

Graduate Texts in Contemporary Physics

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K.T. Hecht

Quantum Mechanics

With 101 Illustrations



Springer

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Preface

This book is an outgrowth of lectures given at the University of Michigan at various times from 1966–1996 in a first-year graduate course on quantum mechanics. It is meant to be at a fairly high level. On the one hand, it should provide future research workers with the tools required to solve real problems in the field. On the other hand, the beginning graduate courses at the University of Michigan should be self-contained. Although most of the students will have had an undergraduate course in quantum mechanics, the lectures are intended to be such that a student with no previous background in quantum mechanics (perhaps an undergraduate mathematics or engineering major) can follow the course from beginning to end.

Part I of the course, Introduction to Quantum Mechanics, thus begins with a brief background chapter on the duality of nature, which hopefully will stimulate students to take a closer look at the two references given there. These references are recommended for every serious student of quantum mechanics. Chapter 1 is followed by a review of Fourier analysis before we meet the Schrödinger equation and its interpretation. The dual purpose of the course can be seen in Chapters 4 and 5, where an introduction to simple square well problems and a first solution of the one-dimensional harmonic oscillator by Fuchsian differential equation techniques are followed by an introduction to the Bargmann transform, which gives us an elegant tool to show the completeness of the harmonic oscillator eigenfunctions and enables us to solve some challenging harmonic oscillator problems, (e.g., the case of general n for problem 11). Early chapters (7 through 12) on the eigenvalue problem are based on the coordinate representation and include detailed solutions of the spherical harmonics and radial functions of the hydrogen atom, as well as many of the soluble, one-dimensional potential problems. These chapters are based on the factorization method. It is hoped the ladder step-up and step-down

operator approach of this method will help to lead the student naturally from the Schrödinger equation approach to the more modern algebraic techniques of quantum mechanics, which are introduced in Chapters 13 to 19. The full Dirac bra, ket notation is introduced in Chapter 13. These chapters also give the full algebraic approach to the general angular momentum problem, $SO(3)$ or $SU(2)$, the harmonic oscillator algebra, and the $SO(2,1)$ algebra. The solution for the latter is given in problem 23, which is used in considerable detail in later chapters. The problems often amplify the material of the course.

Part II of the course, Chapters 20 to 26, on time-independent perturbation theory, is based on Fermi's view that most of the important problems of quantum mechanics can be solved by perturbative techniques. This part of the course shows how various types of degeneracies can be handled in perturbation theory, particularly the case in which a degeneracy is not removed in lowest order of perturbation theory so that the lowest order perturbations do not lead naturally to the symmetry-adapted basis; a case ignored in many books on quantum mechanics and perhaps particularly important in the case of accidental near-degeneracies. Chapters 25 and 26 deal with magnetic-field perturbations, including a short section on the Aharonov–Bohm effect, and a treatment on fine structure and Zeeman perturbations in one-electron atoms.

Part III of the course, Chapters 27 to 35, then gives a detailed treatment of angular momentum and angular momentum coupling theory, including a derivation of the matrix elements of the general rotation operator, Chapter 29; spherical tensor operators, Chapter 31; the Wigner–Eckart theorem, Chapter 32; angular momentum recoupling coefficients and their use in matrix elements of coupled tensor operators in an angular-momentum-coupled basis, Chapter 34; as well as the use of an $SO(2,1)$ algebra and the stretched Coulombic basis and its power in hydrogenic perturbation theory without the use of the infinite sum and continuum integral contributions of the conventional hydrogenic basis, Chapter 35.

Since the full set of chapters is perhaps too much for a one-year course, some chapters or sections, and, in particular, some mathematical appendices, are marked in the table of contents with an asterisk (*). This symbol designates that the chapter can be skipped in a first reading without loss of continuity for the reader. Chapters 34 and 35 are such chapters with asterisks. Because of their importance, however, an alternative is to skip Chapters 36 and 37 on the WKB approximation. These chapters are therefore placed at this point in the book, although they might well have been placed in Part II on perturbation theory.

Part IV of the lectures, Chapters 38 to 40, gives a first introduction to systems of identical particles, with the emphasis on the two-electron atom and a chapter on variational techniques.

