

# MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

[mccormick.northwestern.edu/mechanical](http://mccormick.northwestern.edu/mechanical)

Mechanical engineering is critical to nearly all engineered systems. From large-scale highly-integrated systems such as aircraft down to nanoscale bio-inspired materials design, if physical motion or mechanics is involved, mechanical engineers play a central role.

The interdisciplinarity of modern mechanical engineering is represented in the diversity of the backgrounds and research of the mechanical engineering faculty. For example, the mechanical engineering faculty have degrees in civil engineering, computer science, electrical engineering, neuroscience, physics, robotics, and other fields, in addition to mechanical engineering. Similarly, Northwestern mechanical engineering graduates move on to a wide variety of professions and graduate programs, as the fundamental skills provided by the mechanical engineering degree are in high demand in many fields.

The first part of the curriculum is devoted to mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer programming, and design thinking. With this background, the core of the mechanical engineering degree includes study in electronics design, solid mechanics, fluid mechanics, thermodynamics, manufacturing, and dynamics and design of machines.

The mechanical engineering degree culminates in a two-quarter capstone design project, where students work in teams to hone their skills in human-centered design, mathematical and computer-aided analysis, mechanical design, advanced manufacturing and prototyping, systematic experimentation and testing, and professional documentation.

The mechanical engineering degree provides tremendous flexibility to customize the curriculum to the student's interests and professional goals. This flexibility also reflects the expertise of the faculty and rapidly emerging areas of mechanical engineering.

Curricular flexibility is provided in the form of six courses in one of nine concentrations: a "breadth" concentration, providing advanced training in core and emerging areas of mechanical engineering, and eight specialized concentrations, including aerospace engineering; design; energy and sustainability; engineering mechanics of materials and structures; fluids, energy, and thermal systems; manufacturing; micro-nano engineering; and robotics.

- **ME Breadth:** The ME Breadth concentration gives students the flexibility to tailor their academic program to their own interests in this rapidly diversifying field, encompassing areas such as robotics, automated manufacturing, biological molecular machines, thermodynamics, fluid dynamics, computational mechanics, composite materials, and tribology.
- **Aerospace Engineering:** The Aerospace Engineering concentration includes the design and development of aerial and space vehicles. It emphasizes a combination of mechanics (solids and thermo-fluids), materials science (such as advanced composites, ceramics, and polymers), and control systems.
- **Design:** The Design concentration focuses on methodologies for product design supported by innovation, systematic design processes, computational design methods, and design thinking incorporating manufacturing and life cycle considerations.
- **Energy Systems and Sustainability:** The Energy Systems and Sustainability concentration emphasizes the mechanical engineering

aspects of energy conversion, life cycle analysis, conservation, policy, and energy economics and management.

- **Manufacturing:** The Manufacturing concentration is directed toward planning and selecting manufacturing methods, design for manufacture, computer-aided flexible automation and robotics, digital manufacturing, and increasing the efficiency and productivity of current and emerging manufacturing technologies.
- **Mechanical Sciences:** The Mechanical Sciences concentration is designed to prepare students for graduate study in Mechanical Engineering through an emphasis on experimental and computational methods used in research and providing a broad introduction to techniques used in more specialized engineering fields.
- **Robotics:** The Robotics concentration includes design of robotic hardware, dynamics, motion planning and control, human-robot interaction, sensing, and artificial intelligence for robots.

A listing of courses that satisfy the requirements of each concentration may be found on the department website (<https://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/mechanical/>).

## Program of Study

- **Mechanical Engineering Degree** (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/engineering-applied-science/mechanical-engineering/mechanical-engineering-degree/>)

### MECH\_ENG 222-0 Thermodynamics & Statistical Mechanics - I (1 Unit)

Basic thermodynamics, applications to energy efficiency and climate change, and introduction to statistical thermodynamics. Prerequisite: MATH 220-2 and GEN\_ENG 205-3.

