



Waves in Plasma

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- General dispersion of linear waves
- Waves in homogeneous stationary plasmas
- Wave evolution in the geometrical-optics limit
- Kinetic effects. Collisionless damping and instabilities

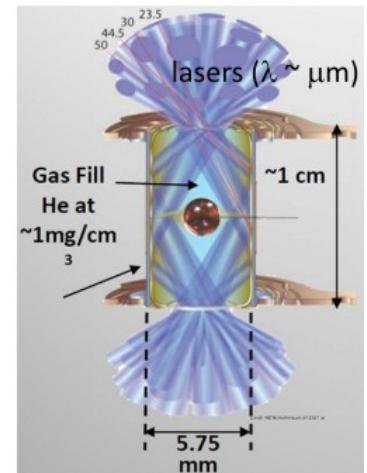
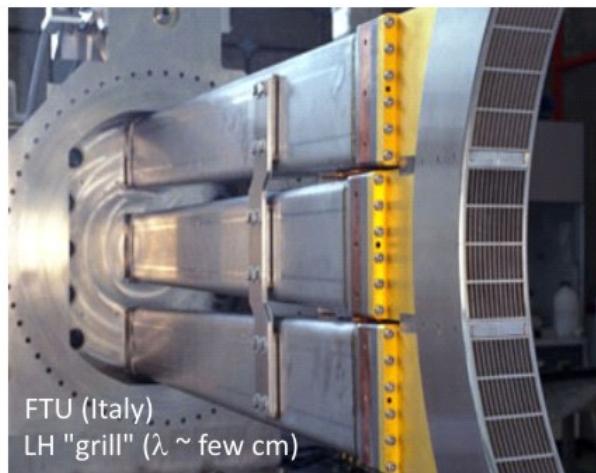
NATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN PLASMA PHYSICS

Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory



Why is it important to understand waves in plasmas?

- Waves are naturally found in plasmas and have to be dealt with.
This includes instabilities, fluctuations, wave-induced transport. . .
- Waves can deliver and/or manipulate energy-momentum in plasma
 - heating, current drive, particle acceleration
 - mode stabilization, α channeling
 - Raman and Brillouin scattering
- Plasma diagnostics: interferometry, Faraday rotation, Thomson scattering. . .

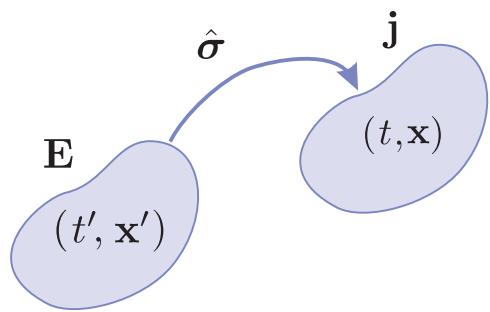




Temporal and spatial dispersion

- Use Maxwell's equations to derive a wave equation for \mathbf{E} :

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}, \quad \nabla \times \mathbf{B} = \frac{4\pi}{c} \mathbf{j} + \frac{1}{c} \frac{\partial \mathbf{E}}{\partial t}$$



$$\nabla \times (\nabla \times \mathbf{E}) + \frac{1}{c^2} \frac{\partial^2 \mathbf{E}}{\partial t^2} = -\frac{4\pi}{c^2} \frac{\partial \mathbf{j}}{\partial t}$$

- In weak fields, one can anticipate \mathbf{j} to be linear in \mathbf{E}
 - Nondispersive medium: $\mathbf{j}(t, \mathbf{x}) = \hat{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}(t, \mathbf{x}) \cdot \mathbf{E}(t, \mathbf{x})$
 - Dispersive medium: *nonlocal* connection between \mathbf{j} and \mathbf{E}

$$\mathbf{j}(t, \mathbf{x}) = \int \hat{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}(t - t', \mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}') \cdot \mathbf{E}(t', \mathbf{x}') dt' d^3x'$$



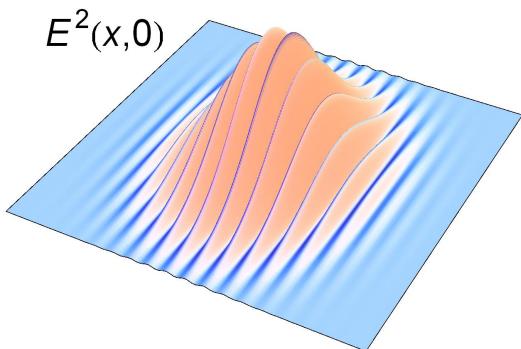
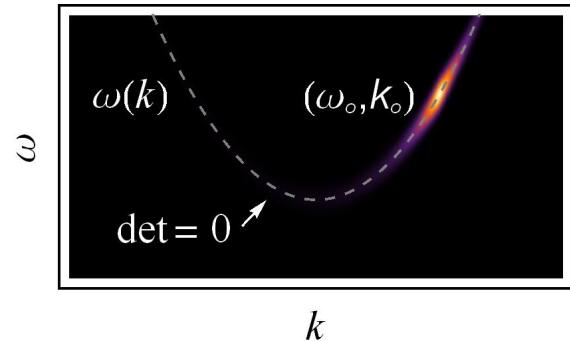
Dispersion relation, $\omega = \omega(\mathbf{k})$. Phase velocity and group velocity

- The Fourier transform gives* $\mathbf{j}_{\omega,\mathbf{k}} = \hat{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}(\omega, \mathbf{k}) \cdot \mathbf{E}_{\omega,\mathbf{k}}, \quad \nabla \rightarrow i\mathbf{k}, \quad \partial_t \rightarrow -i\omega$

$$\mathbf{k} \times (\mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{E}_{\omega,\mathbf{k}}) + \frac{\omega^2}{c^2} \mathbf{E}_{\omega,\mathbf{k}} = -\frac{4\pi i\omega}{c^2} \hat{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}(\omega, \mathbf{k}) \cdot \mathbf{E}_{\omega,\mathbf{k}}$$

$$\left[\mathbf{k}\mathbf{k} - k^2 \hat{\mathbf{1}} + \frac{\omega^2}{c^2} \hat{\boldsymbol{\epsilon}}(\omega, k) \right] \cdot \mathbf{E}_{\omega,\mathbf{k}} = 0$$

$\hat{\boldsymbol{\epsilon}} \equiv \hat{\mathbf{1}} + 4\pi i \hat{\boldsymbol{\sigma}}/\omega$ is the dielectric tensor



$$E(t, x) = \int \mathcal{E}(k) e^{-i\omega(k)t + ikx} dk$$

$$\omega(k) \approx \underbrace{\omega(k_0)}_{\omega_0} + \underbrace{\omega'(k_0)}_{v_g} \Delta k, \quad v_p = \omega_0/k_0$$