Parts I through IV of the course deal with bound-state problems. Part V on scattering theory, which might constitute the beginning of a second semester, begins the treatment of continuum problems with Chapters 41 through 56 on scattering theory, including a treatment of inelastic scattering processes and rearrangement collisions, and the spin dependence of scattering cross sections. The polarization

of particle beams and the scattering of particles with spin are used to introduce density matrices and statistical distributions of states.

Part VI of the course gives a conventional introduction to time-dependent perturbation theory, including a chapter on magnetic resonance and an application of the sudden and adiabatic approximations in the reversal of magnetic fields.

Part VII on atom-photon interactions includes an expansion of the quantized radiation field in terms of the full set of vector spherical harmonics, leading to a detailed derivation of the general electric and magnetic multipole-transition matrix elements needed in applications to nuclear transitions, in particular.

Parts V through IX may again be too much material for the second semester of a one-year course. At the University of Michigan, curriculum committees have at various times insisted that the first-year graduate course include *either* an introduction to Dirac theory of relativistic spin $\frac{1}{2}$ -particles *or* an introduction to many-body theory. Part VIII of the course on relativistic quantum mechanics, Chapters 69 through 77, and Part IX, an introduction to many-body theory, Chapters 78 and 79, are therefore written so that a lecturer could choose *either* Part VIII *or* Part IX to complete the course.

The problems are meant to be an integral part of the course. They are often meant to build on the material of the lectures and to be real problems (rather than small exercises, perhaps to derive specific equations). They are, therefore, meant to take considerable time and often to be somewhat of a challenge. In the actual course, they are meant to be discussed in detail in problem sessions. For this reason, detailed solutions for a few key problems, particularly in the first part of the course, are given in the text as part of the course (e.g., the results of problem 23 are very much used in later chapters, and problem 34, actually a very simple problem in perturbation theory is used to illustrate how various types of degeneracies can be handled properly in perturbation theory in a case in which the underlying symmetry leading to the degeneracy *might not* be easy to recognize). In the case of problem 34, the underlying symmetry *is* easy to recognize. The solution therefore also shows how this symmetry should be exploited.

The problems are not assigned to specific chapters, but numbered 1 through 55 for Parts I through IV of the course, and, again, 1 through 51 for Parts V through IX, the second semester of the course. They are placed at the point in the course where the student should be ready for a particular set of problems.

The applications and assigned problems of these lectures are taken largely from the fields of atomic and molecular physics and from nuclear physics, with a few examples from other fields. This selection, of course, shows my own research interests, but I believe, is also because these fields are fertile for the applications of nonrelativistic quantum mechanics.

I first of all want to acknowledge my own teachers. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have learned the subject from David M. Dennison and George E. Uhlenbeck. Among the older textbooks used in the development of these lectures, I acknowledge the books by Leonard I. Schiff, *Quantum Mechanics*, McGraw-Hill, 1949; Albert Messiah, *Quantum Mechanics, Vol. I and II*, John Wiley and Sons, 1965; Eugene Merzbacher, *Quantum Mechanics*, John Wiley and Sons, 1961; Kurt

Gottfried, *Quantum Mechanics*, W. A. Benjamin, Inc., 1966; and L. D. Landau and E. M. Lifshitz, *Quantum Mechanics. Nonrelativistic Theory. Vol. 3. Course of Theoretical Physics*, Pergamon Press 1958. Hopefully, the good features of these books have found their way into my lectures.

References to specific books, chapters of books, or research articles are given throughout the lectures wherever they seemed to be particularly useful or relevant. Certainly, no attempt is made to give a complete referencing. Each lecturer in a course on quantum mechanics must give the student his own list of the many textbooks a student should consult. The serious student of the subject, however, must become familiar with the two classics: P. A. M. Dirac, *The Principles of Quantum Mechanics*, Oxford University Press, first ed. 1930; and Wolfgang Pauli, *General Principles of Quantum Mechanics*, Springer-Verlag, 1980, (an English translation of the 1933 Handbuch der Physik article in Vol. 24 of the Handbuch).

Finally, I want to thank the many students at the University of Michigan who have contributed to these lectures with their questions. In fact, it was the encouragement of former students of this course that has led to the idea these lectures should be converted into book form. I also thank Prof. Yasuyuki Suzuki for his many suggestions after a careful reading of an early version of the manuscript. Particular thanks are due to Dr. Sudha Swaminathan and Dr. Frank Lamelas for their great efforts in making all of the figures.

