DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Materials Science and Engineering
College of Engineering

Fall Seminar Series

Giant nonlinear optical responses in polar Weyl semimetals

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Wednesday, October 3, 2:00 p.m.

PISB 104

The second-order optical nonlinearity $\sigma^{(2)}(\omega)$ has been a focus of basic research and technological development for decades as it is both a probe of inversion symmetry breaking in media and the basis for generating coherent light from far-infrared to ultraviolet wavelengths. Here, we focus on the relation between band geometry and nonlinear optics. We measured second harmonic generation (SHG) with incident photon energy from 0.4 eV - 1.6 eV on a polar semimetal TaAs with a sharp resonant peak detected at 0.7 eV, that is larger than previously measured in any crystal. Our discovery of a giant anisotropic $\sigma^{(2)}(\omega)$ in TaAs raises the following questions: what is special about TaAs and/or polar metals that accounts for large resonant optical nonlinearity, and, is there a fundamental upper bound on $\sigma^{(2)}(\omega)$ in such inversion breaking crystals? I will describe in the Rice-Mele model based on the band-geometric theory of nonlinear optical response that addresses these questions.