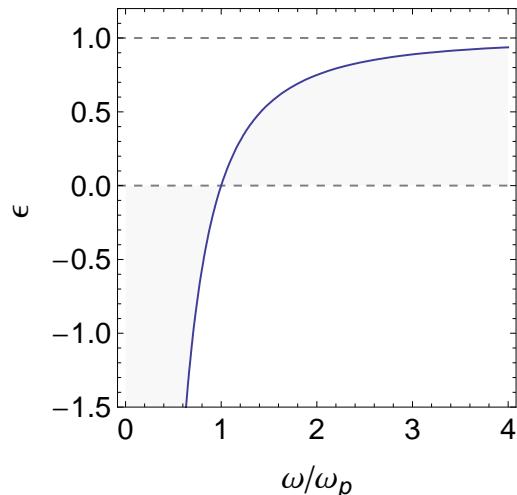
$$E(t, x) = e^{ik_0(x - v_p t)} \times \text{Amplitude}_0(x - v_g t)$$

*Strictly speaking, this is not precisely true if there is damping or instabilities



Dielectric tensor of cold nonmagnetized plasma

- Need to find $\hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k})$ from $\mathbf{j} = \hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k}) \cdot \mathbf{E} \sim e^{-i\omega t + i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}}$, using that $\mathbf{j}_e = en_e \mathbf{v}_e$



$$\underbrace{\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}_e}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{v}_e \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v}_e}_{-i\omega \mathbf{v}_e} = \frac{e}{m_e} \left(\mathbf{E} + \frac{1}{c} \mathbf{v}_e \times \mathbf{B} \right)$$

$$\mathbf{v}_e \approx ie\mathbf{E}/m_e\omega$$

$$\mathbf{j} = e(n_0 + \delta n_e)\mathbf{v}_e \approx en_0\mathbf{v}_e = \underbrace{\frac{in_0e^2}{m_e\omega}}_{\hat{\sigma}} \mathbf{E}$$

- $\hat{\epsilon} \equiv \hat{\mathbf{1}} + 4\pi i \hat{\sigma}/\omega$ is diagonal and independent of \mathbf{k}

$$\hat{\epsilon} = \begin{pmatrix} \epsilon & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \epsilon & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \epsilon \end{pmatrix}$$

- $\epsilon = 1 - \omega_p^2/\omega^2$ is the dielectric function
- $\omega_p = \sqrt{4\pi n_0 e^2/m_e}$ is the “plasma frequency”



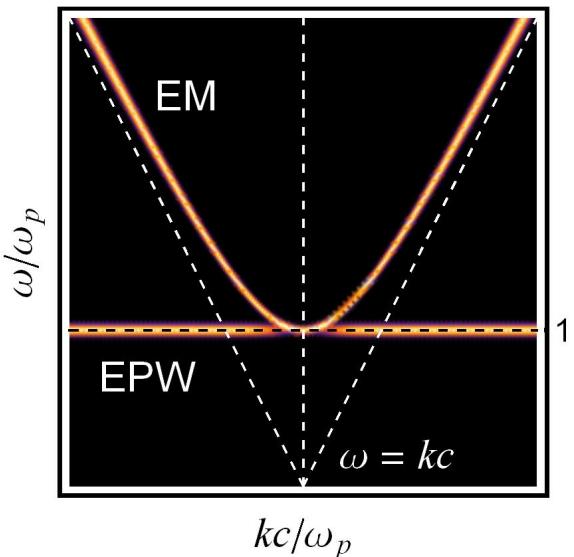
Electron waves in cold nonmagnetized plasma, $\epsilon = 1 - \omega_p^2/\omega^2$

- Transverse electromagnetic waves, $\mathbf{k} \perp \mathbf{E}$

$$\cancel{\mathbf{k}(\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{E})^0} - k^2 \mathbf{E} + \frac{\omega^2}{c^2} \epsilon \mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\omega^2 = \omega_p^2 + k^2 c^2$$

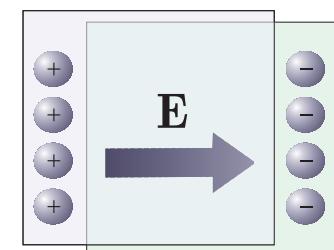
$$\mathbf{v}_p = \omega/k > c, \quad \mathbf{v}_g = c^2/v_p < c$$



- Electron plasma waves, or Langmuir oscillations, $\mathbf{k} \parallel \mathbf{E}$

$$\cancel{\mathbf{k} \times (\mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{E})^0} + \frac{\omega^2}{c^2} \epsilon \mathbf{E} = 0$$

$$\omega^2 = \omega_p^2, \quad \mathbf{v}_p = \omega_p/k, \quad \mathbf{v}_g = 0$$





Waves in warm nonmagnetized plasma

- Now include the electron pressure, $p_e = p_{e0}(n_e/n_0)^\gamma$, and also ions

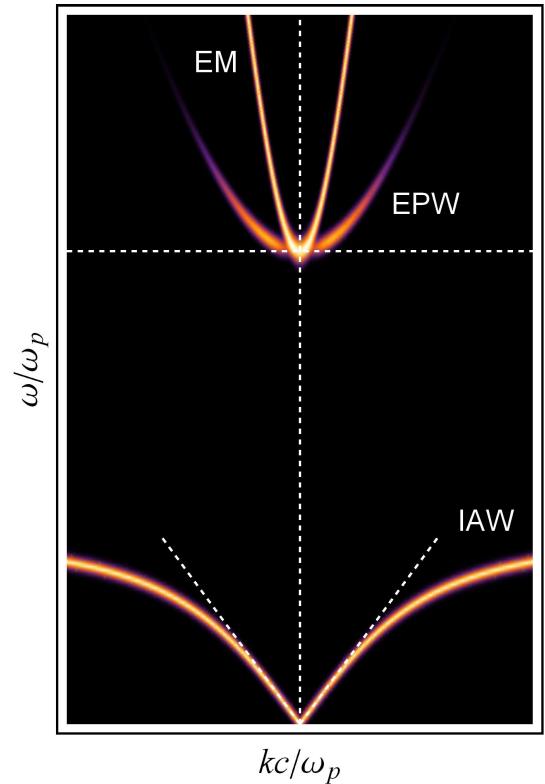
$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}_s}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{v}_s \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v}_s = \frac{e_s}{m_s} \left(\mathbf{E} + \frac{1}{c} \mathbf{v}_s \times \mathbf{B} \right) - \frac{\nabla p_s}{n_s m_s}, \quad \frac{\partial n_s}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (n_s \mathbf{v}_s) = 0$$

- EM waves are almost unaffected, $\omega^2 \approx \omega_p^2 + k^2 c^2$
- Electron plasma waves (EPW) attain nonzero \mathbf{v}_g

$$\omega^2 = \omega_p^2 + 3k^2 v_{Te}^2, \quad v_{Te}^2 = T_e/m_e$$

- New branch – ion acoustic waves (IAW)

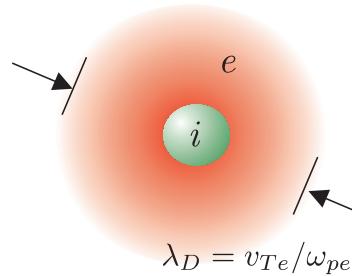
$$\omega^2 \approx k^2 C_s^2, \quad C_s^2 \approx ZT_e/m_i$$





