Ph.D. Program Centre for Research in Nanotechnology & Science (CRNTS) Indian Institute of Technology - Bombay

Topics for CRNTS Ph.D. Program (AUTUMN SEMESTER) (May 2025)

Candidates are encouraged to contact faculty members by e-mail directly in case they have any query.

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category	
1	Design and development of infrared and microwave dual band coating for stealth application	Karthik Sasihithlu, Energy Science & Engineering ksasihithlu@iitb.ac.in	Desikan Ramakrishnan, Earth Sciences ramakrish@iitb.ac.in	B. Tech./ M. Tech. in Materials Science and Metallurgical Engineering, Electrical and electronics engineering, Applied/Engineering Physics, Nanoscience and Engineering, Photonics/Optics, M. Sc. in Physics	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT	
	Topic Name : Design and development of infrared and microwave dual band coating for stealth application Abstract : In order to decrease the radar and infrared footprints of military and civilian targets, dual- band infrared radar stealth technology is a rapidly growing topic. Since radar and infrared waves have very different wavelengths and properties, implementing dual-band infrared radar stealth technology presents some significant obstacles. Stealth compatibility for materials with exceptional microwave absorption (MA) and low infrared emissivity is urgently required with modern military detection					

equipment advancement.

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category	
2	Chemical upcycling of plastics by solar photothermal valorization	C. Subramaniam, Chemistry csubramaniam@iitb.ac.in	Prof. Guruswamy Kumaraswamy, Chemical Engineering guruswamy@iitb.ac.in	Masters/BTech in Chemistry,Physics, Materials Science and Engineering,Chemical Engineering.	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT	
	guruswamy@itb.ac.in Topic Name : Chemical upcycling of plastics by solar photothermal valorization Abstract : The global annual production of synthetic plastics stands at about 400 million tons at this time. The vast majority of these materials are discarded after single-use - therefore, plastic pollution is one of the defining challenges of our time. One approach to address this problem is to recycle the plastics so that their effective use-life is increased, decreasing the need for fresh petrochemically derived monomer. Commonly, this takes the route of thermomechanical recycling, wherein waste plastic is melted and reprocessed. However, there are difficult technical challenges to this route. Post consumer plastic streams are often mixed, comprising different plastics like polyethylene and polypropylene. Separating these is challenging, and processing a mixed stream results in blends with poor mechanical recycling, viz. depolymerization of waste polymers to yield monomers or other value added chemicals is of great contemporary interest. Since most polymerization reactions are downhill in free energy, de-polymerization is energy intensive. Therefore, we propose to explore the utilization of solar photothermal routes to valorization of waste polymerization of plastic. The heterogeneous nature of the photothermal agent and the plastic (reactant) would be engineered to optimize heat-transfer and direct the chemical depolymerization towards desired pathways. Our interest is mainly in commercially relevant commodity materials such as polyethylene and polyethylene and polyethylene terephthalate might also be investigated. Students interested in this project should have a background in chemical engineering or chemistry or materials science and engineering. Strong motivation to learn new skills with a good common-sense is required. Some exposure to polymers is preferable but not mandatory. This project will involve developme					

