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This is a textbook which gradually introduces the student to the statistical mechanical study of the different phases of matter and to the phase transitions between them. Throughout, only simple models of both ordinary and soft matter are used but these are studied in full detail. The subject is developed in a pedagogical manner, starting from the basics, going from the simple ideal systems to the interacting systems, and ending with the more modern topics. The latter include the renormalisation group approach to critical phenomena, the density functional theory of interfaces, the topological defects of nematic liquid crystals and the kinematic aspects of the phase transformation process. This textbook provides the student with a complete overview, intentionally at an introductory level, of the theory of phase transitions. References include suggestions for more detailed treatments and four appendices supply overviews of the mathematical tools employed in the text.

Written for:

Graduate students in physics, chemical engineering and materials sciences

Keywords:

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Statistical Mechanics

Theoretical Physics

Thermodynamics