
Contents

1	Plane Wave Propagation in Dispersive Media	1
1.1	Maxwell's Equations in SI Units	1
1.2	Material Equations	2
1.3	Wave Equation with Refractive Index	4
1.3.1	Derivation of the Wave Equation	4
1.3.2	Solution of the Wave Equation: Plane Wave	7
1.3.3	Summary of the Notation in Vacuum and in a Dispersive Medium	10
1.3.4	TEM Wave and Impedance	10
1.3.5	Polarization	13
1.3.6	Energy Density, Poynting Vector, and Intensity	15
1.4	Dispersion	16
1.4.1	Dispersion for Electromagnetic Waves	16
1.4.2	Sellmeier Equation in the Visible and Near-Infrared	17
1.4.3	Refractive Index from the VUV to the X-Ray Region	21
2	Linear Pulse Propagation	25
2.1	Motivation	25
2.2	Wave Equation in the Spectral Domain: Helmholtz Equation	28
2.2.1	Fourier Transform	28
2.2.2	Derivation of the Helmholtz Equation	30
2.3	Linear Versus Nonlinear Wave Propagation	32
2.3.1	Superposition Principle	32
2.3.2	Linear System Theory	32
2.3.3	Nonlinear Systems	35
2.4	Ultrafast Pulses	35
2.4.1	Pulse Wave Packet and Pulse Envelope	35
2.4.2	Time–Bandwidth Product. Analogy with Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Relation	37

2.4.3	Spectral Phase Yielding Shortest Pulse	40
2.5	Linear Pulse Propagation in a Dispersive Material	42
2.5.1	Linear Pulse Propagation Versus Linear Dispersion	42
2.5.2	Slowly-Varying-Envelope Approximation	42
2.5.3	First and Second Order Dispersion	44
2.5.4	Phase Velocity and Group Velocity	45
2.5.5	Dispersive Pulse Broadening	47
2.5.6	Dispersion as a Function of Frequency and Wavelength	52
2.5.7	Optical Communication	56
2.5.8	Can a Pulse Propagate Faster Than the Speed of Light in Vacuum?	59
2.5.9	Definition of the Group Index	63
2.5.10	Higher Order Dispersion	63
2.5.11	Slowly-Evolving-Wave Approximation	65
3	Dispersion Compensation	73
3.1	Introduction and Motivation	73
3.2	Prism Compressor	77
3.2.1	Second Order Dispersion of the Four-Prism Compressor	77
3.2.2	Third Order Dispersion of the Four-Prism Compressor	85
3.2.3	Continuous Adjustment of Dispersion	88
3.3	Grating Compressor, Stretcher, and Pulse Shaper	92
3.3.1	Diffraction Grating Compressor	92
3.3.2	Turning a Grating Compressor into a Stretcher	103
3.3.3	Grating-Based Pulse Shaper	106
3.4	Gires-Tournois Interferometer (GTI)	109
3.5	Summary of Dispersion Compensation with Angular Dispersion and GTI	113
3.6	Mirrors with Controlled Phase Properties	113
3.6.1	Bragg Mirror	113
3.6.2	Dielectric GTI-Type Mirrors	115
3.6.3	Chirped Mirrors	116
3.6.4	Design of Chirped Mirrors	121
3.7	Dazzlers	124
3.8	Dispersion Measurements	126
4	Nonlinear Pulse Propagation	131
4.1	Self-Phase Modulation (SPM)	131
4.1.1	Kerr Effect and SPM	131
4.1.2	Pulse Compressors Such as Fiber-Grating, Fiber-Prism, and Fiber-Chirped-Mirror Compressors	133