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category
3	Machine learning assisted joint computational and experimental design and development of novel biochar based microbial fuel cells	Sudarshan Vijay, Chemical Engineering sudarshan.vijay@iitb.ac.in	Indrajit Chakraborty, Department of Energy Science and Engineering indra.esed@iitb.ac.in	 BTech / B.E. / B.S. or similar degrees in either Engineering (Chemical/Materials/Mechanical/Civil) or Science (Physics/Chemistry/Applied Science). MTech / M.E. / M.S. or similar degree in either Engineering (Chemical/Materials/Mechanical/Civil) or Science (Physics/Chemistry/Applied Science). 	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT
	Abstract : High energy density f transition metal electrocatalysts transition metal electrocatalysts transition metal electrodes deliv biomass, is trivial to source. It is active at generating electricity b significantly reduce the cost of of First, there is significant variabil translates into significant variabil translates into significant differe Second, biochar based materia unstable electrodes.Both these use microorganisms to convert are tunable, offering pathways t substrate and not as a catalyst) biochar electrodes with microbia which organic moieties, surface Trial-and-error based methods composition.Computational tool electrochemical characterization charge transfer in ORR. A key f for applications to microbial fuel will apply state-of-the-art machi electrodes for charge transfer re assisted molecular dynamics sin assisted computational investig characterization using cyclic vol	uel cells are critical to the energy (such as platinum) to convert rer state-of-the-art performance is rich in carbon, nitrogen, oxy or by converting oxygen to water device fabrication and mainter ity in the quality and composite ences in the concentrations of ls are not stable for long durate challenges of lack of reprodue organic matter (present in the provides standardization while a fuel cells is allowing for sea composition and functional group of designing these electrodes is such as density functional the n tools such as cyclic voltamm ocus of this project will be on l cells. In this project, we will de ne learning methods to perfor eactions in ORR. To verify the mulations and report the atom ations will be synthesized and ltammograms and Tafel analy	ergy transition from fossil fue t energy stored in chemical ce, they are expensive, diffic gen and sulphur. These eler through the oxygen reduction hance. There are two key ch tion of biochar due to the lac carbon, nitrogen, oxygen are tions under an electrochemic cibility and stability are solvate electrolyte) into electricity. ity and electricity generation le offering additional tunabilist mless charge and proton tra- roups on the biochar substr- is time consuming and unlike heory (DFT), molecular dyna- nograms have paved the war applying these tools to desi esign, develop and character m high-throughput computate results of our high-through sistic mechanisms of charge characterized. We will synt- sis. Through these computates	d development of novel biochar based microbial fuel els to renewable and sustainable sources of energy. (bonds (such as the Oâ€"H bond of hydrogen) into ele ult to source and maintain.Biochar, which is obtained nents combine to form amorphous materials that hav on reaction (ORR). Substituting platinum based electrical electron (ORR). Substituting platinum based electrical allenges with using biochar as an electrode for high electron of standardization in biomass (from which it is proce- nd sulphur as well as varied amorphous phases and electron activity and stability under fixed el- tron system conventional fuel cells with microbia Their composition, activity and stability under fixed el- through ORR. Depositing these microorganisms on ty through changing the composition of biomass.A ke ansfer from the cathode. From a design standpoint, it ate lead to the most active and stable ORR in microb elever to succeed given the vast tunability of these micro- amics simulations and machine learning techniques of y towards developing robust design principles and el- gn and develop an understanding of charge transfer erize novel biochar-based cathodes to perform ORR f tional investigations to determine the most stable and out investigation, we will perform long-length and time and proton transfer. Best performing candidates fror hesize these biochar materials and perform systema attional and experimental methods, we will develop co- to asfer reactions in a microbial fuel cell.	Conventional fuel cells use ectricity. While these d from the pyrolysis of ve been shown to be rodes with biochar will energy density fuel cells. duced). This variability surface compositions. reme potentials, leading to al fuel cells. These devices lectrochemical potential biochar (used as a ey challenge with using is currently unclear as to bial fuel cells. roorganisms and biochar coupled with lucidating mechanisms for mechanisms on biochar for microbial fuel cells. We d active biochar e-scale machine learning m the machine-learning tic electrochemical

