Kavli Nanoscience Institute (KNI), located in the subbasement of the Steele building. Microfabrication facilities in the KNI include standard thin-film deposition techniques, a lithography bay, and an etch bay, as well as an electron-beam and laser writers and a suite of nanocharacterization tools, such as focused ion beams (FIB), scanning electron microscopes (SEM), a nanoprobe, and a transmission electron microscope (TEM). Material-preparation facilities include equipment for physical vapor deposition under ultra-high vacuum conditions, melting, casting, and rapid solidification, equipment for the processing of ceramic powders, and high-energy ball milling. Facilities for the characterization of materials include an



extensive array of X-ray diffraction instruments including a single crystal diffractometer, X-ray powder diffractometers with high-performance, position-sensitive detectors, impedance spectrometers for transport and dielectric measurements, Mössbauer spectrometers, differential scanning calorimeters and differential thermal analyzers, thermogravimetric analyzers, and several test systems for the measurement of mechanical properties. A microscopy facility has been built around an FEI Tecnai TF30 300-keV transmission electron microscope with high resolution and analytical capabilities. In addition to the equipment within materials science, a wide range of mechanical and microstructural characterization facilities including mechanical testers, nanoindenters, an in-situ mechanical deformation instrument, SEMmentor, AFM, and an electrical probe tester are available elsewhere at Caltech.

## MATHEMATICS

### *Areas of Research*

Students in mathematics have the opportunity to work in many fields of current research. The main active areas of research by the faculty include the following:

- *Algebra*. Finite group theory, algebraic groups, representation theory, symmetric functions, algebraic K-theory.
- *Algebraic Geometry*. Moduli spaces, birational geometry, Hodge theory, Calabi-Yau varieties, arithmetic geometry.
- *Analysis*. Classical real and complex analysis, harmonic analysis, functional analysis and operator theory, orthogonal polynomials; complex, smooth, and random dynamical and Hamiltonian systems, fractals, integrable systems, partial differential equations.
- *Combinatorics*. Combinatorial designs and matrix theory, coding theory, extremal set theory.
- *Geometry and Topology*. Low-dimensional topology, hyperbolic geometry, geometric group theory and foliations; symplectic geometry and topology, topological gauge theory, knot theory, and their interface with theoretical physics.
- *Mathematical Logic*. Set theory and its interactions with analysis, combinatorics, dynamical systems, and model theory.
- *Mathematical Physics*. Schrödinger operators, random matrices.
- *Noncommutative Geometry*.
- *Number Theory*. Algebraic number theory, automorphic forms, Shimura varieties, Galois representations, and L-functions.

### *Physical Facilities*

The mathematics department occupies three floors of the Sloan Laboratory of Mathematics and Physics. In addition to offices for the faculty and graduate students, there are classrooms, a lecture hall, a computer lab, and a lounge for informal gatherings of the students and staff. The mathematics library is housed nearby in the Millikan Library.

### *Areas of Study and Research*

Mechanical engineering at Caltech explores the boundaries between traditional disciplines of science and engineering in order to develop a fundamental understanding of interdisciplinary challenges and create advanced technology to address contemporary problems.

Mechanical engineering encompasses three broad areas: (1) mechanics of materials, (2) systems and control, and (3) thermal sciences and fluid dynamics.

The educational program in mechanical engineering prepares students for research and professional practice in an era of rapidly advancing technology. It combines a strong background in the basic and engineering sciences with emphasis on addressing the critical technological challenges of the day. It strives to develop professional independence, creativity, leadership, and the capacity for continuing professional and intellectual growth.

### *Areas of Research*

- *Mechanics of Materials.* Studies in the field of mechanics of materials emphasize a fundamental understanding of mechanical behavior and failure of materials as well as its applications. Areas of interest include static and dynamic deformation and failure of homogeneous and heterogeneous solids, mechanical behavior of nanostructures, active materials, microstructure characterization and evolution, thin films, micro-electro-mechanical systems (MEMS), composites, fracture and frictional sliding of solids, earthquake source processes, seismo-mechanics, geomechanics, and granular media. Most problems emphasize bridging temporal and spatial scales and development of advanced analytical, computational, or experimental techniques.
- *Systems and Control.* This area combines a broad range of mechanical engineering fields, including control systems, dynamics, kinematics, and mechanical design, as well as cross-disciplinary areas such as signal processing, computer control, engineering computation, electromechanical design, micro-electro-mechanical systems (MEMS) design, and bioengineering. General areas of interest include control theory, estimation theory, decision theory, and robotics.
- *Thermal Sciences and Fluid Dynamics.* This area encompasses experimental and computational research in fluid dynamics, heat and mass transfer, thermodynamics, and combustion. Specific research areas include Stokesian dynamics, granular materials, cavitation and multiphase flow, turbulent combustion, explosion dynamics, and flow-generated sound. Applications cover a range of scales from molecular to high Reynolds number flows, and include constitutive modeling of colloidal dispersions, micro/nanofluidic systems including Marangoni and thermocapillary forcing in thin liquid films, formation of pollutants from

