Giant magnetoresistance spin valves exchange-biased by ferroelectric BiFeO$_3$ thin films

X. ZHANG, National Institute of Standards and Technology, S. MARUYAMA, University of Maryland, College Park, P.J. CHEN, G. FENG, National Institute of Standards and Technology, T.R. GAO, University of Maryland, College Park, R.D. SHULL, National Institute of Standards and Technology, I. TAKEUCHI, University of Maryland, College Park — The recent demonstrations of electric-field-driven magnetization control in ferromagnet(FM)/BiFeO$_3$ bilayer systems [1,2] have attracted considerable interest because of the potential applications in spintronics. In this study, giant magnetoresistance (GMR) spin valves (Co/Cu/Py/Ta) were fabricated on SrRuO$_3$/BiFeO$_3$ films by magnetron sputtering at a base pressure of $2 \times 10^{-8}$ Torr and with an external field of 300 Oe. The presence of exchange bias between the BiFeO$_3$ layer and the ferromagnetic Co layer is established by magnetization and electronic transport data. The heterostructure was patterned in a rectangular shape with a width of about 20 $\mu$m and a length up to 100 $\mu$m. The GMR characteristics of the patterned devices were systematically studied and directly compared to that obtained from identically fabricated structures on NiO and SiO$_2$, respectively. How these results relate to the realization of reversible control of the GMR spin valve effect by an electric field will be discussed.

[2] Ratcliff et al., submitted].

Xiaohang Zhang
University of Maryland, College Park

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