Contents

Preface	v
I Introduction to Quantum Mechanics	1
1 Background: The Duality of Nature	3
A The Young Double Slit Experiment	4
B More Detailed Analysis of the Double Slit Experiment	4
C Complementary Experimental Setup	6
2 The Motion of Wave Packets: Fourier Analysis	8
A Fourier Series	8
B Fourier Integrals	10
C The Dirac Delta Function	11
D Properties of the Dirac Delta Function	13
E Fourier Integrals in Three Dimensions	14
F The Operation $\frac{1}{i} \frac{\partial}{\partial x}$	15
G Wave Packets	15
H Propagation of Wave Packets: The Wave Equation	17
3 The Schrödinger Wave Equation and Probability Interpretation	19
A The Wave Equation	19
B The Probability Axioms	20
C The Calculation of Average Values of Dynamical Quantities	23
D Precise Statement of the Uncertainty Principle	24

E	Ehrenfest's Theorem: Equations of Motion	26
F	Operational Calculus, The Linear Operators of Quantum Mechanics, Hilbert Space	27
G	The Heisenberg Commutation Relations	29
H	Generalized Ehrenfest Theorem	30
I	Conservation Theorems: Angular Momentum, Runge–Lenz Vector, Parity	31
J	Quantum-Mechanical Hamiltonians for More General Systems .	33
K	The Schrödinger Equation for an n -particle System	34
L	The Schrödinger Equation in Curvilinear Coordinates	35
	Problems	36
4	Schrödinger Theory: The Existence of Discrete Energy Levels	39
A	The Time-Independent Schrödinger Equation	39
B	The Simple, Attractive Square Well	40
	Square Well Problems	45
C	The Periodic Square Well Potential	48
D	The Existence of Discrete Energy Levels: General $V(x)$	56
E	The Energy Eigenvalue Problem: General	60
F	A Specific Example: The One-Dimensional Harmonic Oscillator	62
5	Harmonic Oscillator Calculations	65
A	The Bargmann Transform	65
B	Completeness Relation	66
C	A Second Useful Application: The matrix $(x)_{nm}$	67
	Problems	68
6	Further Interpretation of the Wave Function	75
A	Application 1: Tunneling through a Barrier	76
B	Application 2: Time-dependence of a general oscillator $\langle q \rangle$.	78
C	Matrix Representations	79
D	Heisenberg Matrix Mechanics	80
7	The Eigenvalue Problem	82
A	The Factorization Method: Ladder Operators	84
8	Spherical Harmonics, Orbital Angular Momentum	92
A	Angular Momentum Operators	93
9	ℓ-Step operators for the θ Equation	96
10	The Radial Functions for the Hydrogenic Atom	105

11 Shape-Invariant Potentials: Soluble One-Dimensional Potential Problems	108
A Shape-Invariant Potentials	110
B A Specific Example	110
C Soluble One-Dimensional Potential Problems	114
Problems	122
12 The Darboux Method: Supersymmetric Partner Potentials	130
Problems	134
13 The Vector Space Interpretation of Quantum-Mechanical Systems	138
A Different “Representations” of the State of a Quantum-Mechanical System	138
B The Dirac Notation	141
C Notational Abbreviations	144
14 The Angular Momentum Eigenvalue Problem (Revisited)	145
A Simultaneous Eigenvectors of Commuting Hermitian Operators	145
B The Angular Momentum Algebra	147
C General Angular Momenta	148
15 Rigid Rotators: Molecular Rotational Spectra	152
A The Diatomic Molecule Rigid Rotator	152
B The Polyatomic Molecule Rigid Rotator	153
Problems	158
16 Transformation Theory	159
A General	159
B Note on Generators of Unitary Operators and the Transformation $UHU^\dagger = H'$	161
17 Another Example: Successive Polarization Filters for Beams of Spin $s = \frac{1}{2}$ Particles	163
18 Transformation Theory for Systems with Continuous Spectra	167
A The Translation Operator	168
B Coordinate Representation Matrix Elements of p_x	169
C Calculation of the Transformation Matrix $\langle \vec{r}_0 \vec{p}_0 \rangle$	171
19 Time-Dependence of State Vectors, Algebraic Techniques, Coherent States	173
A Recapitulation: The Postulates of Quantum Theory	173
B Time Evolution of a state $ \psi\rangle$	175