4.1.3	Nonlinear Optical Pulse Cleaner	143
4.1.4	Average Power Scaling of Pulse Compressors	144
4.2	Self-Focusing and Filamentation Compressor	149
4.2.1	Self-Focusing via a Kerr Lens	149
4.2.2	Filament Formation	151
4.2.3	Filament Pulse Compression	153
4.3	Solitons	154
4.3.1	Discovery of the Soliton	154
4.3.2	Solution of the NSE: The Fundamental Soliton	158
4.3.3	Solution of the NSE: Higher-Order Solitons	162
4.3.4	Optical Communication with Solitons	164
4.3.5	Periodic Perturbations of Solitons	168
4.4	Self-Strengthening	172
4.4.1	Higher-Order Nonlinear Effects	172
4.4.2	Optical Shock Front	174
4.4.3	Effect of GDD on Optical Shock	176
4.5	Nonlinear Propagation in a Saturable Absorber or Saturable Amplifier	178
4.5.1	Saturable Amplifier	178
4.5.2	Saturable Absorber	179
4.5.3	Nonlinear Pulse Propagation in a Saturable Absorber or Amplifier	182
5	Laser Rate Equations, Steady-State Solutions, Relaxation Oscillations, and Transfer Functions	185
5.1	What Do We Need to Know About Lasers?	185
5.1.1	Diode-Pumped Solid-State Laser	185
5.1.2	Rate Equations for an Ideal Four-Level Laser	190
5.1.3	Steady-State Solutions (Four-Level Laser)	190
5.1.4	Gain Saturation (Four-Level Laser)	192
5.1.5	Three-Level Laser	194
5.2	Relaxation Oscillations in a Four-Level Laser	197
5.2.1	Linearized Rate Equations	197
5.2.2	Ansatz for Solution After Perturbation	198
5.2.3	Over-Critically Damped Lasers	199
5.2.4	Under-Critically Damped Lasers	200
5.2.5	Examples of Relaxation Oscillations Using Different Laser Materials	202
5.2.6	Measurement of the Small-Signal Gain	206
5.3	Transfer Function Analysis	209
5.3.1	Rate Equations for Power and Gain	210
5.3.2	Relaxation Oscillations	213
5.3.3	Transfer Function	215
5.3.4	Transfer Function Measurement	220

6	Active Modelocking	225
6.1	Modelocking	225
6.1.1	Basic Principle of Modelocking	225
6.1.2	Modelocked Frequency Comb and Axial Cavity Modes	228
6.1.3	Difference Between Q-Switching and Modelocking	230
6.2	Basic Principles of Active Modelocking	231
6.3	Optical Loss Modulators	234
6.3.1	Acousto-Optic Modulator (AOM)	234
6.4	Active Modelocking Without SPM and GDD	237
6.4.1	Gaussian Pulse Analysis	237
6.4.2	Derivation and Solution of the Haus Master Equation	242
6.4.3	Explanation of Active Modelocking in the Spectral Domain	247
6.5	Active Modelocking with SPM, but Without GDD	248
6.5.1	Master Equation	248
6.5.2	Solution of the Master Equation: A Chirped Gaussian Pulse	250
6.5.3	Example: Nd:YLF Laser	256
6.6	Soliton Modelocking with Active Modelocking	258
6.6.1	Derivation and Solution of the Master Equation with SPM and GDD	259
6.6.2	Soliton Modelocked Nd:glass Laser Stabilized with an Intracavity AOM	264
6.7	Modelocking with Homogeneously Versus Inhomogeneously Broadened Gain	267
6.7.1	Homogeneously Versus Inhomogeneously Broadened Gain: CW Lasing	268
6.7.2	Modelocking Results Better for Inhomogeneous Gain Broadening	269
6.7.3	Modelocking with Spatial Hole Burning	270
6.8	Synchronous Modelocking	273
6.9	Selected Results of Active Modelocked Solid-State Lasers	275
7	Saturable Absorbers for Solid-State Lasers	279
7.1	Introduction	279
7.2	Slow and Fast Saturable Absorbers	281
7.2.1	Saturable Absorber Parameters and Rate Equation	281
7.2.2	Justification for the Simplified Saturable Absorber Rate Equation	285
7.2.3	Slow Saturable Absorber	287
7.2.4	Fast Saturable Absorber	290
7.2.5	Summary of Relevant Equations	293

