

Engineering Tripos Part IIA, 3A5: Thermodynamics & Power Generation, 2020-21

Module Leader

[Dr A J White](#) [1]

Lecturers

Prof R S Cant, Dr A J White

Lab Leader

[Prof R S Cant](#) [2]

Timing and Structure

Michaelmas term. Thermodynamics 2 lectures/week, weeks 1-4 (Dr A J White); Power Generation: 2 lectures/week, weeks 5-8 (Prof R S Cant). 16 lectures.

Aims

The aims of the course are to:

- Focus on electricity power generation and the underlying thermodynamic theory.
- Cover topics including power generation by gas, steam and combined cycles, and direct electrochemical conversion by fuel cells.
- Introduce some advanced cycle concepts and discuss the possibility of carbon dioxide capture and storage.

Objectives

As specific objectives, by the end of the course students should be able to:

- Understand the principles of exergy analysis, be able to calculate the lost work terms of power cycle components.
- Know the importance of the Helmholtz and Gibbs functions, the uses of standard property changes in chemical reactions, and the idea of rational efficiency..
- Understand the principles of electrochemical energy conversion, be aware of different types of fuel cell technology, be able to calculate the Gibbs and Nernst potentials, and have a basic knowledge of fuel cell losses.
- Understand the principles of phase equilibrium for single and multi-component systems, the role of the chemical potential, and the Clausius-Clapeyron equation.
- Be able to undertake phase equilibrium analysis for ideal mixtures (Raoult's Law).
- Understand equation of state theory including characteristic form, Maxwell's relations, ideal gases, ideal gas mixtures, imperfect gases, van der Waals form, and law of corresponding states.
- Understand chemical equilibrium theory and the use of the equilibrium constant, be able to perform calculations for gas mixtures with one or two independent reactions, and be able to apply van't Hoff's equation.
- Understand the rôle of steam and gas turbine cycles in electricity power generation and be conversant with likely future developments.

- Be able to evaluate the performance of gas turbine plants including reheat, intercooling and recuperation.
- Be able to evaluate the performance of steam power plants including reheat and feedheating.
- Be able to evaluate the performance of combined cycles.
- Understand the issues involved in the capture and storage of carbon dioxide from fossil-fuelled power plants.

Content

Thermodynamics (8L)

- Thermodynamic availability, lost work and entropy production, exergy analysis, application to power cycles.
- Gibbs and Helmholtz functions, standard property changes in chemical reactions, overall and rational efficiencies, electrochemical conversion, fuel cells (theory and practice).
- Equilibrium criteria, phase equilibrium, chemical potential, Clapeyron equation, equations of state, ideal gas mixtures, imperfect gases, van der Waals equation.
- Gibbs equation, chemical equilibrium, chemical potential of ideal gas, equilibrium constant, gas phase reactions, van't Hoff equation.

Power Generation (8L)

- Overview of current and future electricity power generation, and the associated carbon emissions.
- Gas turbines with intercooling, reheat and recuperation. Turbine blade cooling.
- Steam cycles with feed heating and reheat. The combustion process and boiler efficiency. Steam cycles for nuclear power.
- Combined gas-steam cycles.
- Advanced cycles and carbon dioxide sequestration.

Coursework

Computer based cycle simulation

Learning objectives:

- To consolidate the concept of exergy covered in lectures, and to apply this to the analysis of power-generating gas turbine cycles.
- To study the methods by which the efficiency and specific work output of a simple gas turbine plant may be improved.
- To investigate trends in cycle performance with various design parameters.

Practical information:

- Sessions will take place in the DPO, during weeks 1-6.
- This activity doesn't involve preliminary work.

Full Technical Report:

Students will have the option to submit a Full Technical Report.

Booklists

Please refer to the Booklist for Part IIA Courses for references to this module, this can be found on the associated Moodle course.

Examination Guidelines

Please refer to [Form & conduct of the examinations](#) [3].

UK-SPEC

This syllabus contributes to the following areas of the [UK-SPEC](#) [4] standard:

[Toggle display of UK-SPEC areas.](#)

GT1

Develop transferable skills that will be of value in a wide range of situations. These are exemplified by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Higher Level Key Skills and include problem solving, communication, and working with others, as well as the effective use of general IT facilities and information retrieval skills. They also include planning self-learning and improving performance, as the foundation for lifelong learning/CPD.

IA1

Apply appropriate quantitative science and engineering tools to the analysis of problems.

KU1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of essential facts, concepts, theories and principles of their engineering discipline, and its underpinning science and mathematics.

KU2

Have an appreciation of the wider multidisciplinary engineering context and its underlying principles.

S3

Understanding of the requirement for engineering activities to promote sustainable development.

E1

Ability to use fundamental knowledge to investigate new and emerging technologies.

E2

Ability to extract data pertinent to an unfamiliar problem, and apply its solution using computer based engineering tools when appropriate.

E3

Ability to apply mathematical and computer based models for solving problems in engineering, and the ability to assess the limitations of particular cases.

P1

A thorough understanding of current practice and its limitations and some appreciation of likely new developments.

P3

Understanding of contexts in which engineering knowledge can be applied (e.g. operations and management, technology, development, etc).

US1

A comprehensive understanding of the scientific principles of own specialisation and related disciplines.

US2

A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of mathematical and computer models relevant to the engineering discipline, and an appreciation of their limitations.

US3

An understanding of concepts from a range of areas including some outside engineering, and the ability to apply them effectively in engineering projects.

US4

An awareness of developing technologies related to own specialisation.

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Links

[1] <mailto:ajw36@cam.ac.uk>

[2] <mailto:rsc10@cam.ac.uk>

[3] <https://teaching24-25.eng.cam.ac.uk/content/form-conduct-examinations>

[4] <https://teaching24-25.eng.cam.ac.uk/content/uk-spec>