C	The Heisenberg Treatment of the One-Dimensional Harmonic Oscillator: Oscillator Annihilation and Creation Operators . . .	177
D	Oscillator Coherent States	180
E	Angular Momentum Coherent States	187
	Problems	192
II Time-Independent Perturbation Theory		201
20	Perturbation Theory	203
A	Introductory Remarks	203
B	Transition Probabilities	204
	Problems	206
21	Stationary-State Perturbation Theory	208
A	Rayleigh–Schrödinger Expansion	208
B	Case 1: Nondegenerate State	209
C	Second-Order Corrections	211
D	The Wigner–Brillouin Expansion	213
22	Example 1: The Slightly Anharmonic Oscillator	215
23	Perturbation Theory for Degenerate Levels	221
A	Diagonalization of $H^{(1)}$: Transformation to Proper Zeroth-Order Basis	221
B	Three Cases of Degenerate Levels	222
C	Higher Order Corrections with Proper Zeroth-Order Basis . . .	223
D	Application 1: Stark Effect in the Diatomic Molecule Rigid Rotator	224
E	Application 2: Stark Effect in the Hydrogen Atom	227
24	The Case of Nearly Degenerate Levels	229
A	Perturbation Theory by Similarity Transformation	229
B	An Example: Two Coupled Harmonic Oscillators with $\omega_1 \approx 2\omega_2$	232
25	Magnetic Field Perturbations	235
A	The Quantum Mechanics of a Free, Charged Particle in a Magnetic Field	235
B	Aharonov–Bohm Effect	236
C	Zeeman and Paschen–Back Effects in Atoms	238
D	Spin-Orbit Coupling and Thomas Precession	240
26	Fine Structure and Zeeman Perturbations in Alkali Atoms	243
	Problems	247

III	Angular Momentum Theory	261
27	Angular Momentum Coupling Theory	263
A	General Properties of Vector Coupling Coefficients	265
B	Methods of Calculation	266
28	Symmetry Properties of Clebsch–Gordan Coefficients	269
29	Invariance of Physical Systems Under Rotations	273
A	Rotation Operators	274
B	General Rotations, $R(\alpha, \beta, \gamma)$	276
C	Transformation of Angular Momentum Eigenvectors or Eigenfunctions	277
D	General Expression for the Rotation Matrices	279
E	Rotation Operators and Angular Momentum Coherent States	282
30	The Clebsch–Gordan Series	285
A	Addition Theorem for Spherical Harmonics	286
B	Integrals of D Functions	288
	Problems	291
31	Spherical Tensor Operators	294
A	Definition: Spherical Tensors	295
B	Alternative Definition	295
C	Build-up Process	296
32	The Wigner–Eckart Theorem	299
A	Diagonal Matrix Elements of Vector Operators	300
B	Proof of the Wigner–Eckart Theorem	301
33	Nuclear Hyperfine Structure in One-Electron Atoms	303
	Problems	309
*34	Angular Momentum Recoupling: Matrix Elements of Coupled Tensor Operators in an Angular Momentum Coupled Basis	312
A	The Recoupling of Three Angular Momenta: Racah Coefficients or 6-j Symbols	312
B	Relations between U Coefficients and Clebsch–Gordan Coefficients	314
C	Alternate Forms for the Recoupling Coefficients for Three Angular Momenta	318
D	Matrix Element of $(U^k(1) \cdot V^k(2))$ in a Vector-Coupled Basis	320
E	Recoupling of Four Angular Momenta: 9-j Symbols	321
F	Matrix Element of a Coupled Tensor Operator, $[U^{k_1}(1) \times V^{k_2}(2)]_q^k$ in a Vector-Coupled Basis	325