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category			
4	Porous Transport Layers for Water Electrolyzers	Nagappan Ramaswamy, S.A.I.F. Nagappan@iitb.ac.in	Chandramouli Subramaniam, Chemistry csubbu@chem.iitb.ac.in	Masters/BTech in Chemistry,Physics, Materials Science and Engineering, Chemical Engineering.	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT			
	Topic Name : Porous Transport	Layers for Water Electrolyzer	ſS					
	its individual chemical compone enables the generation of green industries and a potential energ	ents namely, hydrogen and ox n hydrogen which plays a key y carrier. A global research ef	ygen. The integration of wat role in carbon-free, sustaina fort is underway to decrease	e electrolysis of water wherein electricity is used to s er electrolyzers with renewable energy sources such able energy economy. Hydrogen is a major chemical e the capital cost of electrolyzers and hence the cost depend on improving the properties of several struct	as wind or solar power feedstock in various of hydrogen generated.			
At the core the electrolyzer are the catalysts for water splitting, membrane for ion transport and the Porous Transport Layer (PTL) for mass transport of products. Electrolyzer is fabricated by sandwiching an anode and a cathode catalyst layer in either side of the membrane. PTLs are composed of meta are placed on the back side of the catalyst layers. The PTL in water electrolyzer plays a crucial role in ensuring efficient reactant and product transport ion transport while maintaining structural and electrical integrity. Its primary functions include facilitating a) reactant water distribution to the catalyst layer hydrogen and oxygen product gas release, c) prevent gas bubble accumulation that could hinder mass transport, d) electrical conductivity between the and the current collector, ensuring efficient charge transfer with minimal resistance, e) maintain structural integrity, preventing electrode deformation a stable operation under varying pressure conditions and finally f) dissipate heat generated during electrolysis, preventing overheating and improving overheating and improving overheating.					d of metal meshes and transport gas, water, and atalyst layer, b) continuous tween the catalyst layer mation and ensuring			
During electrolyzer operation a few critical challenges related to the anode PTL causes major performance losses of the electrolyzer. These include the de a resistive passivation layer due to the high anode potential, delamination of the catalyst layer from the PTL and inefficient mass transport leading to lower rates and system inefficiencies.								
	Materials used for PTLs vary depending on the type of electrolyzer. In proton exchange membrane (PEM) electrolyzers, PTLs are often made of titanium due t corrosion resistance in acidic environments, whereas alkaline electrolyzers typically use porous nickel-based structures. Optimizing the design, material proper mass transport characteristics of the PTL is crucial for enhancing electrolyzer efficiency, durability, and cost-effectiveness.							
	Given the multi-faceted role of the PTL, this provides an exciting research and development opportunity requiring a good understanding of the chemistry, chemical engineering and materials science aspects of the problem. The project will take an interdisciplinary approach involving the fabrication, characterization and diagnosis of PTLs in water electrolyzers. A key aspect of the doctoral dissertation would be to analyze the structure-property relationship of the PTL in electrolyzers, the impact of the pore structure, and the key interfacial aspects. Understanding and optimising PTL structures ensures a balance between reactant delivery, gas removal, and maintaining a robust interracial structure leading to improvement in electrolyzer efficiency and longevity.							

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category			
5	Electrochemical Reduction of Carbon Dioxide	Nagappan Ramaswamy, S.A.I.F. Nagappan@iitb.ac.in	Srinivasan Ramakrishnan, Chemistry sriniramk@iitb.ac.in	B.Tech. (Chemical Engineering/ Materials Science/Energy Science and Engineering) M.Sc. (Chemistry)	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT			
	Topic Name : Electrochemical Reduction of Carbon Dioxide Abstract : The electrochemical reduction of carbon dioxide (CO2) has garnered significant attention as a promising technology for mitigating the effects of climate change by converting CO2 into useful chemicals and fuels. This process involves the use of renewable electricity to drive the reduction of CO2 at the cathode of an electrochemical cell, with potential products including carbon monoxide, methane, formic acid, and various hydrocarbons. The efficiency and selectivity of CO2 reduction are influenced by multiple factors, including the choice of electrode materials, catalysts, electrolytes, and operating conditions. Recent advancements in catalyst design, particularly with metal-based catalysts and carbon-based materials, have led to improved product selectivity and increased Faradaic efficiency. Additionally, innovations in reactor design, such as gas diffusion electrodes and flow reactors, have enhanced the scalability and performance of the process. Despit these advancements, challenges remain in terms of overcoming energy inefficiencies, enhancing long-term stability, and achieving economically viable production rates. In this project, the aspiring doctoral candidate will study various aspects of CO2RR and identify new factors that influence the selectivity, yield and efficiency. Some of these factors include homogeneous catalyst, electrocatalysis, electrolyte selection and operating conditions such as voltage and temperature. CO2 reductic plants are proposed to be placed near industrial flue gas sources such as sulfur compounds, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds become critical to CO2 RR it may change the reduction pathways and mechanisms. Further, the choice of electrolyte is also influences the product distribution as it preferentially stabilizes intermediates with various studies being carried out in aqueous and non-aqueous electrolytes. Finally, the durability of the catalyst needs to be understood as it determines the longevity							
6	Study of fluid flow for controlled assembly of colloidal particles in evaporating droplets	Sunita Srivastava, Physics sunita.srivastava@iitb.ac.in	Abhijeet Kumar, na abhijeet.kumar@iitb.ac.in	 M.Sc in Physics. M.Tech in Material Science/ Nanoscience and Nanotechnology. B.Tech in Engineering Physics/ Material Science and Engineering/Mechanical Engineering/Chemical Engineering." 	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT			
	Topic Name : Study of fluid flow for controlled assembly of colloidal particles in evaporating droplets Abstract : Investigate the role of fluid flow in controlled and ordered assembly of colloidal particles in evaporating dropletsSunita Srivastava and Abhijeet KumarDepartment of Physics and Mechanical Engineering, IIT BombayAbstract							