### MECH\_ENG 224-0 Scientific and Embedded Programming in Python (1 Unit)

Python is arguably now the world's foremost programming language. It is the go-to coding language for data scientists, machine learning researchers, design engineers, and anyone who needs to grab and process the vast amounts of data online, from networked sensors, or smart devices. Recently Python has become practical for coding in embedded systems, as well. Embedded microcontrollers are relevant for our annual robot design competition, NU engineering teams (Solar car, Baja), internships, and experimental apparatuses. Our approach to coding emphasizes algorithm creation, debugging, methodical creation and partitioning in a modern notebook framework, as well as hardware-level access for microcontroller applications. The course is taught in an active learning format. Prerequisite: GEN\_ENG 205-1 or GEN\_ENG 206-1.

**MECH\_ENG 233-0 Electronics Design (1 Unit)** Design and prototyping of analog and digital electronic circuits using semiconductor devices: diodes, transistors, op amps, logic chips, etc. Optical and other sensors, power electronics, filters, and feedback control. Extensive hands-on construction and debugging. Intended for engineers in all disciplines.

### MECH\_ENG 240-0 Intro to Mechanical Design and Manufacturing (1 Unit)

Introduction to strategy and methods of designing, manufacturing, and testing of mechanical products. Material properties and selection methodology, engineering drawing and CAD, and simple manufacturing processes. Prerequisites: MAT\_SCI 201-0; CIV\_ENV 216-0.

**MECH\_ENG 241-0 Fluid Mechanics I (1 Unit)** Fundamentals of fluid mechanics. Properties and statics of fluids. Kinematics and dynamics of fluid motion-continuity, momentum, and energy equations. Dimensional analysis, flow in closed conduits. Prerequisites: MATH 228-2 (may be taken concurrently) and GEN\_ENG 205-4.

**MECH\_ENG 301-0 Introduction to Robotics Laboratory (1 Unit)** A laboratory-based introduction to robotics. Focus will be on both hardware

(sensors and actuators) and software (sensor processing and behavior development). Topics will include: the basics in kinematics, dynamics, control and motion planning; and an introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Cross-listed as COMP\_SCI 301-0.

**MECH\_ENG 314-0 Machine Dynamics (1 Unit)**

This class covers the foundations of rigid multi-body mechanics. Topics include geometry of rigid bodies, rotating bodies, Lagrangian mechanics and variational principles, conservation of energy and momentum, symmetries, impact dynamics, and numerical methods that may be used to simulate mechanical systems. Students numerically simulate rigid body systems and use rigid body geometry to visualize simulations. Prerequisite: GEN\_ENG 205-4.

**MECH\_ENG 315-0 Theory of Machines: Design of Elements (1 Unit)**

Factors influencing the proportioning of machine elements-stresses, deformations, and failure criteria-as applied to shafts, springs, belts, bearings, gears. Lectures, laboratory. Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 240-0.

**MECH\_ENG 316-0 Mechanical Systems Design (1 Unit)**

Design of mechanical systems such as cams, multi-bar linkages, and precision machines. Design principles and best practices. Case studies and team-based projects. Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 315-0.

**MECH\_ENG 320-0 Micro- and Nanomechanical Properties of Surfaces (1 Unit)**

Micro and nanomechanical interactions between surfaces, fractal nature of surfaces, interfacial forces, principles of micromechanics, characterization of surfaces using atomic force microscopy, optical interferometry, and nanoindentation.

**MECH\_ENG 322-0 Thermodynamics and Statistical Mechanics II (1 Unit)**

Classical and statistical thermodynamics. Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 222-0.

**MECH\_ENG 327-0 Finite Elements for Stress Analysis (1 Unit)**

Development of finite elements from variational principles and application to static stress analysis. Introduction to techniques for transient and generalized field problems. Computer implementation of finite element techniques. Taught with CIV\_ENV 327-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

**MECH\_ENG 328-0 Computational Failure Analysis (1 Unit)**

The course will cover the use of the scientific method for accident investigation, hypothesis development, and the use of the finite element method to analyze the root cause of a failure. Practical application problems for both civil and mechanical structures will be analyzed using commercial finite element codes (Abaqus, Hypermesh, LS-Dyna). Prerequisite: CIV\_ENV 327-0 or MECH\_ENG 327-0.

**MECH\_ENG 329-0 Mechanistic Data Science for Engineering (1 Unit)**

Introduce mechanistic data science for engineering through the integration of mathematical scientific principles using six basic data science concepts: multimodal data generation and collection, extraction of mechanistic features, knowledge-driven dimension reduction, reduced order surrogate models, regression and classification models, and system and design. These concepts will be implemented using Python and MATLAB for engineering applications.

