Contents

Introduction 1

1. Basic concepts in nuclear physics 9
1.1 Nucleons and leptons 9
1.2 General properties of nuclei 11
1.2.1 Nuclear radii 12
1.2.2 Binding energies 14
1.2.3 Mass units and measurements 17
1.3 Quantum states of nuclei 25
1.4 Nuclear forces and interactions 29
1.4.1 The deuteron 31
1.4.2 The Yukawa potential and its generalizations 35
1.4.3 Origin of the Yukawa potential 38
1.4.4 From forces to interactions 39
1.5 Nuclear reactions and decays 41
1.6 Conservation laws 43
1.6.1 Energy-momentum conservation 44
1.6.2 Angular momentum and parity (non)conservation 46
1.6.3 Additive quantum numbers 46
1.6.4 Quantum theory of conservation laws 48
1.7 Charge independence and isospin 51
1.7.1 Isospin space 51
1.7.2 One-particle states 52
1.7.3 The generalized Pauli principle 55
1.7.4 Two-nucleon system 55
1.7.5 Origin of isospin symmetry; n-p mass difference 56
1.8 Deformed nuclei 58
1.9 Bibliography 62
Exercises 62

2. Nuclear models and stability 67
2.1 Mean potential model 69
2.2 The Liquid-Drop Model 74
2.2.1 The Bethe–Weizsäcker mass formula 74

2.3 The Fermi gas model ... 77
2.3.1 Volume and surface energies ... 79
2.3.2 The asymmetry energy ... 81
2.4 The shell model and magic numbers ... 81
2.4.1 The shell model and the spin-orbit interaction ... 85
2.4.2 Some consequences of nuclear shell structure ... 88
2.5 β-instability ... 90
2.6 α-instability ... 94
2.7 Nucleon emission ... 98
2.8 The production of super-heavy elements ... 100
2.9 Bibliography ... 101
Exercises ... 101

3. Nuclear reactions ... 107
3.1 Cross-sections ... 108
3.1.1 Generalities ... 108
3.1.2 Differential cross-sections ... 111
3.1.3 Inelastic and total cross-sections ... 112
3.1.4 The uses of cross-sections ... 113
3.1.5 General characteristics of cross-sections ... 115
3.2 Classical scattering on a fixed potential ... 121
3.2.1 Classical cross-sections ... 122
3.2.2 Examples ... 123
3.3 Quantum mechanical scattering on a fixed potential ... 126
3.3.1 Asymptotic states and their normalization ... 127
3.3.2 Cross-sections in quantum perturbation theory ... 129
3.3.3 Elastic scattering ... 132
3.3.4 Quasi-elastic scattering ... 135
3.3.5 Scattering of quantum wave packets ... 136
3.4 Particle–particle scattering ... 143
3.4.1 Scattering of two free particles ... 143
3.4.2 Scattering of a free particle on a bound particle ... 146
3.4.3 Scattering on a charge distribution ... 149
3.4.4 Electron–nucleus scattering ... 151
3.4.5 Electron–nucleon scattering ... 153
3.5 Resonances ... 157
3.6 Nucleon–nucleus and nucleon–nucleon scattering ... 161
3.6.1 Elastic scattering ... 161
3.6.2 Absorption ... 167
3.7 Coherent scattering and the refractive index ... 169
3.8 Bibliography ... 171
Exercises ... 171

4. Nuclear decays and fundamental interactions 175
4.1 Decay rates, generalities 175
4.1.1 Natural width, branching ratios 175
4.1.2 Measurement of decay rates 176
4.1.3 Calculation of decay rates 178
4.1.4 Phase space and two-body decays 183
4.1.5 Detailed balance and thermal equilibrium 184
4.2 Radiative decays 187
4.2.1 Electric-dipole transitions 188
4.2.2 Higher multi-pole transitions 190
4.2.3 Internal conversion 193
4.3 Weak interactions 195
4.3.1 Neutron decay 196
4.3.2 β-decay of nuclei 202
4.3.3 Electron-capture 207
4.3.4 Neutrino mass and helicity 209
4.3.5 Neutrino detection 214
4.3.6 Muon decay 218
4.4 Families of quarks and leptons 221
4.4.1 Neutrino mixing and weak interactions 221
4.4.2 Quarks 228
4.4.3 Quark mixing and weak interactions 232
4.4.4 Electro-weak unification 235
4.5 Bibliography 241
Exercises 241