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category		
7	Advanced Electron Microscopy of Molecular Beam Epitaxy Grown Quantum Dot Semiconductor Heterostructures	Abhinandan Gangopadhyay, Met.Engg & Mat.Science abhinandan.g@iitb.ac.in	Subhananda Chakrabarti, Electrical Engineering subhananda@iitb.ac.in	B.E./B.Tech./M.E./M.Tech. in Metallurgical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering; M.Sc. or equivalent degree in Physics, Materials Science	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
				n Dot Semiconductor Heterostructures	aternary allovs are useful		
	for optoelectronic device application and dots, elemental segregation and	ations. The optical response o d strain. This project aims to c	of these heterostructures is of orrelate nanoscale structure	dependent on various intertwined factors such as the al and chemical information obtained using advanced owth strategies for heterostructures with improved opt	size and shape of the transmission electron		
8	Development of Graphene based materials for energy storage	Sumit Saxena, Met.Engg & Mat.Science sumit.saxena@iitb.ac.in	venkatsailanathan Ramadesigan, Energy Science & Engineering venkatr@iitb.ac.in	BTech/Tech in Chemical Engineering/ Materials Science/Energy Science Masters in Chemistry	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
	Topic Name : Development of C	Topic Name : Development of Graphene based materials for energy storage					
	Abstract : The aim of the projec characterizations including elec		ne based materials to be use	ed as electrode for supercapacitors. This would involve	ve materials		
9	Defects in Semiconductor Nanodevice	Sandip Mondal, Electrical Engineering 10001970@iitb.ac.in	Prof. M Maniraj, Physics maniraj@iitb.ac.in	MTech/MSc (Materials Science or Electrical Engineering or Physics)	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
	Topic Name : Defects in Semiconductor Nanodevice						
	Abstract : The revolutionary impact of advanced semiconductor physics on our daily lives remains unabated. We continually interact with computational, memory, and imaging devices where a large number of electrons are pushed around various defect states at every nanosecond inside semiconductors. As these technologies are rapidly evolving from traditional circuit boards to flexible electronics, new materials, physics, and processing technologies are being explored to improve their functionality and efficiency. This brings unique experimental challenges to evaluate the fundamental interaction of defects with electrons in novel semiconductors. In this project, we will first design a prototypical MIS capacitive device architecture to illustrate the electron trapping in memory devices fabricated at low temperatures. Unlike the conventional measurement system, we will then focus on the challenges in measuring the defect state in semiconductors and our approach to probing the defect state during charge pumping operations. References: IEEE Trans. on Electron Devices 68, 3 (2021) IEEE Electron Device Letters 41, 5 (717 - 720) (2020) Semiconductor Science and Technology 35, 10LT02 (2020)						

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category		
10	Semiconductor Memory Technology for Artificial Intelligence	Sandip Mondal, Electrical Engineering 10001970@iitb.ac.in	Prof. M Maniraj, Physics maniraj@iitb.ac.in	MTech (Materials Science or Electrical Engineering)	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
	Topic Name : Semiconductor N	lemory Technology for Artificia	al Intelligence				
	such features in electronic devi oxides to illustrate learning beh examples of prototypical flash r	ces is essential for advancing avior. We will examine the tra eno-mamory devices, we will	neuromorphic electronics for nsient memory and forgettin present our vision for a neu-	le mechanism for the stability and lifelong learning of or Artificial Intelligence. In this project, we will explore ng dynamics by controlling the state of the nano mem promorphic platform utilizing NAND flash memories. C extended to brain-machine interfaces.	memory devices using ory devices. Using		
	References: Science vol 375, No 6580 (2022 Advanced Intelligent Systems 2						
11	Development of Carbon quantum dots for electrochemical sensing of Heavy metals	Sumit Saxena, Met.Engg & Mat.Science sumit.saxena@iitb.ac.in	venkatsailanathan Ramadesigan, department of energy science & engineering venkatr@iitb.ac.in	BTech/Tech in Chemical Engineering/ Materials Science/Energy Science Masters in Chemistry	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
	Topic Name : Development of Carbon quantum dots for electrochemical sensing of Heavy metals						
	Abstract : Heavy metal contamination is one of the severe problems and requires effective sensing. This project aims for sensing of heavy metals using electrochemical techniques.						
12	Patterning of high k Materials for Meta optics	Shobha Shukla, Met.Engg & Mat.Science sshukla@iitb.ac.in	Anindya Datta, Chemistry adutta@iitb.ac.in	M. Tech. in Materials Science or Electrical Engineering or M. Sc. in Physics, Chemistry or Life Sciences	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
	Topic Name : Patterning of high k Materials for Meta optics						
	Abstract : High K Materials are of great importance for next gen computing devices. Towards this goal, we propose to pattern high K materials such as HfO2 using two-photon laser lithography. Dimentions of the order of few hundred nanometers with high aspect ratios are expected to be achieved here. Extensive characterization using spectroscopy and microscopy will be performed to qualify these patterned nanostructures. Final applications in the field of metasurfaces and metaoptics will be explored.						