7.3	Nonlinear Reflectivity Model Functions	295
7.3.1	Approximations	295
7.3.2	Time-Dependent Reflectivity	296
7.3.3	Pulse-Averaged Reflectivity	298
7.3.4	Correction for Gaussian Beam Profile	301
7.3.5	Inverse Saturable Absorption (ISA)	302
7.3.6	Summary of Relevant Model Functions for Nonlinear Reflectivity	305
7.4	Semiconductor Saturable Absorbers	306
7.4.1	Semiconductor Saturable Absorber Materials	306
7.4.2	Introduction to Semiconductor Relaxation Dynamics	310
7.4.3	Fast Saturable Absorbers with Carrier Trapping Engineering	313
7.4.4	Fast Saturable Absorbers with Quantum-Confinement Stark Effect	318
7.4.5	Saturable Absorber Optimization with Quantum Confinement	319
7.4.6	Derivation of the Density of States	325
7.5	Semiconductor Saturable Absorber Mirror (SESAM)	328
7.5.1	SESAM Design: A Historical Perspective	329
7.5.2	Resonant Versus Antiresonant SESAM	331
7.5.3	Antiresonant High-Finesse SESAM	334
7.5.4	Reflectivity, Phase, Dispersion, and Penetration Depth of a DBR	336
7.5.5	Antiresonant Low-Finesse SESAM	346
7.5.6	Dispersive SESAM	348
7.5.7	Ultrabroadband SESAMs	349
7.5.8	SESAM Optimization with Standing Wave Field Enhancement	351
7.6	SESAM Damage	355
7.6.1	SESAM Damage Measurements	355
7.6.2	SESAM Damage Theory	359
7.6.3	SESAM Design for High Average Power Thin-Disk Lasers	361
7.7	SESAM Characterization	363
7.7.1	One-Beam Measurement of Nonlinear Reflectivity	363
7.7.2	Pump-Probe Measurement of Recovery Time	368
7.7.3	Pump-Probe Measurement of Nonlinear Reflectivity	369
7.8	Novel Saturable Absorber Materials	370

8	Q-Switching	373
8.1	Active Q-Switching	374
8.1.1	Fundamental Principle of Active Q-Switching	374
8.1.2	Acousto-Optic Q-Switched Diode-Pumped Solid-State Laser	376
8.1.3	Pulsed Single-Frequency Laser	377
8.1.4	Actively Q-Switched Microchip Laser	377
8.2	Theory for Active Q-Switching	378
8.2.1	Rate Equations	378
8.2.2	Inversion Build-Up Phase	378
8.2.3	Pulse Build-Up Phase: Leading Edge of the Pulse	380
8.2.4	Dynamics During the Pulse Duration	381
8.2.5	Pulse Depletion Phase: Trailing Edge of the Pulse	384
8.3	Passive Q-Switching	384
8.3.1	Fundamental Principle of Passive Q-Switching	384
8.3.2	Passively Q-Switched Microchip Laser	386
8.3.3	Passively Q-Switched Monolithic Ring Laser	386
8.4	Theory for Passive Q-Switching	390
8.4.1	Rate Equations	390
8.4.2	Model for SESAM Q-Switched Microchip Laser	395
8.4.3	Pulse Energy	396
8.4.4	Pulse Duration and Pulse Shape	400
8.4.5	Pulse Repetition Rate	400
8.4.6	Remarks on Three-Level Lasers	401
8.5	Passively Q-Switched Microchip Lasers Using SESAMs	402
8.5.1	SESAM Design	402
8.5.2	Laser Setup	405
8.5.3	SESAM Q-Switching Results	406
8.5.4	Design Guidelines	413
8.5.5	Summary of the Q-Switched Microchip Laser	417
9	Passive Modelocking	419
9.1	Introduction and Basic Principle	419
9.1.1	Basic Principle	419
9.1.2	Starting Passive Modelocking	421
9.1.3	Historical Development	423
9.2	Coupled Cavity Modelocking	429
9.3	Passive Modelocking with a Slow Saturable Absorber and Dynamic Gain Saturation	432
9.3.1	Modelocking Conditions	433
9.3.2	Example: Colliding Pulse Modelocking (CPM)	434
9.3.3	Pulse Formation through Saturable Absorption and Gain	436
9.3.4	Master Equation and Solution	440
9.4	Passive Modelocking with a Fast Saturable Absorber	443