G	An Application: The Nuclear Hyperfine Interaction in a One-Electron Atom Revisited	329
*35	Perturbed Coulomb Problems via SO(2,1) Algebra	332
A	Perturbed Coulomb Problems: The Conventional Approach . . .	332
B	The Runge–Lenz Vector as an ℓ Step Operator and the SO(4) Algebra of the Coulomb Problem	334
C	The SO(2,1) Algebra	338
D	The Dilation Property of the Operator, T_2	339
E	The Zeroth-Order Energy Eigenvalue Problem for the Hydrogen Atom: Stretched States	340
F	Perturbations of the Coulomb Problem	344
G	An Application: Coulomb Potential with a Perturbing Linear Potential: Charmonium	346
H	Matrix Elements of the Vector Operators, \vec{r} and $r\vec{p}$, in the Stretched Basis	347
I	Second-Order Stark Effect of the Hydrogen Ground State Revisited	350
J	The Calculation of Off-Diagonal Matrix Elements via the Stretched Hydrogenic Basis	351
K	Final Remarks	352
	Problems	352
36	The WKB Approximation	354
A	The Kramers Connection Formulae	357
B	Appendix: Derivation of the Connection Formulae	357
37	Applications of the WKB Approximation	363
A	The Wilson–Sommerfeld Quantization Rules of the Pre-1925 Quantum Theory	363
B	Application 2: The Two-Minimum Problem: The Inversion Splitting of the Levels of the Ammonia Molecule	365
	Problems	368
IV	Systems of Identical Particles	379
38	The Two-Electron Atom	381
A	Perturbation Theory for a Two-Electron Atom	384
39	n-Identical Particle States	389
40	The Variational Method	393
A	Proof of the Variational Theorem	394
B	Bounds on the Accuracy of the Variational Method	395

C	An Example: The Ground-State Energy of the He Atom	395
D	The Ritz Variational Method	397

V Scattering Theory 399

41 Introduction to Scattering Theory 401

A	Potential Scattering	401
B	Spherical Bessel Functions	409
	*Mathematical Appendix to Chapter 41. Spherical Bessel Functions	412

42 The Rayleigh–Faxen–Holtzmark Partial Wave Expansion: Phase Shift Method 419

	*Mathematical Appendix to Chapter 42	426
--	--	-----

43 A Specific Example: Scattering from Spherical Square Well Potentials 436

A	Hard Sphere Scattering	438
B	The General Case: Arbitrary V_0	441

44 Scattering Resonances: Low-Energy Scattering 443

A	Potential Resonances	443
B	Low-Energy Scattering for General $V(r)$: Scattering Length	444
	Problems	448

45 Integral Equation for Two-Body Relative Motion: Scattering Green’s Functions in Coordinate Representation 450

A	Box Normalization: Discrete Spectrum	450
B	Continuum Green’s Function	452
C	Summary	457
D	Closing Remarks	458
	*Mathematical Appendix to Chapter 45	458

46 The Born Approximation 462

A	Application: The Yukawa Potential	464
B	The Screened Coulomb Potential	464
C	Identical Particle Coulomb Scattering	465
	*Mathematical Appendix to Chapter 46	468
	Problems	474

47 Operator Form of Scattering Green’s Function and the Integral Equation for the Scattering Problem 477

A	The Lippmann–Schwinger Equation	479
---	---	-----

48 Inelastic Scattering Processes and Rearrangement Collisions	481
A Inelastic Scattering Processes	481
B Rearrangement Collisions	483
49 Differential Scattering Cross Sections for Rearrangement Collisions: Born Approximation	488
Problems	491
50 A Specific Example of a Rearrangement Collision: The (d, p) Reaction on Nucleus A	493
51 The S Matrix	503
A The T Matrix	505
Problems	506
52 Scattering Theory for Particles with Spin	509
A Scattering of a Point Particle with Spin from a Spinless Target Particle	509
B First Born Approximation	512
53 Scattering of Spin $\frac{1}{2}$ Particles from Spinless Target: Partial Wave Decomposition	514
54 The Polarization Vector	518
A Polarization of the Scattered Beam	519
55 Density Matrices	522
A Detection of Polarization via Double Scattering	525
B Differential Scattering Cross Section of a Beam with Arbitrary Incident Polarization	527
C Generalizations to More Complicated Cases	527
56 Isospin	529
A Spectra of Two-Valence Nucleon Nuclei	531
Problems	534
VI Time-Dependent Perturbation Theory	539
57 Time-Dependent Perturbation Expansion	541
A First-Order Probability Amplitude: The Golden Rule	544
B Application: The First Born Approximation of Scattering Theory Revisited	547
C Box Normalization: An Alternative Approach	548
D Second-Order Effects	549
E Case 2: A Periodic Perturbation	551