Ion acoustic waves in detail

- Electrostatic waves determined by the ion inertia and electron pressure



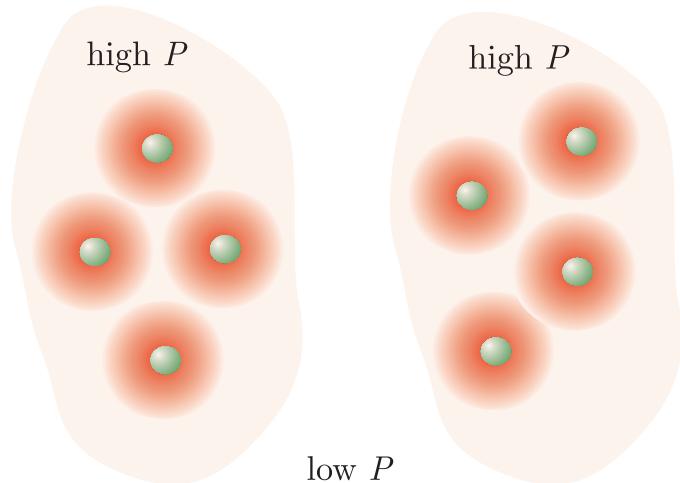
- Debye shielding of a test charge:

$$n_e = n_0 \exp(e\phi/T_e) \approx n_{0e}(1 + e\phi/T_e)$$

- Ions are followed by electrons; those carry pressure P_e

- Dispersion relation (cf. $1 - \omega_{pe}^2/\omega^2 = 0$)

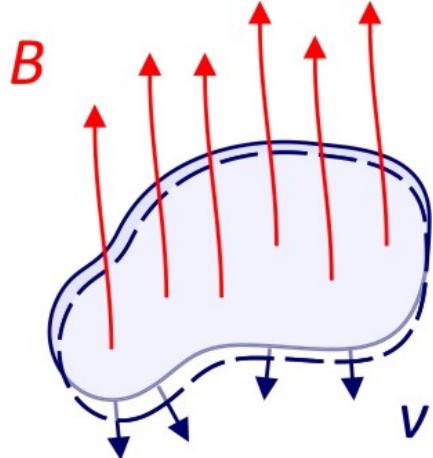
$$1 - \underbrace{\frac{\omega_{pi}^2}{\omega^2}}_{\text{ions}} + \underbrace{\frac{1}{k^2 \lambda_D^2}}_{\text{electrons}} = 0$$



- Is it possible to have low-frequency waves at negligible T_e ?



Frozen-in law. Magnetic fields can ring!

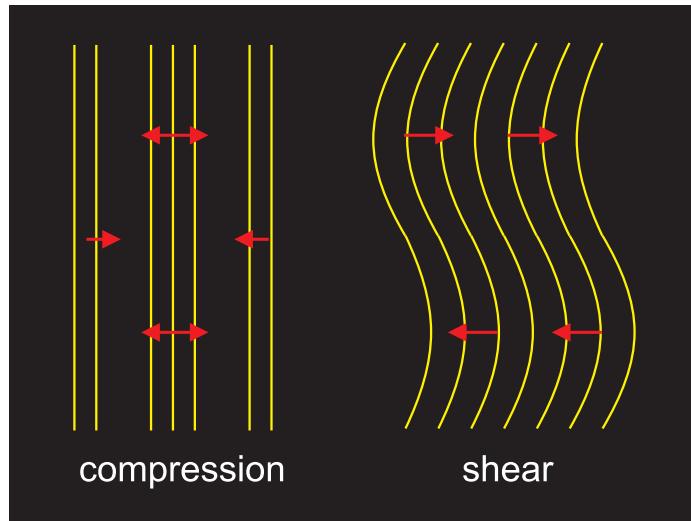


- Faraday's "frozen-in law" for collisionless plasma:

$$\oint \mathbf{B} \cdot d\mathbf{s} = \text{const}$$



M. Faraday



- Plasma motion causes field distortion
- Perturbed \mathbf{B} creates a restoring force

$$\rho \left[\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v} \right] = \underbrace{\frac{(\mathbf{B} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{B}}{4\pi}}_{\mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{B}/c} - \frac{\nabla \mathbf{B}^2}{8\pi}$$



Magnetohydrodynamic (MHD) waves, $\omega \ll \Omega_i$

$$\frac{m_e}{c} \left[\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v} \right]^0 = \mathbf{E} + \frac{1}{c} \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B}$$

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} = -c \nabla \times \mathbf{E}$$

$$V_A \equiv \frac{B_0}{\sqrt{4\pi\rho_0}} \text{ -- Alfvén speed}$$

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t} = \nabla \times (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B})$$

$$\rho \left[\frac{\partial \mathbf{v}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{v} \right] = \frac{(\mathbf{B} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{B}}{4\pi} - \frac{\nabla \mathbf{B}^2}{8\pi}$$

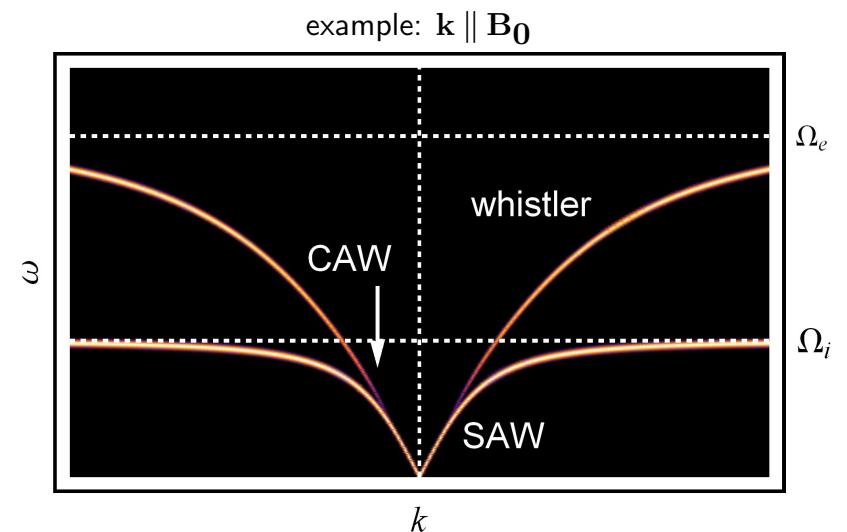
$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{v}) = 0, \quad \rho \approx m_i n$$

- Compressional Alfvén wave:

$$\omega^2 \approx k^2 V_A^2, \quad \mathbf{v}_g \parallel \mathbf{k}$$

- Shear Alfvén wave, $\nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} = 0$

