

PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY COLLOQUIUM

Gabriela Gonzalez, Ph.D. Louisiana State University

Opening the Gravitational Wave Window

Gravitational waves are “ripples in space time” produced by violent astrophysical events such as core-collapse supernova and collisions of neutron stars and black holes, as well as by other continuous phenomena as rotating stars and the early Universe. These waves have never been directly detected on Earth yet, but a network of ground-based interferometric detectors including the LIGO detectors in the US is expected to do this very soon. These detectors have operated with record sensitivity in the recent past, and they are being upgraded to begin operating with good prospects of observations, to start operations in a few years. I will present a brief introduction to the nature and detection of gravitational waves, and present the current status of the international network of detectors.



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