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Plasma Gratings as a Novel Target for Ion Acceleration

Thursday, 19 September 2019 18:00 (20 minutes)

With the trend towards higher repetition rate laser systems for applications, there is a demand for new, high repetition rate target solutions. This talk will look at efforts to develop shaped, thin, near-critical density gas targets for radiation pressure driven ion acceleration experiments using the high power, $10.6\mu m$ CO_2 laser at Brookhaven National Laboratory. By suitably shaping a gas target, a ps laser pulse was used to first form a transient plasma grating structure in an underdense density ramp. Subsequently, protons were accelerated from the near-critical density plasma grating elements to multi-MeV energies, with few percent energy spreads with modest $\sim 10^{15}$ Wcm^{-2} laser intensities. The measured proton energies were more than twice that predicted by the hole-boring scaling, $E_i = 4I/n_c c$. Multiple spectral features were observed on a significant fraction of shots. These results will be discussed, along with some future directions.

Primary author: ETTLINGER, Oliver (Imperial College London)

Co-authors: DOVER, Nicholas (National Institutes for Quantum and Radiological Science and Technology); Dr CHEN, Yu-hsin (Naval Research Laboratory); Dr HELLE, Mike (Naval Research Laboratory); DITTER, Emma-Jane (Imperial College London); HICKS, George (Imperial College London); GORDON, Daniel (Naval Research Laboratory); Dr TING, Antonio (University of Maryland); POLYANSKIY, Mikhail N.; POGORELSKY, Igor (BNL); NAJMUDIN, Zulfikar (Imperial College London)

Presenter: ETTLINGER, Oliver (Imperial College London)

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