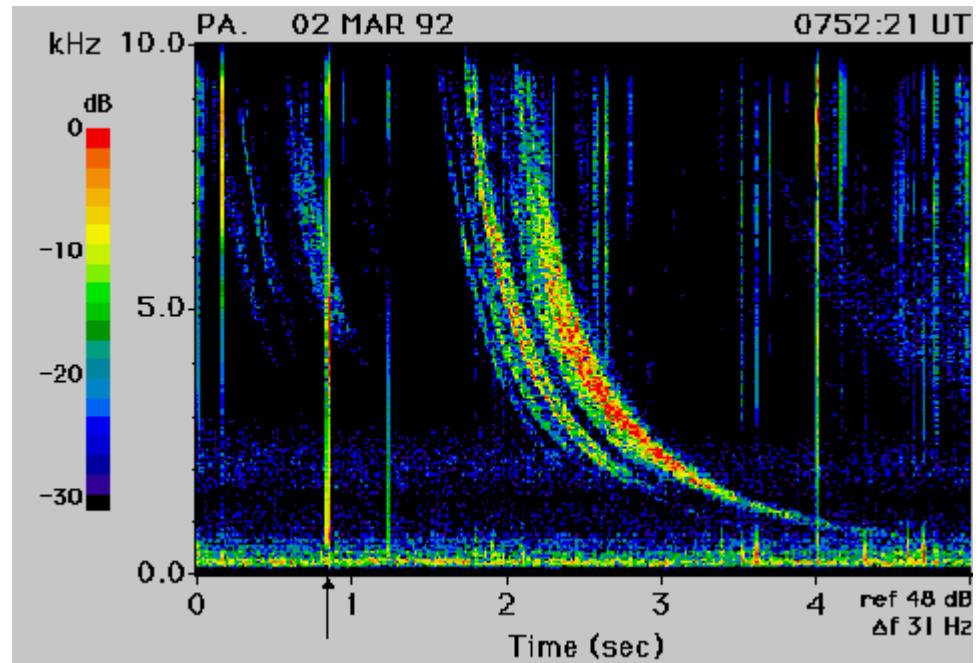
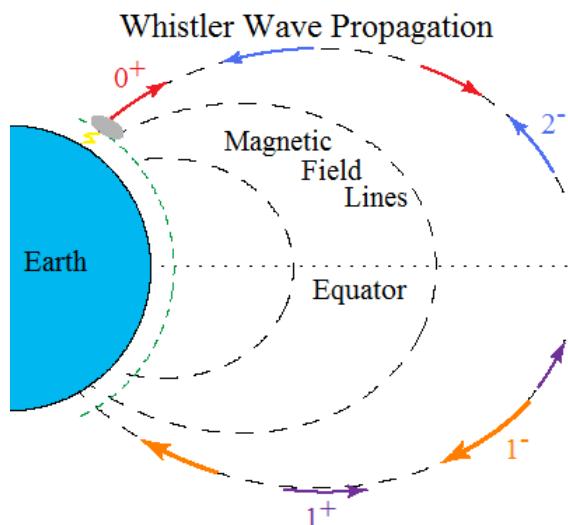
$$\omega^2 \approx k_{\parallel}^2 V_A^2, \quad \mathbf{v}_g \parallel \mathbf{B}_0$$





Whistler waves

- Whistlers: R -polarized EM waves propagating with $\mathbf{v}_g \parallel \mathbf{B}_0$ at $\omega < \Omega_e$



- Earth: triggered by lightnings, $\omega \sim 10^3 - 10^4$ Hz (audio range!), $v_g \sim \sqrt{\omega}$
 - ↳ Signals with lower ω arrive at a detector *later*. Sounds like whistle



Dielectric tensor of cold magnetized plasma

- Let us calculate $\hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k})$ from $\mathbf{j} = \hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k}) \cdot \mathbf{E} \sim e^{-i\omega t + i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}}$, using that

$$\mathbf{j} = \sum_s e_s (n_{0s} + \delta n_s) \mathbf{v}_s \approx \sum_s e_s n_{0s} \mathbf{v}_s$$

$$-i\omega \mathbf{v}_s \approx \frac{e_s}{m_s} \left(\mathbf{E} + \frac{1}{c} \mathbf{v}_s \times \mathbf{B}_0 \right)$$

- Dielectric tensor $\hat{\epsilon} \equiv 1 + 4\pi i \hat{\sigma}/\omega$:

$$\hat{\epsilon} = \begin{pmatrix} S & -iD & 0 \\ iD & S & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & P \end{pmatrix}$$

$$S = 1 - \sum_s \frac{\omega_{ps}^2}{\omega^2 - \Omega_s^2}$$

$$D = \sum_s \frac{\Omega_s}{\omega} \frac{\omega_{ps}^2}{\omega^2 - \Omega_s^2}$$

$$P = 1 - \sum_s \frac{\omega_{ps}^2}{\omega^2}$$

$$\omega_{ps}^2 = 4\pi n_{0s} e_s^2 / m_s$$

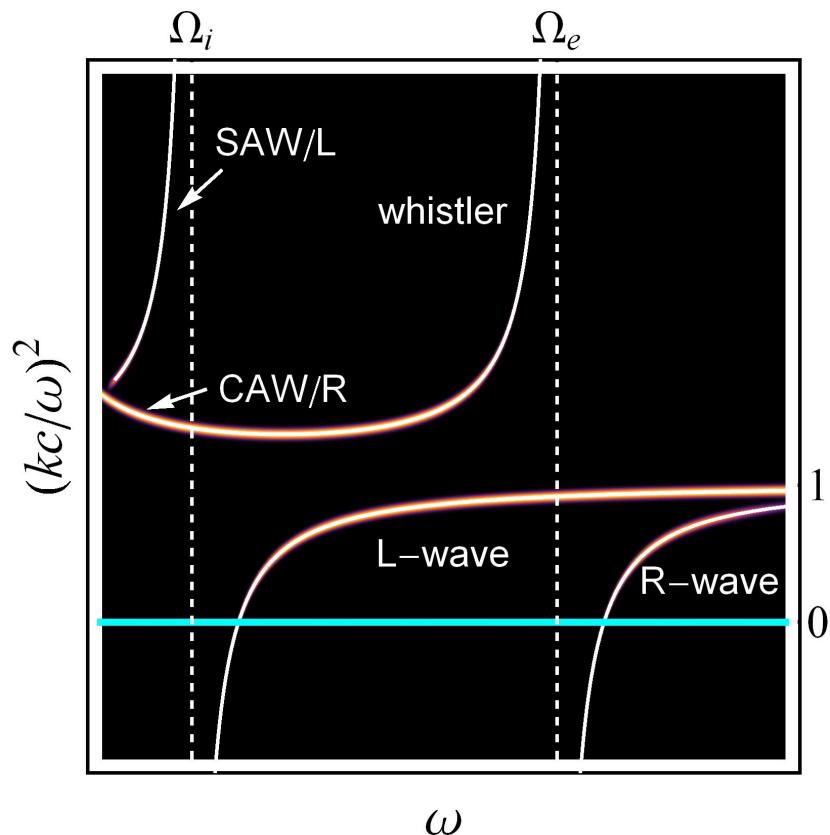
- Hermitian tensor. Within this model, waves do not dissipate
- Singular at cyclotron resonances, $\omega = \Omega_s$, where $\Omega_s = e_s B_0 / m_s c$