58 Oscillating Magnetic Fields: Magnetic Resonance	553
A Exact Solution of the Magnetic Resonance Problem	554
B Density Matrices and the Magnetization Vector	558
C General Case with $J > \frac{1}{2}$	560
59 Sudden and Adiabatic Approximations	561
A Sudden Approximation	561
B Adiabatic Approximation: An Example: The Reversal of the Magnetic Field in a One-Electron Atom	562
Problems	570
 VII Atom–Photon Interactions	 573
60 Interaction of Electromagnetic Radiation with Atomic Systems	575
A The Electromagnetic Radiation Field	576
B The Quantized Radiation Field	579
61 Photons: The Quantized Radiation Field	582
A Photon Energy	582
B Photon Linear Momentum	583
C Photon Rest Mass	584
D Angular Momentum: Photon Spin	584
62 Vector Spherical Harmonics	587
A Properties of Vector Spherical Harmonics	588
B The Vector Spherical Harmonics of the Radiation Field	590
C Mathematical Appendix	593
63 The Emission of Photons by Atoms: Electric Dipole Approximation	598
64 The Photoelectric Effect: Hydrogen Atom	606
Problems	612
65 Spontaneous Photon Emission: General Case: Electric and Magnetic Multipole Radiation	615
A Electric Multipole Radiation	617
B Magnetic Multipole Radiation	622
Problems	626
66 Scattering of Photons by Atomic Systems	631
A Thomson Scattering	634
B Rayleigh and Raman Scattering	636

67 Resonance Fluorescence Cross Section	640
A The Photon Scattering Cross Section and the Polarizability Tensor	642
68 Natural Line Width: Wigner–Weisskopf Treatment	645
Problems	651
VIII Introduction to Relativistic Quantum Mechanics	655
69 Dirac Theory: Relativistic Quantum Theory of Spin-$\frac{1}{2}$ Particles	657
A Four-Vector Conventions	657
B The Klein–Gordon Equation	658
C Dirac’s Reasoning: Historical Approach	658
D The Dirac Equation in Four-Dimensional Notation	661
E Hermitian Conjugate Equation	663
70 Lorentz Covariance of the Dirac Equation	664
A Construction of the Lorentz Matrix, S	666
B Space Inversions	670
71 Bilinear Covariants	671
A Transformation Properties of the $\bar{\psi}\Gamma^A\psi$	672
B Lower Index γ Matrices	673
72 Simple Solutions: Free Particle Motion: Plane Wave Solutions	674
A An Application: Coulomb Scattering of Relativistic Electrons in Born Approximation: The Mott Formula	678
73 Dirac Equation for a Particle in an Electromagnetic Field	681
A Nonrelativistic Limit of the Dirac Equation	682
B Angular Momentum	683
74 Pauli Approximation to the Dirac Equation	686
A The Foldy–Wouthuysen Transformation	690
75 The Klein Paradox: An Example from the History of Negative Energy State Difficulties: The Positron Interpretation	692
A Modern Hole Analysis of the Klein Barrier Reflection	695
Problems	698
76 Exact Solutions for the Dirac Equation for Spherically Symmetric Potentials	703
A The Relativistic Hydrogen Atom	708

77	The MIT Bag Model: The Dirac Equation for a Quark Confined to a Spherical Region	713
IX	Introduction to Many-Body Theory	719
78	Many-Body Formalism	721
A	Occupation Number Representation	721
B	State Vectors	728
C	One-Body Operators	729
D	Examples of One-Body Operators	732
E	Two-Body Operators	735
F	Examples of Two-Body Operators	738
79	Many-Body Techniques: Some Simple Applications	739
A	Construction of All Pauli-Allowed States of a $(d_{5/2})^{N=3}$ Fermion Configuration	739
B	Calculation of an Electric Dipole Transition Probability	743
C	Pairing Forces in Nuclei	745
D	The Coulomb Repulsion Term in the Z -Electron Atom	749
E	Hartree–Fock Theory for Atoms: A Brief Introduction	751
	Index	753