9.4.1	Definition of an Ideally Fast Saturable Absorber	444
9.4.2	Example: Kerr Lens Modelocking (KLM)	445
9.4.3	Master Equation	445
9.4.4	Solution without SPM and GDD	447
9.4.5	Comparison with Active Modelocking without SPM and GDD	449
9.4.6	Solution with SPM and GDD for Soliton Formation	450
9.4.7	Problem for Self-Starting Modelocking	460
9.5	Passive Modelocking with Slow Saturable Absorber and Without Dynamic Gain Saturation	461
9.5.1	Soliton Modelocking	462
9.5.2	Example: Soliton Modelocked Ti:sapphire Laser	467
9.5.3	Soliton Modelocking with $GDD > 0$ and $n_2 < 0$	470
9.5.4	What Happens Without Soliton Formation	479
9.6	Summary of Analytical Solutions for all Modelocking Techniques	483
9.7	Q-Switching Instabilities of Passively Modelocked Solid-State Lasers	491
9.7.1	Q-Switching Instabilities: A More Serious Issue for Solid-State Lasers	491
9.7.2	Q-Switching Instabilities Without ISA: Derivation and Discussion of (9.126)	496
9.7.3	Q-Switching Instabilities with Soliton Modelocking but Without ISA: Derivation and Discussion of (9.127)	500
9.7.4	Q-Switching Instabilities with ISA: Discussion of (9.129)	504
9.7.5	Special Cavity Designs to Prevent Q-Switching Instabilities	506
9.7.6	Negative n_2 to Prevent Q-Switching Instabilities	507
9.8	Passively Modelocked Diode-Pumped Semiconductor Lasers	508
9.8.1	Optically Pumped VECSELs	508
9.8.2	Optically-Pumped MIXSELs and SESAM-Modelocked VECSELs	510
9.9	Dual-Comb Modelocking	513
9.10	Performance Frontiers in Ultrafast Lasers	516
9.10.1	Pulse Generation in the Few-Cycle Regime	516
9.10.2	High Average Power	522
9.10.3	Gigahertz Pulse Repetition Rates	533
10	Pulse Duration Measurements	547
10.1	Electronic Measurements of the Pulse Duration	547
10.1.1	Cables and Connectors	547

10.1.2	Fast Photodiode	547
10.1.3	Estimating the Time Resolution and Measurement Bandwidth	552
10.1.4	Sampling Oscilloscope	554
10.1.5	Microwave Spectrum and Signal Analyzers	555
10.1.6	Equivalent-Time Sampling	556
10.2	Optical Autocorrelation	558
10.2.1	Pulse Spectrum	558
10.2.2	Intensity Autocorrelation	558
10.2.3	Interferometric Autocorrelation (IAC)	563
10.2.4	High-Dynamic-Range Autocorrelation	570
10.2.5	Temporal Smearing in Noncollinear Autocorrelation	571
10.3	Frequency-Resolved Optical Gating (FROG)	572
10.3.1	Basic Principle	573
10.3.2	Second Harmonic Generation FROG (SHG-FROG)	579
10.4	Spectral Phase Interferometry for Direct Electric Field Reconstruction (SPIDER)	582
10.4.1	Basic Principle	582
10.4.2	Experimental Realization	584
11	Intensity Noise and Timing Jitter of Modelocked Lasers	589
11.1	Introduction	589
11.1.1	Definition of Intensity Noise and Timing Jitter	590
11.1.2	Basic Mathematical Principles for Noise	592
11.2	Measurement Techniques for Intensity Noise and Timing Jitter	595
11.2.1	General Remarks on Intensity Noise	595
11.2.2	General Remarks on Timing Jitter	597
11.2.3	Measurement Based on Microwave Spectrum Analyzers	597
11.2.4	Measurement Based on Electronic Reference Signals	599
11.2.5	Measurement Based on Optical Cross-Correlations	600
11.2.6	Measurement with an Indirect Phase Comparison Method	601
11.3	Noise Measurements with Power Spectral Densities	602
11.3.1	Ideal Laser Without Amplitude Fluctuations and Timing Jitter	602
11.3.2	Pulse Train with Intensity Noise	604
11.3.3	Pulse Train with Timing Jitter	609
11.3.4	Summary of Intensity Noise and Timing Jitter	613
11.4	Noise Characteristics of Modelocked Lasers	613