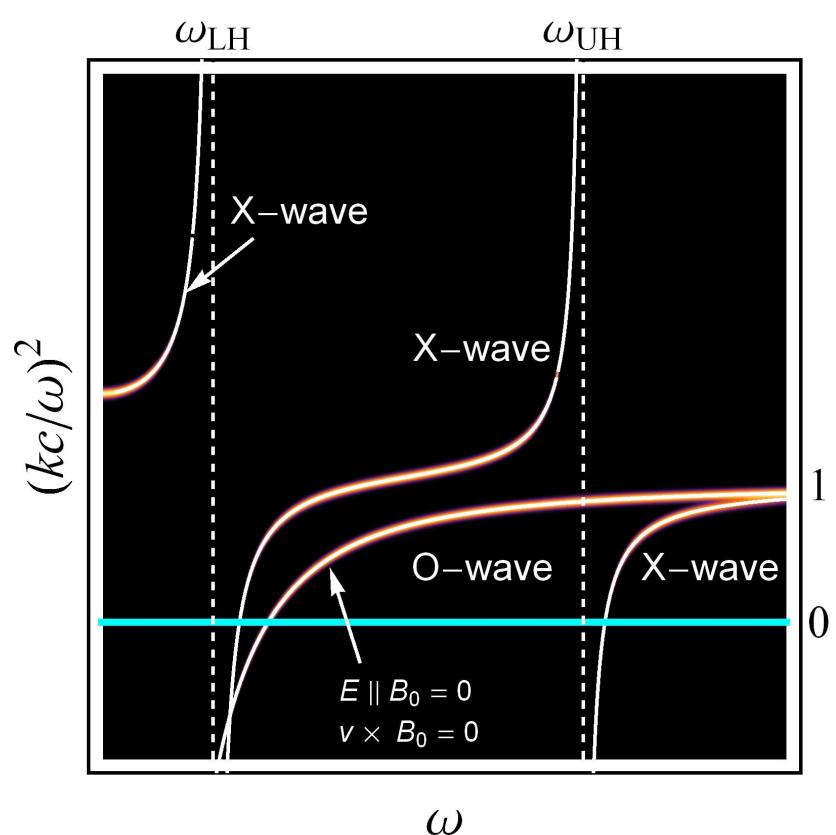
Waves in cold magnetized plasma. Summary

- Electron-ion plasma, one type of ions, gyrofrequencies $\Omega_s = |e_s|B_0/m_s c$

(a) $\mathbf{k} \parallel \mathbf{B}_0$



(b) $\mathbf{k} \perp \mathbf{B}_0$

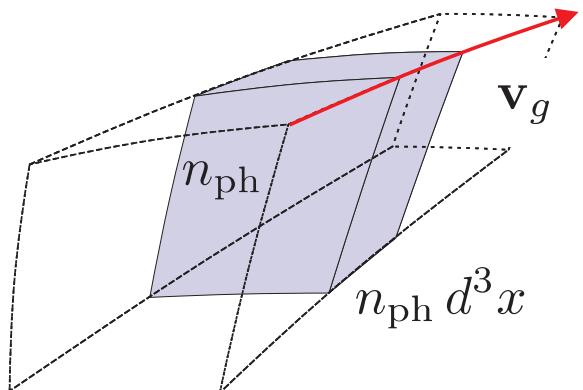




Dynamics in the geometrical-optics limit. Action conservation

- In nonstationary inhomogeneous plasma $\hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k})$ will depend also on (t, \mathbf{x})
- From QM: each wave can be quantized into photons, “plasmons”, etc.

$$\hbar \int n_{\text{ph}} d^3x = \int \frac{\mathcal{E}}{\omega} d^3x = \text{const}$$



$$n_{\text{ph}}\hbar = \mathcal{E}/\omega, \quad \mathcal{E} = n_{\text{ph}}\hbar\omega, \quad \mathbf{P} = n_{\text{ph}}\hbar\mathbf{k}$$

$$\frac{d\mathbf{x}}{dt} = \frac{\partial(\hbar\omega)}{\partial(\hbar\mathbf{k})} \equiv \mathbf{v}_g, \quad \frac{d(\hbar\mathbf{k})}{dt} = -\frac{\partial(\hbar\omega)}{\partial\mathbf{x}}$$

$$\partial_t n_{\text{ph}} + \nabla \cdot (\mathbf{v}_g n_{\text{ph}}) = 0 \quad \dots \times \hbar$$

$$\partial_t(\mathcal{E}/\omega) + \nabla \cdot (\mathbf{v}_g \mathcal{E}/\omega) = 0$$

Phys. Rev. A 86, 053834 (2012);
Phys. Lett. A 378, 1598 (2014)

- The “ray equations” and the “action density”, \mathcal{E}/ω , are classical (no \hbar)
- Applicability conditions (GO): plasma parameters vary slowly ($\partial_t \ll \omega$, $\nabla \ll k$)

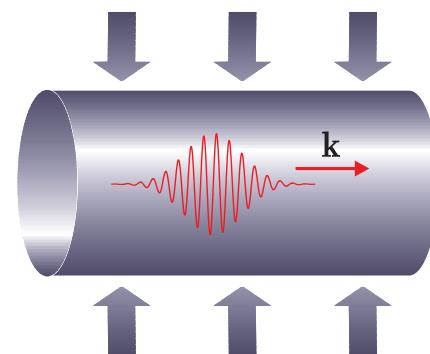


Action conservation theorem: applications

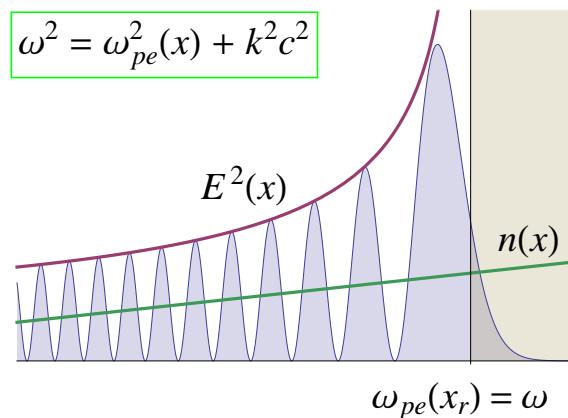
- Example: transverse EM wave in nonmagnetized plasma, $\mathcal{E} = |E|^2/8\pi$
 - Homogeneous nonstationary plasma:

$$\omega^2 = \omega_p^2(t) + k^2 c^2, \quad \dot{k} = -\partial_x \omega \equiv 0$$

$$\frac{\int \mathcal{E}_2 d^3x}{\omega_2} = \frac{\int \mathcal{E}_1 d^3x}{\omega_1}$$



- Inhomogeneous stationary plasma (one-dimensional problem):



