



## COURSE DATA

### DATA SUBJECT

**Code:** 36402

**Name:** Renewable energies and solar radiation

**Cycle:** Undergraduate Studies

**ECTS Credits:** 7.5

**Academic year:** 2025-26

### STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1105 - Degree in Physics	Facultat de Física	4	First quarter

### SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1105 - Degree in Physics	Complements of Physics	ELECTIVES

### COORDINATION

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## SUMMARY

The course «Renewable Energies and Solar Radiation» is taught, as an optional matter, in the first semester of the fourth year in the Physics degree.

This course must provide the students the physical basis necessary to understand issues related to the environmental physics and renewable energy, as well as the appropriate tools to solve them quantitatively. Climate change and the energy transition constitute one of the most important and urgent challenges currently facing globally. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to find mitigation strategies for the former by improving knowledge of the climate system. All the most promising solutions from the technological point of view and the most competitive from the economic point of view go through the increase in renewable energies use as an alternative to classic energy sources, which are limited and polluting.

The subject does not focus exclusively on the world of scientific, technological or industrial knowledge, but also has a strong content of a social and human nature. For this reason, the development of the program is not based exclusively on the study of academic problems that allow establishing the basic concepts and fundamental work techniques, but also introduces students to the pressing problems that affect our time



and Scientific-technical applications that can help us solve these problems. It is about preparing students adequately for their occupational work to be developed later and that is related to the knowledge and improvement of the environment that surrounds us and the energy management that can lead to achieving these ends.

## PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

No prerequisites are required

## COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

### 1105 - Degree in Physics

Ability to collect and interpret relevant data in order to make judgements.

Basic & applied Research: acquire an understanding of the nature and ways of physics research and of how physics research is applicable to many fields other than physics, e.g. engineering; be able to design experimental and/or theoretical procedures for: (i) solving current problems in academic or industrial research; (ii) improving the existing results.

Communication Skills (written and oral): Being able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions through argumentation and reasoning which are characteristic of the scientific activity, using basic concepts and tools of physics.

Foreign Language skills: Have improved command of English (or other foreign languages of interest) through: use of the basic literature, written and oral communication (scientific and technical English), participation in courses, study abroad via exchange programmes, and recognition of credits at foreign universities or research centres.

Knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of physics in theoretical and experimental aspects, and the mathematical background needed for its formulation.

Learning ability: be able to enter new fields through independent study, in physics and science and technology in general.

Literature Search: be able to search for and use physical and other technical literature, as well as any other sources of information relevant to research work and technical project development.

Modelling & Problem solving skills: be able to identify the essentials of a process / situation and to set up a working model of the same; be able to perform the required approximations so as to reduce a problem to an approachable one. Critical thinking to construct physical models.

Physics general culture: Be familiar with the most important areas of physics and with those approaches



which span many areas in physics, or connections of physics with other sciences.

Problem solving: be able to evaluate clearly the orders of magnitude in situations which are physically different, but show analogies, thus allowing the use of known solutions in new problems .

Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have acquired the competences required for the preparation and defence of arguments and for problem solving in their field of study.

Students must be able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both expert and lay audiences.

Students must have acquired knowledge and understanding in a specific field of study, on the basis of general secondary education and at a level that includes mainly knowledge drawn from advanced textbooks, but also some cutting-edge knowledge in their field of study.

Students must have developed the learning skills needed to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually in their field of study) to make judgements that take relevant social, scientific or ethical issues into consideration.

To know how to apply the knowledge acquired to professional activity, to know how to solve problems and develop and defend arguments, relying on this knowledge.

## DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

### 1. Radiometric quantities

Solid angle.

Basic radiometric quantities.

Spectral radiometric magnitudes.

Relationship between radiance and flux density.

Radiant energy density.