**MECH\_ENG 333-0 Introduction to Mechatronics (1 Unit)**

Introduction to microprocessor-controlled electromechanical systems. Interfacing sensors and actuators to computers, electrical and mechanical prototyping, dissection of a commercial product. Final team project. Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 233-0 or ELEC\_ENG 221-0 or BMD\_ENG 308-0, or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 340-1 Computer Integrated Manufacturing: Manufacturing Processes (1 Unit)**

Use of computers to improve productivity and reduce costs in the manufacture of discrete parts and assemblies. Manufacturing processes: Analysis and evaluation of process usage in the contemporary manufacturing environment.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 240-0 or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 340-2 Computer Integrated Manufacturing: CAD/CAM (1 Unit)**

Use of computers to improve productivity and reduce costs in the manufacture of discrete parts and assemblies. CAD/ CAM: Geometric modeling, dimensioning systems, tolerances, design for manufacture, programming of machine tools.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 340-1 or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 340-3 Computer Integrated Manufacturing: Automation (1 Unit)**

Use of computers to improve productivity and reduce costs in the manufacture of discrete parts and assemblies. Manufacturing automation: sensors, actuators, and computers for automation; principles of computer control; programmable logic controllers; robotic devices; assembly automation.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 340-2 or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 341-0 Computational Methods for Engineering Design (1 Unit)**

Introduction to a wide range of computational techniques for engineering design. Modeling, simulation, optimization, design software, examples, and projects with emphasis on computational techniques for design and manufacturing related applications.

Prerequisite: senior standing or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 346-0 Introduction to Tribology (1 Unit)**

Fundamentals of surface contact: surface topography, asperity contact, interfacial phenomena. Friction theories and wear mechanisms. Temperatures in sliding contacts. Hydrodynamic, hydrostatic, elastohydrodynamic, and boundary lubrication.

**MECH\_ENG 359-0 Reliability Engineering (1 Unit)**

Probability concepts and random variables. Failure rates and reliability testing. Wearin, wear-out, random failures. Probabilistic treatment of loads, capacity, safety factors. Reliability of redundant and maintained systems. Fault tree analysis.

Prerequisite: GEN\_ENG 205-4.

**MECH\_ENG 360-0 Mechanics of Sports (1 Unit)** Applications of mechanics and mathematical modeling to sports, including baseball, basketball, golf, soccer, swimming, and running, among others. Introduction to the biomechanics of sports.

**MECH\_ENG 362-0 Stress Analysis (1 Unit)**

Theory of elasticity: elastic stability, principle of minimum potential energy, Rayleigh-Ritz methods. Introduction to finite element methods of stress analysis: computer implementation and use of commercial codes. Structural analysis of rods, beams, columns, and plates.

Prerequisite: CIV\_ENV 216-0.

**MECH\_ENG 363-0 Mechanical Vibrations (1 Unit)**

Analysis of vibrations in single and multi-degree of freedom systems. Free and forced vibrations with various types of damping. Response to steady-state and transient excitations.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 314-0.

**MECH\_ENG 364-0 Introduction to Aerospace Engineering (1 Unit)**

The purpose of the course is to learn the language of aerospace engineering and to explore emerging concepts in this field. This course

will cover essential topics in areas relevant to aerospace engineering including Aerodynamics, Flight Dynamics, Propulsion, and Orbital Mechanics. Computational tools for structural analysis, fluid flow calculations, and flight dynamics modeling will be introduced.

Prerequisites: CIV\_ENV 216-0, MECH\_ENG 241-0 or equivalent.

**MECH\_ENG 366-0 Finite Elements for Design & Optimizatn (1 Unit)**

Numerical methods for interaction and optimal CAD. Fully stressed design; design sensitivity analysis and descent methods; optimality criteria to automated design.

Prerequisites: senior standing; MECH\_ENG 327-0 or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 367-0 Quantitative Methods in Life Cycle Analysis (1 Unit)**

Lifecycle analysis (LCA) framework for environmental assessment of technology systems, focusing on modeling methods for systems mass and energy flows, process and input-output-based systems inventories, environmental impact analysis, and methods for robust engineering decisions. MECH\_ENG 367-0 is taught with CHEM\_ENG 367-0; may not receive credit for both courses.