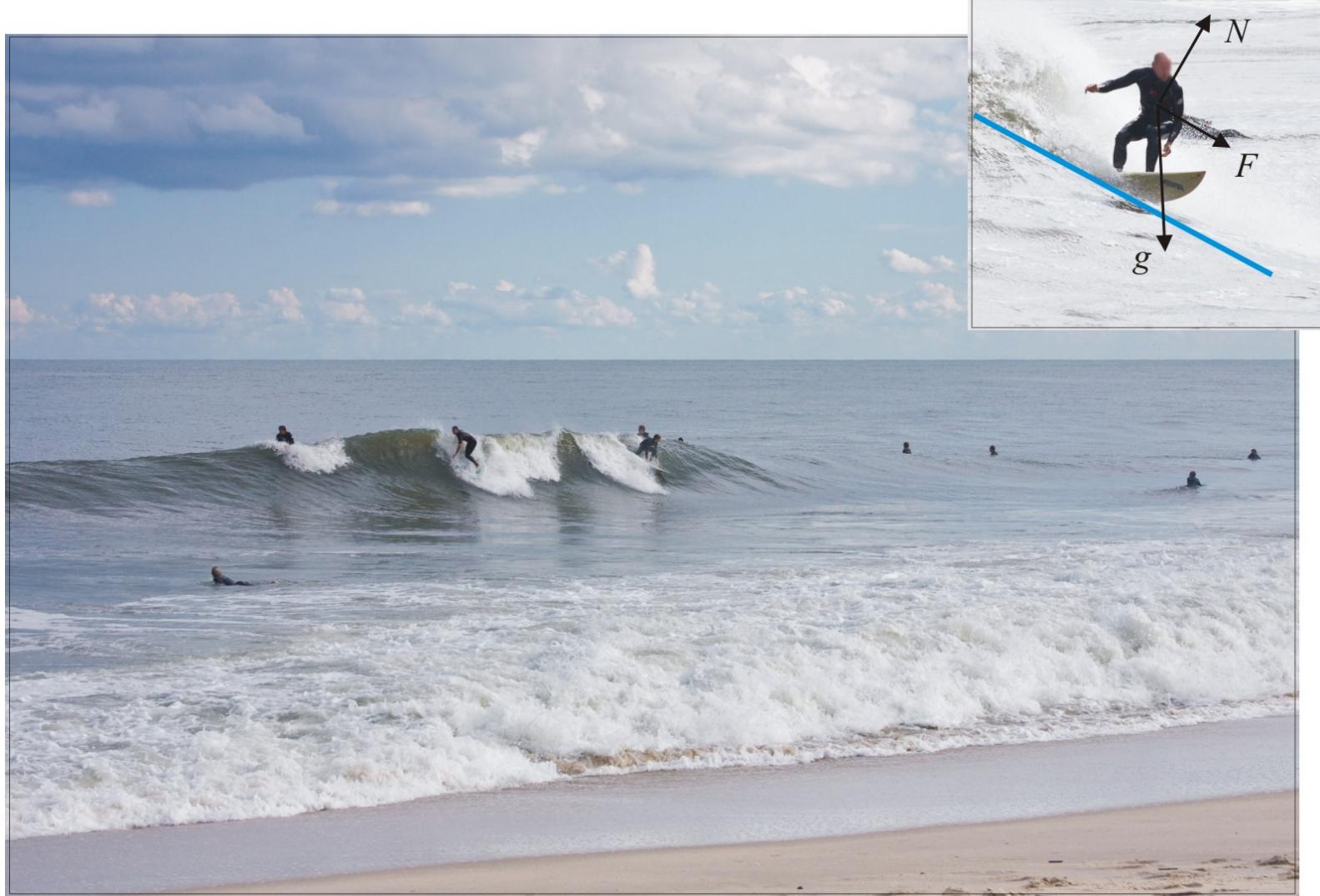
$$\partial_t(\mathcal{E}/\omega)^0 + \partial_x(v_g \mathcal{E}/\omega) = 0$$

$$v_g = \partial_k \omega(x, k), \quad \dot{\omega} = \partial_t \omega \equiv 0$$

$$E \sim k^{-1/2}(x) \sim [1 - \omega_p^2(x)/\omega^2]^{-1/4}$$



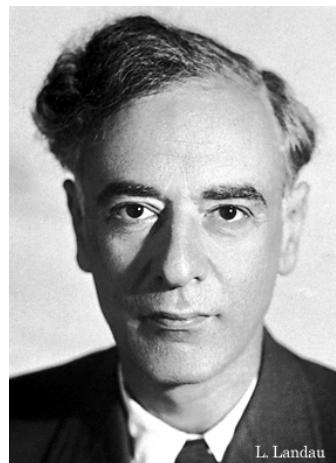
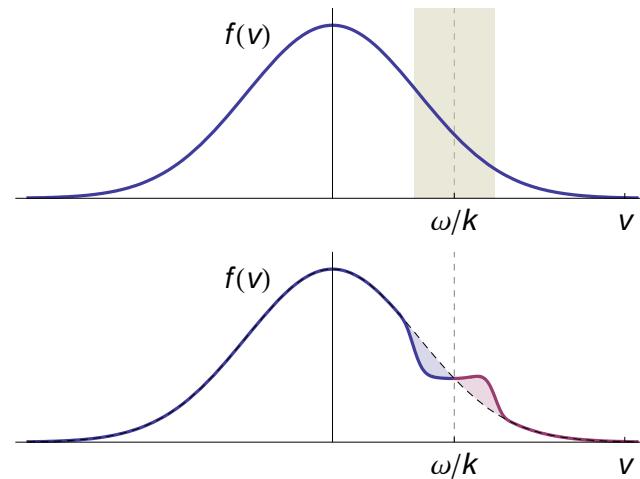
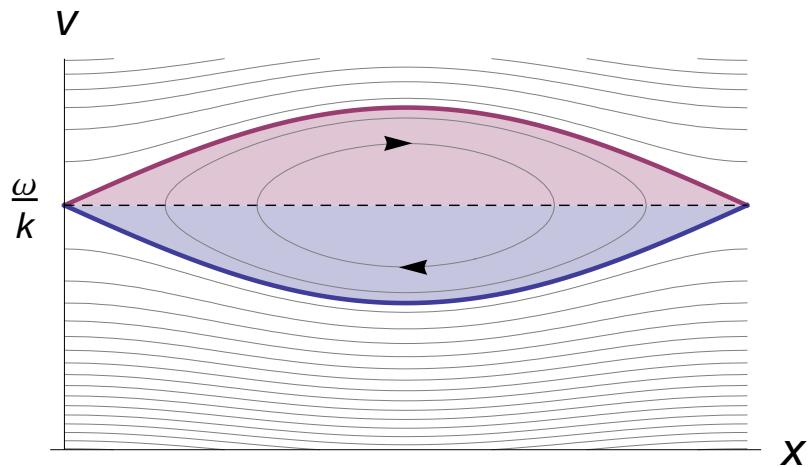
Resonant interaction with particles occurs when $v \approx \omega/k$





Resonant interaction with particles. Landau damping

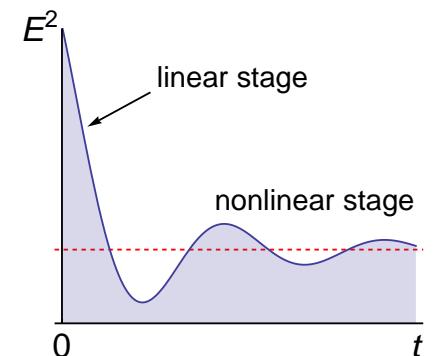
- In the wave rest frame, $v' = v'(x')$. The perturbations are strongest at $v \approx \omega/k$