### 2. Interaction of radiation with matter

Interaction mechanisms

Reflection

Planetary albedo

Absorption

Dispersion

Extinction



Relationships between reflectance, absorbance and transmittance

### 3. Sources of radiation. Issue

Radiation sources  
Black body radiation  
Emissivity  
Selective surfaces  
The Sun and Earth as sources of radiation

### 4. Absorption

Origin of the spectral lines  
Profile of a spectral line  
Widening of a spectral line  
Line intensity  
Total absorption in one line. Equivalent width  
Band models. Definitions  
Regular or Elsasser model  
Random models  
Average intensity and half width

### 5. Dispersion by molecules and particles

Attenuation of radiation by scattering.  
Rayleigh theory of molecular dispersion  
Rayleigh scattering parameters  
Bases of Mie's theory for particle dispersion.  
Mie dispersion coefficients

### 6. The radiative transfer equation

Radiance balance in a volume element  
Source function



Beer's law and Schwarzschild's equation  
Plane-parallel atmospheres  
Resolution of the ETR in a non-dispersive atmosphere. Problem Statement  
Radiation expressions  
Isothermal atmosphere. Cooling approach into space  
ETR in a dispersive atmosphere  
Parameterization of the phase function  
ETR resolution in a dispersive atmosphere

## 7. Absorption and dispersion by gaseous components in the Earth's atmosphere

UV absorption  
Absorption in the visible and near IR  
Absorption in thermal IR and microwave  
Optical mass  
Transmittances  
Molecular dispersion. Parametric approximations  
Empirical expressions for particle dispersion. Turbidity coefficients

## 8. Atmospheric aerosols

Introduction: the role of aerosols in the atmosphere  
Physical and radiative properties  
Determination of the optical thickness from radiation measurements  
Determination of size distribution. Models  
Aerosol Climate Models  
Aerosols and human health

## 9. Clouds. Radiation balance

Clouds and the equilibrium temperature of the earth-atmosphere system  
Formation and growth of particles in a cloud  
Microphysical properties of clouds. Size distribution  
Radiative transfer in a cloud atmosphere  
Parameterization of the radiative properties of clouds  
Radiation Balance Overview  
Radiation flux calculation  
Atmospheric ceiling radiation balance (TOA)



Radiation balance on the Earth's surface

## 10. Radiation at the limit of the Earth's atmosphere

Relative distance Sun-Earth

Solar declination

Geographical coordinates

Equation of time

Solar coordinates

Radiation depending on the angle of incidence

Irradiance on a horizontal surface on the roof of the atmosphere

Irradiation on a horizontal surface on the roof of the atmosphere

Irradiation on an arbitrary surface on the roof of the atmosphere

## 11. Calculation of solar radiation at ground level: Parametric approximation

Justification

Components of solar radiation

Direct irradiance

Dispersion. Approximation of the two flows

Diffuse irradiance. Components

Global irradiance at ground level

## 12. Measurement of radiation and atmospheric components

Radiation measurements: general

Measurement of broadband solar radiation: direct, diffuse and global components

Measurement in different bands: ultraviolet and infrared

Albedo measurement

Spectral measurements

Measurement of the physical and radiative properties of aerosols

Renewable energy



### 13. Energy and human development

Concept of energy and its forms  
Last. Cheap and abundant energy  
The present. Social awareness  
The future. Sustainable development  
Alternative energies and renewable energies  
Pollutant effects of energy

### 14. Wind energy

Wind energy and its historical use  
Origin, characteristics and determination of the wind resource  
Estimation of energy production  
Wind turbines  
Wind plants and applications  
Advantages, disadvantages and environmental impact of wind energy

### 15. Photovoltaic energy

The photovoltaic effect  
The solar cell and its characteristic curve  
Performance and operation indicators  
Association of cells in series and in parallel  
From the module to the photovoltaic plant. Applications  
Advantages, disadvantages and environmental impact of photovoltaic energy

### 16. Thermal solar energy

Some historical notes  
Optical properties of materials  
Thermal properties of materials and heat transfer mechanisms



## 17. Low temperature thermal solar energy

The flat solar collector and its energy balance equation  
Performance evaluation of the flat solar collector  
Types of low temperature solar collectors  
Low temperature applications

## 18. Medium and high temperature solar thermal energy

Solar concentration, types of concentrators  
Thermoelectric solar power generation  
Some applications of solar thermal energy

## 19. Biomass energy

Biomass concept  
Organic waste  
Biomass to energy conversion  
Energy crops  
Biofuels  
Advantages and disadvantages of biomass energy

## 20. Other alternative energies

Hydraulic energy  
Geothermal energy  
Energy from the sea  
Tidal energy  
Wave energy  
Energy of marine currents  
Energy of marine gradients



## 21. Laboratory

### P1. Solar radiation.

Earth-Sun astronomical relations. Radiometer calibration. Variation of irradiance with the zenith angle. Know and manage devices for measuring solar radiation. Calibration of the measuring devices. Analysis of integrated solar radiation data. Radiative transfer models to study the reflectivity and transmissivity of different surfaces. Study and calculate some properties such as transmissivity, reflectivity, etc., of different surfaces through the study of radiative transfer models.