**MECH\_ENG 371-0 Combustion Engines (1 Unit)**

Theoretical and actual cycles, combustion, detonation, carburetion, fuels, performance characteristics, and fuel-cell power.

**MECH\_ENG 373-0 Engineering Fluid Mechanics (1 Unit)**

Laminar and turbulent duct flows. Boundary layers and potential flows. Lift and drag forces. Thermodynamics and mechanics of compressible flow. Nozzle flows and choking. Wave motion and shock waves.

Applications to fluid machinery.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 241-0.

**MECH\_ENG 377-0 Heat Transfer (1 Unit)**

Fundamentals of heat transfer by conduction, convection, and radiation. Steady and transient heat conduction in solids. Forced and free convection in fluids. Properties of thermal radiation. Radiation heat transfer between solids. Solar radiation.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 241-0.

**MECH\_ENG 378-0 Applied Computational Fluid Dynamics and Heat Transfer (1 Unit)**

This course provides an understanding of the theory and process of computational flow analysis by giving students the opportunity to use commercial simulation software (ANSYS/Fluent) to solve fluid flow problems. Topics covered include conservation of mass, momentum and energy; boundary conditions; turbulence modeling; mesh generation; solution procedures; and verification/validation. Topics will be presented through lectures, hands-on computer lab sessions, and team-based projects.

**MECH\_ENG 380-0 Thermal Energy Systems Design (1 Unit)**

Applications of the principles of energy engineering analysis to the design of thermal systems. Consideration of such systems as air conditioning, oil piping, refrigeration, fluid distribution, and pneumatic control. Projects will be tailored to the class. Solution of open-ended design problems including introduction to EES (Engineering Equation Solver) software that has built-in thermophysical properties.

Prerequisite: Basic Thermodynamics or equivalent.

**MECH\_ENG 381-0 Introduction to Micro-electro-mechanical Systems (1 Unit)**

Introduction to MEMS devices, with an emphasis on their manufacturing and mechanical behavior. Materials properties, microfabrication technology, mechanical behavior of microstructures, design, and packaging. Case studies on sensors, wireless communications, fluidic systems, microengines, and biological devices.

Prerequisite: CIV\_ENV 216-0 or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 382-0 Experiments in Micro- and Nano Science and Engineering (1 Unit)**

Interdisciplinary topics spanning the physical and biological sciences and engineering. Seven integrated labs in which students acquire hands-on experience in various aspects of micro-and nanoscience and engineering: cleanroom microfabrication, flow visualization in micro-channels, nanomechanics, AFM and dippen nanolithography, multiphysics computational tools, and experimental techniques to evaluate micro-and nanoscale devices.

Prerequisite: MECH\_ENG 381-0 or consent of instructor.

**MECH\_ENG 390-0 Intro to Dynamic Systems (1 Unit)**

Modeling the dynamic behavior of physical systems. Concepts of causality, dependent and independent storages, and state. Introduction to bond graphs. Generation of state equations; analytical and computer simulation of system behavior. Application to problems of engineering interest.

Prerequisites: MECH\_ENG 241-0; CIV\_ENV 216-0; GEN\_ENG 205-4.

**MECH\_ENG 395-0 Special Topics in Mechanical Engineering (1 Unit)**

Topics suggested by students or faculty members and approved by the department.

**MECH\_ENG 398-1 Engineering Design I (1 Unit)** Experience in the creative process of design. Defining product specifications, developing and analyzing ideas, using CAD drawings, building physical prototypes, demonstrating feasibility, and achieving full alpha-level functionality.

Prerequisite: senior standing or consent of department.

**MECH\_ENG 398-2 Engineering Design II (1 Unit)** Experience in the creative process of design. Defining product specifications, developing and analyzing ideas, using CAD drawings, building physical prototypes, demonstrating feasibility, and achieving full alpha-level functionality.

Prerequisite: senior standing or consent of department.

**MECH\_ENG 399-0 Projects (1-3 Units)** Special studies to be done under faculty direction. Credit to be arranged.