combustion to hydrocarbon fuels, instabilities of complex, reacting flows, and high-speed flows with shock waves. Interdisciplinary activities in the group include research on geophysical phenomena, biomedical devices, bio-inspired propulsion, and application of control theory to fluid mechanics.

### *Physical Facilities*

Students and faculty in mechanical engineering conduct research in laboratory facilities in a number of areas, including design and prototyping, flow visualization, heat transfer, robotics, bio/nano-mechanics, nano-mechanical testing, seismo-mechanics, biomolecular circuits, autonomous vehicles, explosion dynamics, T5 hypervelocity flow, and geomechanics. A number of High Performance Computing (HPC) clusters are available, including both CPU- and GPU-based architectures. Kavli Nanoscience Institute (KNI) is utilized for micro- and nano-fabrication, testing, and characterization.

## **PHYSICS**

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### *Areas of Research*

Students in physics will find opportunities for research in a number of areas where members of the faculty are currently active, including those listed below. Physics research at Caltech is often done in collaboration with scientists in the departments of applied physics, astrophysics, planetary science, engineering, chemistry, biology, and other departments, as well as with collaborators at other universities and laboratories. Additional research programs and more detailed information can be found on the Caltech physics department website.

- *Experimental Elementary Particle Physics.* Activities in elementary particle physics are aimed primarily at finding physics beyond the Standard Model. Experimental efforts employ hadronic colliders,  $e+e-$  colliders, and neutrino beams at several international facilities. Current experiments include the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, which is searching for the Higgs boson and physics beyond the Standard Model; the MINOS and Nona experiments at Fermilab, studying long baseline neutrino interactions; the BABAR and follow-up experiments, searching for new physics in CP-violating and other rare processes in B meson and  $t$  lepton decays.
- *Theoretical Elementary Particle Physics.* The particle theory group studies the unification of interactions based on string theory, the detailed properties of hadrons described by QCD, the quantum properties of black holes, the foundations of cosmology, including dark matter and dark energy, and other aspects of mathematical physics.

### *Areas of Study and Research*

- *Nuclear Physics.* The interests of the nuclear group include understanding the detailed properties of neutrinos and performing precision nuclear measurements to search for physics beyond the Standard Model. Neutrino oscillations are investigated at off-campus facilities using accelerators and antineutrinos produced in reactors to provide detailed information on the relative neutrino masses and mixing properties. Precision measurements of neutron decay allow sensitive searches for new physics, while measurements of the neutron electric dipole moment may help explain the dominance of matter over antimatter in the universe.
- *Observational Astrophysics.* Research in this area covers a broad range of topics using observational tools covering the entire electromagnetic spectrum. The high-energy astrophysics group at the Space Radiation Laboratory (SRL) uses X-ray and gamma-ray detectors aboard spacecraft and balloons to investigate energetic processes from compact astrophysical objects, including gamma-ray bursts from neutron-star and black-hole systems, supernova and hypernova dynamics, and the development of stars and galaxies in the early universe.

The cosmic ray group at SRL uses data from a variety of spacecraft to study the composition of energetic particles arriving from the sun, the local interstellar medium, and beyond, in order to understand the origin and acceleration of energetic particles in space.

The ultraviolet astronomy group uses satellite observations, such as from the GALEX spacecraft, to explore the ultraviolet sky. Studies include the birth and death of stars, galaxy dynamics and evolution, and other areas.

The submillimeter astronomy group studies star formation, interstellar gas, galaxies, and quasars using the Caltech Submillimeter Observatory and other facilities. An active program is also under way to develop new superconducting detector technologies for use at these wavelengths, in collaboration with scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The infrared astronomy group studies a host of astrophysical phenomena using Caltech's Palomar Observatory, the twin 10-meter optical telescopes at the Keck Observatory, and observations from the Spitzer Space Telescope. Caltech also manages the Spitzer Science Center on campus.