11.4.1	Some Basic Remarks on Noise, Stabilization, and Coupling Mechanisms	613
11.4.2	Ultrafast Dye Lasers	617
11.4.3	Flashlamp-Pumped Solid-State Lasers	619
11.4.4	Diode-Pumped SESAM-Modelocked Solid-State Lasers	620
11.4.5	Argon-Ion Versus Diode-Pumped Ti:Sapphire Lasers	623
11.5	Some Words of Caution About Noise Characterization	624
11.5.1	General Remarks About Nonstationary Processes and Finite Measurement Durations	624
11.5.2	Noise Measurements in the Frequency Domain	627
11.5.3	Noise Measurements in the Time Domain	627
11.6	Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) Optimization Techniques	628
11.6.1	Basic Principle of Pump–Probe Measurements	628
11.6.2	High Frequency Chopping with Lock-in Detection	630
11.6.3	Minimal Detectable Signal for Shot-Noise-Limited Detection	631
11.6.4	Short Measurement Durations for Lower SNR	633
12	Optical Frequency Comb from Modelocked Lasers	639
12.1	Introduction	639
12.2	Carrier Envelope Offset (CEO) Phase and Frequency	642
12.3	Measurement of the CEO Frequency	648
12.3.1	Basic Principle with Heterodyne (Interference) Signals	648
12.3.2	Method 1: f -to- $2f$ Interferometer	650
12.3.3	Method 2: Frequency-Doubled Transfer Oscillator with Lower Bandwidth Requirement	656
12.3.4	Method 3: Frequency-Tripled Transfer Oscillator	659
12.3.5	Method 4: SHG and THG of Two Auxiliary Oscillators and Self-Referenced 2f-to-3f Interferometer	659
12.3.6	Method 5: Frequency Interval Bisection	660
12.4	Phase and Frequency Noise	661
12.4.1	Spectrally Resolved CEO Frequency Noise	661
12.4.2	Basic Mathematical Principle of Phase and Frequency Noise	664
12.4.3	Integrated Phase and Frequency Noise	667
12.4.4	Phase Noise from Cavity Mirror Vibrations	670
12.4.5	Intensity Noise, Timing Jitter, and CEO Frequency Noise	671
12.4.6	Phase-Time and Fractional (or Relative) Frequency Noise	673

12.4.7	Polynomial Model: White, $1/f$ (Flicker), and $1/f^2$ Noise	675
12.4.8	Allan Variance	676
12.5	Connection Between the Optical Laser Spectrum and the Phase Noise	680
12.5.1	Optical Laser Spectrum	680
12.5.2	Variance of the Phase Noise Change and Optical Autocorrelation	680
12.5.3	Optical Spectral Linewidth from Frequency and Phase Noise	682
12.5.4	Optical Linewidth for (Low-Pass Filtered) White Frequency Noise	684
12.5.5	β -Separation Line	687
12.5.6	Optical Linewidth from Flicker Noise	688
12.5.7	Quantum Noise Limit	690
12.5.8	Optical Interferometers, Coherence, and Phase Noise	691
12.6	Stabilized Optical Frequency Combs	694
12.6.1	Basic Principle of Active Stabilization	694
12.6.2	CEO Frequency Stabilization with Laser Feedback Control	695
12.6.3	Full Optical Frequency Comb Stabilization	698
12.6.4	External CEO Frequency Stabilization	699
12.7	Laser Technology for Optical Frequency Combs	700
Appendix A: Fourier Transform	.....	703
Appendix B: Dispersion for Quantum Mechanical Particles	.....	707
Appendix C: Delta-Function	.....	709
Appendix D: Delta-Comb	.....	713
Appendix E: Soliton Algebra	.....	717
Appendix F: Linearized Operators for the Master Equation	.....	721
References	.....	727
Index	.....	791