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category	
13	Graphene based foam/membrane for water quality sensing and purification	Shobha Shukla, Met.Engg & Mat.Science sshukla@iitb.ac.in	Lalit Kumar, department of energy science & engineering lalit.kumar@iitb.ac.in	M. Tech. in Materials Science or Electrical Engineering or M. Sc. in Physics, Chemistry or Life Sciences	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT	
Topic Name : Graphene based foam/membrane for water quality sensing and purification Abstract : Graphene is 2D material with multiple functional group. This makes it attractive for trapping and detection of multiple analytes after suita Here we propose to synthesize graphene from the agri-waste materials from the already optimized recipe developed in the NEMO lab. Integration solution casted membranes will be used for trapping of pollutants. Graphene based inks with suitable modification will be used for sensing the analytes and integrated purifier system will be developed through this project.						
14	Next-Generation Membrane Systems for Virus Removal and Antibody Recovery in Bioprocessing	Swatantra Pratap Singh, E.S.E.D. swatantra@iitb.ac.in	Asutosh Kumar, BSBE ashutoshk@iitb.ac.in	M. Sc. in chemistry, Biochemistry/ M.Sc/M.tech in Environmental Science/ Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, Materials Science and Engineering, Biotechnology, Bio-Engineering or equivalent	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT	
	Topic Name : Next-Generation Membrane Systems for Virus Removal and Antibody Recovery in Bioprocessing Abstract : Membrane separation technology plays a crucial role in biopharmaceutical processes, particularly in virus clearance, virus concentration, and antibody purification. The separation of viruses and antibodies is essential in vaccine production, monoclonal antibody (mAb) manufacturing, and gene therapy. The project will focus on the development of advance membranes for better permeability and slectivity					

Sr. No.	Name of Topic	Guide Name	Co-Guide Name	Qualification Required	Category		
15	Hybrid MOF-Graphene Membrane Separators for High-Performance Sodium and Lithium-Ion Energy Storage Systems	Swatantra Pratap Singh, E.S.E.D. swatantra@iitb.ac.in	Lalit Kamar, DESE lalit.kumar@iitb.ac.in	M.Sc/M.tech in Environmental Science/ Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Physics, Materials Science and Engineering or equivalent	TA/FA/SW/SF/IS/EX/CT		
	Topic Name : Hybrid MOF-Graphene Membrane Separators for High-Performance Sodium and Lithium-Ion Energy Storage Systems Abstract : The development of high-performance separators is critical for advancing sodium-ion (Na-ion) and lithium-ion (Li-ion) battery technology. This study focuses on the fabrication and optimization of hybrid metal-organic framework (MOF)-graphene hollow fiber membrane separators to enhance battery efficiency, safety, and longevity. The incorporation of MOFs provides high ion selectivity and thermal stability, while graphene enhances mechanical strength and conductivity, facilitating improved ion transport. The hybrid membrane architecture offers superior electrolyte wettability, reduced internal resistance, and enhanced cycling stability compared to conventional polyolefin separators. Characterization techniques, including SEM, XRD, FTIR, and electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS), will be employed to evaluate structural, morphological, and electrochemical properties. The performance of the developed separators will be tested in both Na-ion and Li-ion battery systems to assess ionic conductivity, rate capability, and capacity retention. This research aims to provide a scalable and efficient separator solution, contributing to the development of next-generation energy storage systems with higher safety and performance.						