### P2. Wind power.

Study of a wind turbine. Analyze the wind resource: speed, direction and frequency distribution of the wind. Compass Rose. Obtain the real available power, maximum profitable and profitable curves of a wind turbine. Study the behavior of a wind turbine as a function of the speed distribution. Obtain the angular distribution of power generated by the wind turbine.

### P3. Thermal solar energy.

Study of a flat solar collector. Study the characteristics and behavior of a flat solar panel. Determine your performance curve. Obtain the values  $\eta$  of the heat extraction factor and its global loss coefficient. Analyze its operation over time and that of temperature variations.

### P4. Photovoltaic Solar Energy.

Study of photovoltaic modules and their associations Analyze the structure and behavior of a photovoltaic module. Obtain its characteristic curve and find the point of maximum power. Study the dependence of the module on the received irradiance. Performance analysis. Obtain the characteristic curves of modules connected in series and parallel and their maximum power point. Study the dependence of the modules on the received irradiance. Association performance.

## WORKLOAD

### PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	45,00
Laboratory	30,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>75,00</b>

### NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	30,00
Independent study and work	64,00
Preparation of lessons	18,50
Preparation for assessment activities	0,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>112,50</b>

## TEACHING METHODOLOGY



The course has two parts with a well differentiated methodology: A) Lectures and B) Laboratory. The development of the classes is as follows:

### **Lectures**

Theoretical and problem solving credits are structured in three class hours per week, with a variable proportion of theory and problems according to the subject. The working methodology can be classified into the following sections:

**Theory:** The teacher teaches the theoretical content, generally following the model of the master lesson and based on different materials (presentation of slides, notes, figures and blackboard) that will be previously provided to the students.

**Problem solving:** This part has a double aspect: it contemplates individual study and the participation of students in class. Students have a collection of problems for each theory group, which can bring together several lessons, some of which will be solved in class (both by the students and the teacher). The teacher may leave some problems in the newsletters, or propose new ones, to be solved by the students outside the classroom.

### **Laboratory**

The course is structured in eight laboratory sessions (one session each week) of 3 hours and 45 minutes each. These are taught in small subgroups, with a teacher assigned to each subgroup. In the sessions the students grouped in pairs carry out the practices. Attendance at these sessions is compulsory and a necessary condition to pass the course.

The student must go to the laboratory having carefully read the script of the practice that they will have to do in each session (previously known). At the beginning of the session, the teacher will supervise the understanding of this script and will guide the students on those conceptual or technical aspects necessary for the students to start correctly the acquisition of data.

For each practice, the couple must present a memory where the experimental data and their treatment (errors, graphs, adjustments) are collected, as well as the conclusions reached. Emphasis will be placed on the use of computer programs for data processing (spreadsheet), which can be done during the practical sessions with the computers available in the laboratory itself.

## **EVALUATION**

The assessment of the course is done taking into account, proportionally, the parts of: A) Lectures and B) Laboratory.

A. LECTURES: 70%



The evaluation of this part of the subject will be based on a continuous evaluation in which the attendance and participation of the student in class, and the correction of the problems proposed for their resolution at home will be taken into account. An attendance greater than 80% and the grade corresponding to the correction of the proposed problems may lead to the PASSING of the course, with a maximum grade of 6.5.

As an alternative, every student will be able to take a written exam that may consist of different questions of theory and problems. In the second call, this is the only option.

#### B. LABORATORY: 30%

Laboratory work is continuously evaluated based on the writing reports made by the students for each of the experiments planned during the course.

The final grade will be obtained as the weighted average of sections A and B, provided that a minimum of 4/10 is obtained in section A and 5/10 in section B. The total grade required to pass the course will be 5/10 points.

## REFERENCES

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