Department of Physics FAQs

1. What can I do with a Physics degree?
Physics prepares you well for a wide range of careers! Many of our students go to graduate school in physics or other fields such as engineering, mathematics, geology, and forestry. They perform research in nanotechnology, detection of gravitational waves and exoplanets, modeling water sheds, and many other areas. More than half of our graduates work in industries such as 3M, Honeywell, Boston Scientific, and Medtronic. Some even become patent lawyers, medical doctors, or research scientists for the United States Air Force.

2. Is it possible to double major or minor in Physics?
Yes! More than 50% of our physics majors earn double majors in areas such as engineering, chemistry, mathematics, education, and computer science. Our physics minor is also very popular because it provides a great technical addition to many other fields.

3. Are students involved in research?
Yes, during the school year and over the summer, we offer many opportunities for students to work closely with faculty on experimental, computational, and mathematical projects. Many of our projects are interdisciplinary. We have state-of-the-art laboratories and computational facilities, a machine shop, and a fully robotic observatory where we can detect exoplanets and quasars! You can find more information on the Physics web page on the St. Thomas website.

4. Which Physics courses satisfy the Natural Science core requirement?

PHYS 101 Physics for Liberal Arts
PHYS 104 Astronomy (a sustainability themed course)
PHYS 105 Musical Acoustics
PHYS 109 and 110 Physics for Life Sciences I and II
PHYS 211 and 212 Classical Physics I and II

5. When can I tour the observatory?
We usually have a big event during Family Weekend as well as telescope parties throughout the year. You can find more information on the Observatory web page.

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