- Linear stage: $E \sim e^{-\gamma t}$. For Langmuir waves,

$$\gamma \approx \frac{\omega_{pe}}{\kappa^3} \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{8}} \exp\left(-\frac{1}{2\kappa^2} - \frac{3}{2}\right)$$

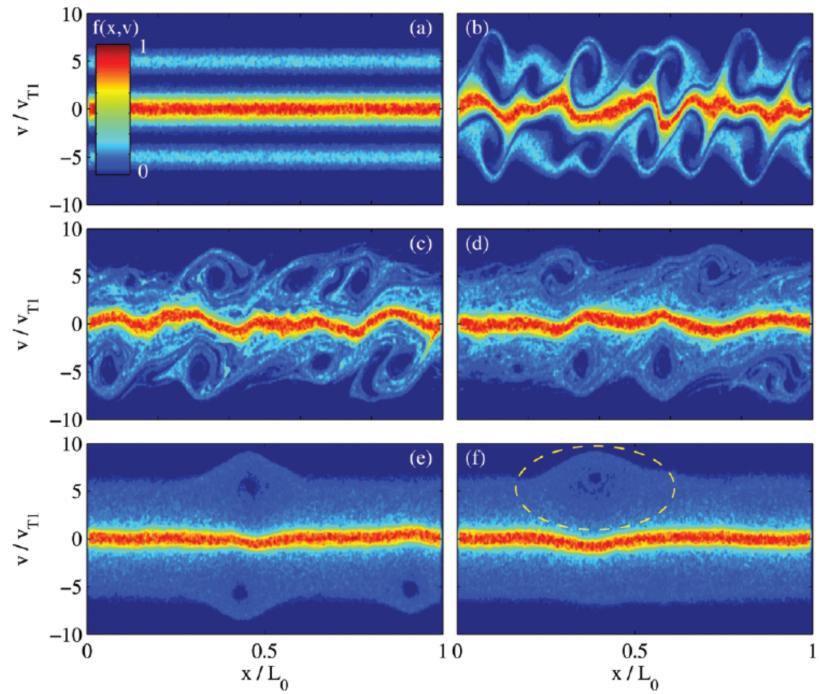
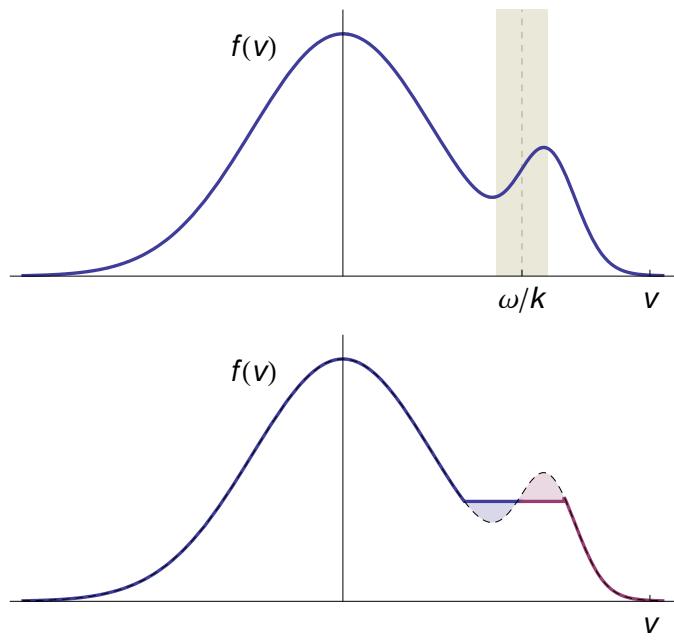
$$\kappa \equiv kv_{Te}/\omega_{pe} \sim v_{Te}/v_p \lesssim 1$$





Bump-on-tail instability as a paradigmatic kinetic instability

- If $f'(\omega/k) > 0$, particles, on average, are *decelerated*, so the wave is unstable



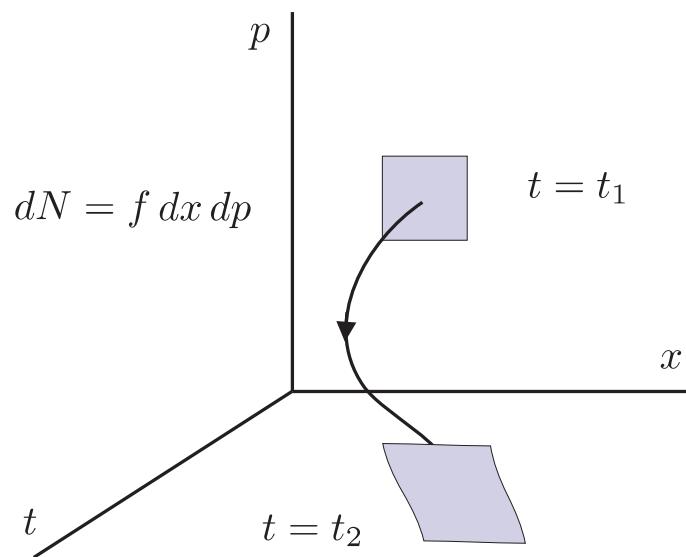
- Like an inverted medium. A spectrum of waves is generated, flattening $f(v)$
- The saturated state can be an essentially nonlinear wave, $\omega(k, a)$

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Kinetic treatment. Vlasov equation

- Our fluid equations do not resolve kinetic effects. A general theory is needed



- $dN = \text{const}$ in $dV = d^3x d^3p$
- Liouville's theorem: $dV = \text{const}$
- Thus, $f \equiv dN/dV = \text{const}$, i.e.,

$$\frac{d}{dt} f(t, \mathbf{x}(t), \mathbf{p}(t)) = 0$$

- Vlasov equation:

$$\begin{aligned}\dot{\mathbf{x}}(t) &= \mathbf{v}(t) \\ \dot{\mathbf{p}}(t) &= \mathbf{F}(\mathbf{x}(t), \mathbf{p}(t), t)\end{aligned}$$

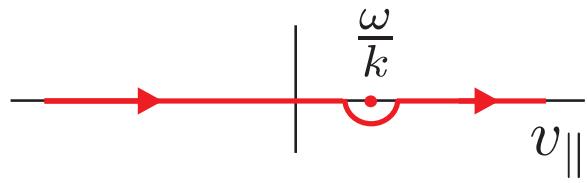
$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \frac{\partial f}{\partial \mathbf{x}} + \mathbf{F} \cdot \frac{\partial f}{\partial \mathbf{p}} = 0$$



Dielectric tensor of hot nonmagnetized plasma ($\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B}/c$ is neglected)

