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Higher derivative field theories: Classical instabilities and positivity problems

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We will review some basic aspects of the covariant approach to quantum mechanics in a framework free of ultraviolet singularities. Some higher derivative field theories are also free of ultraviolet singularities and ghosts. They seem to provide a safe framework also for quantum field theories.
However, we point out that they undergo hidden pathologies and in spite of the absence of ghosts most of these theories are not unitary.

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