- *Theoretical Astrophysics.* The TAPIR (Theoretical Astrophysics Including Relativity) group carries out research on an ever-changing list of topics, including high-energy astrophysics and the physics of black holes and neutron stars, gravitational-wave astrophysics, cosmology, the formation of stars and galaxies in the early universe, and general relativity.
- *Cosmology.* The observational cosmology group explores the structure and dynamics of the early universe using precise

measurements of the cosmological microwave background radiation from detectors on the ground, on balloons, and on spacecraft. Efforts to directly detect dark matter are also under way. These experiments include an active program of detector development in collaboration with scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Theoretical studies seek to understand the large-scale structure of the universe, including the physical nature of dark matter and dark energy.

- *Gravitational-wave Astronomy.* Observations from the LIGO and LISA projects seek to use gravitational radiation to study a variety of astrophysical sources. Theoretical studies are aimed at developing sensitive data analysis techniques and calculating G-wave signals from sources such as coalescing black holes and neutron stars.
- *Condensed-Matter Physics.* Areas of interest include correlated electron systems, 2-D matter, phase transitions, atomic and excitonic Bose condensation, nanomechanical and nanoelectronic systems, biosensors, quantum electromechanics, phonon physics, high-temperature superconductivity, graphene and carbon nanotube systems, quantum entanglement, dynamics of disordered systems, chaos, pattern formation, and systems far from equilibrium. Resources include numerous labs in the Caltech physics department, at the Kavli Nanoscience Institute at Caltech, and at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.
- *Quantum Optics and Information.* Research on campus and at the Institute for Quantum Information at Caltech includes studies of the nature of quantum computation and quantum information, cavity quantum electrodynamics, algorithms and error correction techniques in quantum computation, and generally how quantum physics can be harnessed to improve the acquisition, transmission, and processing of information.

### *Physical Facilities*

The physics and astrophysics departments and laboratories are mainly housed in six buildings on campus: the Norman Bridge Laboratory, the Alfred P. Sloan Laboratory of Mathematics and Physics, the W. K. Kellogg Radiation Laboratory, the George W. Downs Laboratory of Physics, the C. C. Lauritsen Laboratory of High Energy Physics, and the Cahill Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics. Off-campus astronomical facilities include Palomar Observatory, the Keck Observatories, Owens Valley Radio Observatory, the Caltech Submillimeter Observatory, the Combined Array for Research in Millimeter-wave Astronomy (CARMA), and the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO).

## SOCIAL SCIENCE

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The social science program at Caltech is highly interdisciplinary, integrating economics, political science, quantitative history, law, anthropology, and psychology. It makes extensive use of mathematical modeling, laboratory experiments, and econometric techniques. Social science at Caltech strongly emphasizes the understanding and analysis of the relationships between individual incentives, political and economic institutions, and public policy.

### *Areas of Research*

Caltech social scientists are leaders in the field of laboratory experimentation. They have focused upon the behavior and design of auctions and auction-like mechanisms, public goods provision, interpersonal bargaining, and committee decision making. Considerable laboratory experimentation also focuses upon the workings of financial markets, and seeks to elucidate basic principles that underlie the pricing of assets, trading, and information aggregation in these markets. Many of these experiments are conducted through the use of networked computers in the William D. Hacker Social Science Experimental Laboratory.

In recent years, new avenues of experimentation in social science have emerged with advances in neuroscience. Utilizing fMRI brain-imaging, eye-tracking, and other measurement technologies, research at Caltech has begun to explore the neural foundations of decision making in game theoretic and market settings. The real world provides another setting for experimental research, and Caltech social scientists have conducted game theoretic-based experiments involving a wide variety of subjects, ranging from urban Americans to African villagers.

In the area of economic theory, research at Caltech has played a major role in the design of new institutions that more efficiently allocate resources and provide public goods. There has also been considerable research at Caltech on developing better theoretical and statistical models of individual choice behavior.

Political scientists at Caltech focus primarily upon quantitative analyses of voting, legislative behavior, and public policy. They draw heavily upon techniques and approaches used in a variety of other disciplines, such as economics, statistics, and legal studies. During the past decade Caltech faculty members have been active contributors to the Voting Technology Project, a joint Caltech-MIT research effort that evaluates the performance and reliability of U.S. balloting technology, registration systems, and election administration. Caltech political scientists have also pioneered techniques for the detection of vote fraud and other election anomalies.

As in the case of economics and political science, historical research conducted at Caltech employs mathematical modeling and

sophisticated statistical techniques to attack a wide range of historical questions. These include the development of capital markets in Europe, the impact of racial discrimination in the United States, the causes of recurrent financial crises in capitalist economies, and the determinants of economic growth.