- Let us calculate $\hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k})$ from $\mathbf{j} = \hat{\sigma}(\omega, \mathbf{k}) \cdot \mathbf{E} \sim e^{-i\omega t + i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}}$, using that

$$j_m = \sum_s e_s \int v_m f_s d^3 p = \sum_s e_s \int v_m (f_{0s} + \tilde{f}_s) d^3 p = \sum_s e_s \int v_m \tilde{f}_s d^3 p$$



$$\underbrace{\frac{\partial f_s}{\partial t} + \mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla f_s}_{-i(\omega - \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{v}) \tilde{f}_s} + e_s E_\ell \left(\frac{\partial f_{s0}}{\partial p_\ell} + \frac{\partial \tilde{f}_s}{\partial p_\ell} \right) = 0$$

$$\hat{\epsilon} = \begin{pmatrix} \epsilon_\perp & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \epsilon_\perp & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \epsilon_\parallel \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\epsilon_{m\ell} = \delta_{m\ell} + \sum_s \frac{\omega_{ps}^2}{\omega} \int \frac{v_m}{\omega - \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{v}} \frac{\partial f_{0s}}{\partial v_\ell} d^3 p$$

- The pole is encircled in the complex- v_\parallel plane. Thus $\hat{\epsilon}$ is *not* Hermitian
 - Collisionless damping and instabilities

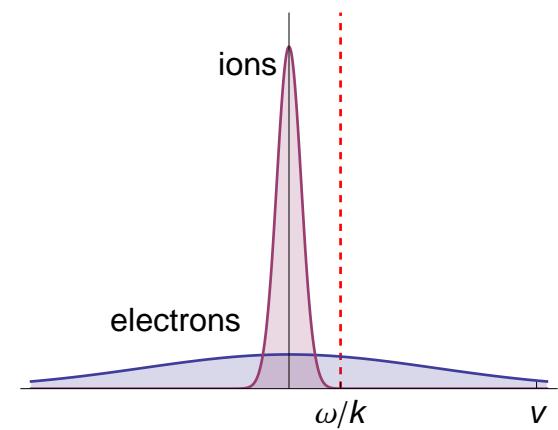
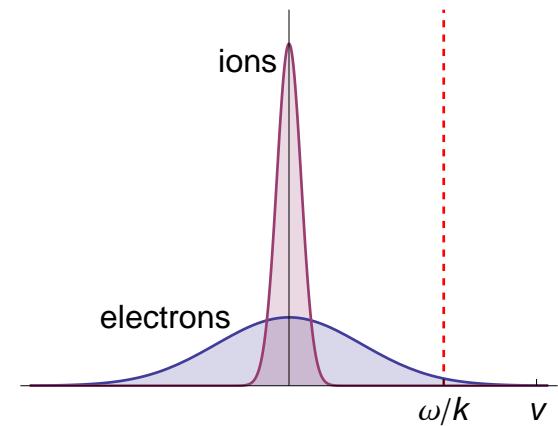


Electrostatic waves in hot magnetized plasma

$$\mathbf{k} \times (\mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{E})^0 + \frac{\omega^2}{c^2} \underbrace{\hat{\epsilon} \cdot \mathbf{E}}_{\epsilon_{\parallel} \mathbf{E}} = 0, \quad \epsilon_{\parallel} = 0$$

- EPW: warm electrons, cold ions

$$\begin{aligned} \epsilon_{\parallel} &\approx 1 - \frac{\omega_p^2}{\omega^2} \left(1 + \frac{3k^2 v_{Te}^2}{\omega^2} \right) \\ &+ i \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{\omega}{\omega_p} (k \lambda_D)^{-3} \exp \left(-\frac{v_p^2}{2v_{Te}^2} \right) \end{aligned}$$



- Ion sound: hot electrons, cold ions

$$\epsilon_{\parallel} \approx 1 - \frac{\omega_{pi}^2}{\omega^2} + \frac{1}{k^2 \lambda_D^2} \left(1 + i \sqrt{\frac{\pi}{2}} \frac{v_p}{v_{Te}} \right)$$



Example: dielectric tensor of hot magnetized plasma

$$\epsilon(\omega, \mathbf{k}) = \mathbf{1} + \sum_s \chi_s(\omega, \mathbf{k})$$

$$\chi_s = \frac{\omega_{p0,s}^2}{\omega \Omega_{0,s}} \sum_{n=-\infty}^{\infty} \int_0^{\infty} 2\pi p_{\perp} dp_{\perp} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dp_{\parallel} \left(\frac{\Omega}{\omega - k_{\parallel} v_{\parallel} - n\Omega} \mathbf{S}_n \right)_s$$

$$\mathbf{S}_n = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{n^2 J_n^2}{z^2} p_{\perp} U & \frac{i n J_n J'_n}{z} p_{\perp} U & \frac{n J_n^2}{z} p_{\perp} W \\ -\frac{i n J_n J'_n}{z} p_{\perp} U & (J'_n)^2 p_{\perp} U & -i J_n J'_n p_{\perp} W \\ \frac{n J_n^2}{z} p_{\parallel} U & i J_n J'_n p_{\parallel} U & J_n^2 p_{\parallel} W \end{pmatrix}$$

$$U = \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\perp}} + \frac{k_{\parallel}}{\omega} \left(v_{\perp} \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\parallel}} - v_{\parallel} \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\perp}} \right),$$

$$V = \frac{k_{\perp}}{\omega} \left(v_{\perp} \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\parallel}} - v_{\parallel} \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\perp}} \right),$$

$$W = \left(1 - \frac{n\Omega}{\omega} \right) \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\parallel}} + \frac{n\Omega p_{\parallel}}{\omega p_{\perp}} \frac{\partial f_0}{\partial p_{\perp}}.$$

$$J_n(z), z \text{ denotes } k_{\perp} v_{\perp} / \Omega$$



Summary

- Plasma has many degrees of freedom, so it supports many waves, e.g.,
 - Electromagnetic waves, similar to those in vacuum if $\omega \gg \omega_p$
 - Langmuir waves, or electrostatic plasma oscillations, $\omega \approx \omega_p$
 - Ion acoustic waves, or ion sound, $\omega \approx C_s k$
 - Alfvén waves, or low-frequency B -field oscillations,
 - Whistlers. . .
- Quasimonochromatic waves are described by geometrical-optics equations
 - Rays travel as particles with energy $\hbar\omega(t, \mathbf{x}, \hbar\mathbf{k})$ and momentum $\hbar\mathbf{k}$
 - These “quasiparticles” are conserved, so $\int (\mathcal{E}/\omega) d^3x = \text{const}$
- Resonant interactions with particles appear as damping/instabilities
- The physics of incoherent and nonlinear waves is a whole other story



Some books on waves in plasmas and basic wave physics

[Aleksandrov et al., 1984]

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M. Brambilla, *Kinetic theory of plasma waves: homogeneous plasmas* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998).

[Krall and Trivelpiece, 1973]

N. A. Krall and A. W. Trivelpiece, *Principles of plasma physics* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1973).

[Pécseli, 2013]

H. L. Pécseli, *Waves and oscillations in plasmas* (CRC Press, Boca Raton, 2013).

[Stix, 1992]

T. H. Stix, *Waves in plasmas* (AIP, New York, 1992).

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E. R. Tracy and A. J. Brizard and A. S. Richardson and A. N. Kaufman, *Ray tracing and beyond: phase space methods in plasma wave theory* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2014).

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