

matter, Selinger's book focuses more on key concepts and core principles and less on presenting the diverse array of problems in soft-matter systems. In that way, Selinger's approach is similar to that of *Principles of Condensed Matter Physics* by Paul Chaikin and Tom Lubensky (Cambridge University Press, 2000), but it is accessible at a more elementary level. The writing is very conversational, and Selinger's lecture style really comes through as he repeatedly raises common questions and acknowledges points of confusion for discussion.

A unique aspect of the book is the use of interactive online figures to illustrate many of the book's concepts. The figures are available online in Wolfram's CDF format and viewable in Mathematica or a freely available CDF player. Readers are able to manipulate model parameters, such as temperature or an external field, via sliders. In that way, engaged readers can internalize important lessons of the statistical theories presented in the book, even before they master the more technical aspects of tensor-based and field-theoretical derivations. A limitation of that otherwise nice feature is the clumsy access provided by Springer, which requires typing a cumbersome 133-character URL into a browser.

Some instructors might feel that the heavy focus on liquid crystals provides too narrow a slice of soft matter. Several broadly relevant topics, including polymers, supramolecular assembly, and diffusion, make no appearance in the book. One suspects, however, that the relatively narrow scope is intentional, so as to maintain a more coherent conceptual and mathematical framework throughout. The book might also benefit from additional problems that would help students to strengthen their engagement with the material.

Minor limitations aside, *Introduction to the Theory of Soft Matter* is a well-written and engaging text that serves an unmet need. It will be a valuable asset for students and junior researchers who are in a growing interdisciplinary field and are looking for an approachable yet rigorous introduction to many of its cornerstone principles.

Greg Grason

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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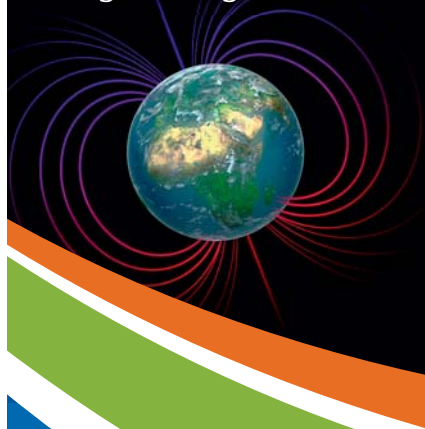
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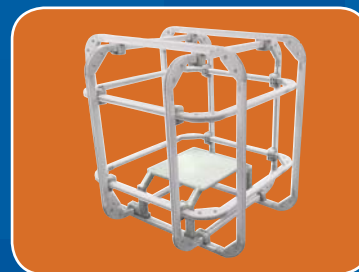
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