5. Radioactivity and all that 245
5.1 Generalities 245
5.2 Sources of radioactivity 246
5.2.1 Fossil radioactivity 247
5.2.2 Cosmogenic radioactivity 252
5.2.3 Artificial radioactivity 254
5.3 Passage of particles through matter 256
5.3.1 Heavy charged particles 257
5.3.2 Particle identification 263
5.3.3 Electrons and positrons 265
5.3.4 Photons 266
5.3.5 Neutrons 269
5.4 Radiation dosimetry 270
5.5 Applications of radiation 273
5.5.1 Medical applications 273
5.5.2 Nuclear dating 274
5.5.3 Other uses of radioactivity 280
5.6 Bibliography 281
Exercises 282

6. Fission 285
6.1 Nuclear energy 285
6.2 Fission products 287
6.3 Fission mechanism, fission barrier 290
6.4 Fissile materials and fertile materials 295
6.5 Chain reactions 297
6.6 Moderators, neutron thermalization 299
6.7 Neutron transport in matter 301
6.7.1 The transport equation in a simple uniform spherically symmetric medium 302
6.7.2 The Lorentz equation 305
6.7.3 Divergence, critical mass 306
6.8 Nuclear reactors 308
6.8.1 Thermal reactors 309
6.8.2 Fast neutron reactors 316
6.8.3 Accelerator-coupled sub-critical reactors 319
6.8.4 Treatment and re-treatment of nuclear fuel 322
6.9 The Oklo prehistoric nuclear reactor 323
6.10 Bibliography 326
Exercises 327

7. Fusion 329
7.1 Fusion reactions 330
7.1.1 The Coulomb barrier 331
7.1.2 Reaction rate in a medium 335
7.1.3 Resonant reaction rates 338
7.2 Reactor performance criteria 339
7.3 Magnetic confinement 342
7.4 Inertial confinement by lasers 346
7.5 Bibliography 349
Exercises 349

8. Nuclear Astrophysics 351
8.1 Stellar Structure 351
8.1.1 Classical stars 352
8.1.2 Degenerate stars 359
8.2 Nuclear burning stages in stars 363
8.2.1 Hydrogen burning 363
8.2.2 Helium burning 366
8.2.3 Advanced nuclear-burning stages 369
8.2.4 Core-collapse 370
8.3 Stellar nucleosynthesis 373
8.3.1 Solar-system abundances 373
8.3.2 Production of $A < 60$ nuclei 376
8.3.3 $A > 60$: the s-, r- and p-processes 376

8.4 Nuclear astronomy . . . 381
8.4.1 Solar Neutrinos . . . 382
8.4.2 Supernova neutrinos . . . 390
8.4.3 γ-astronomy . . . 392
Exercises . . . 394

9. Nuclear Cosmology . . . 397
9.1 The Universe today . . . 399
9.1.1 The visible Universe . . . 400
9.1.2 Baryons . . . 401
9.1.3 Cold dark matter . . . 401
9.1.4 Photons . . . 402
9.1.5 Neutrinos . . . 403
9.1.6 The vacuum . . . 404
9.2 The expansion of the Universe . . . 405
9.2.1 The scale factor $a(t)$ . . . 407
9.3 Gravitation and the Friedmann equation . . . 410
9.4 High-redshift supernovae and the vacuum energy . . . 416
9.5 Reaction rates in the early Universe . . . 416
9.6 Electrons, positrons and neutrinos . . . 420
9.7 Cosmological nucleosynthesis . . . 424
9.8 Wimps . . . 434
Exercises . . . 436

A. Relativistic kinematics . . . 441

B. Accelerators . . . 445

C. Time-dependent perturbation theory . . . 451
C.0.1 Transition rates between two states . . . 451
C.0.2 Limiting forms of the delta function . . . 453

D. Neutron transport . . . 455
D.0.3 The Boltzmann transport equation . . . 455
D.0.4 The Lorentz equation . . . 456

E. Solutions and Hints for Selected Exercises . . . 461

F. Tables of numerical values . . . 469

G. Table of Nuclei . . . 471

References . . . 507

Index . . . 511