

Abstract Submitted
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Finite Element Methods for Modelling Mechanical Loss in LIGO coating optics. JONATHAN NEWPORT, GREGG HARRY, American University, LIGO COLLABORATION — Gravitational waves from sources such as binary star systems, supernovae explosions and stochastic background radiation have yet to be directly detected by experimental observations. Alongside international collaborators, the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) is designed to realize detection of gravitational waves using interferometric techniques. The second generation of gravitational wave observatories, known as Advanced LIGO, are currently undergoing installation and commissioning at sites in Hanford, Washington and Livingston, Louisiana. The ultimate sensitivity of Advanced LIGO within select spectral bands is limited by thermal noise in the coatings of the interferometer optics. The LIGO lab at American University is measuring the mechanical loss of coated substrates to predict thermal noise within these spectral bands. These predictions use increasingly sophisticated finite element models to ensure the ultimate design sensitivity of Advanced LIGO and to study coating and substrate materials for future gravitational wave detectors.

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