EE 232: Lightwave Devices

Lecture #9 – Bulk semiconductor gain

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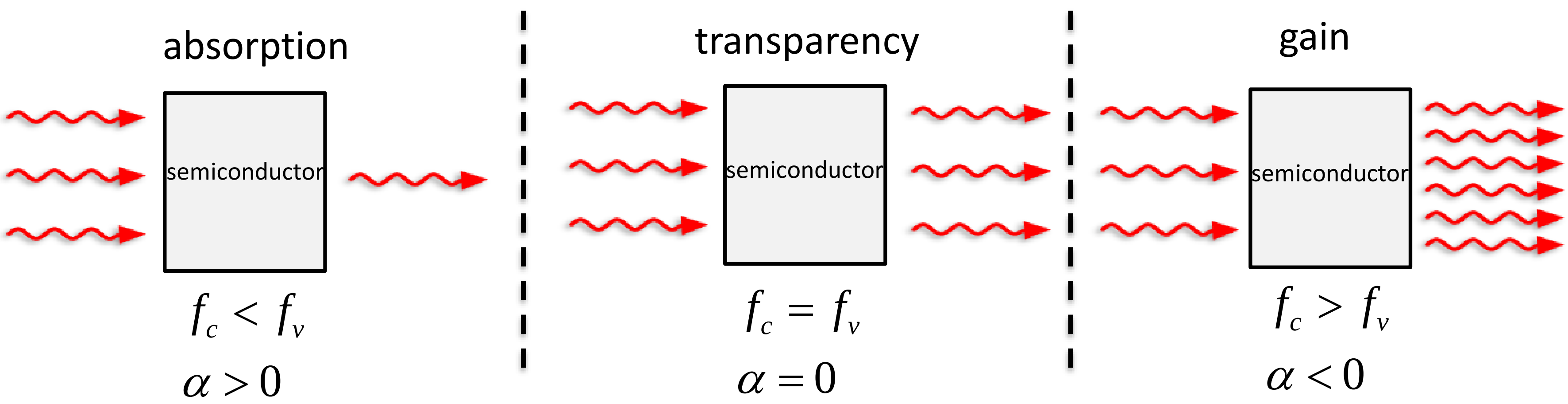
Gain in a semiconductor

$$\alpha(\hbar\omega) = C_0 M_b^2 \rho_r(\hbar\omega)\left[f_v(\hbar\omega) - f_c(\hbar\omega)\right]$$

This expression implies that absorption becomes negative if $f_c > f_v$

Negative absorption is simply gain. We get more photons out than what we put in.

$f_c = f_v$ is known as the transparency condition. Gain is precisely balanced by absorption and the materials is “transparent”.



Transparency condition

$$f_c = \frac{1}{1+\exp[(E_g + (\hbar\omega - E_g) m_r^* / m_e^* - F_c)/kT]}$$

$$f_v = \frac{1}{1+\exp[(-(\hbar\omega - E_g) m_r^* / m_h^* - F_v)/kT]}$$

$$f_c = f_v \rightarrow E_g + (\hbar\omega - E_g) m_r^* / m_e^* - F_c = -(\hbar\omega - E_g) m_r^* / m_h^* - F_v)$$

$$F_c - F_v = E_g + (\hbar\omega - E_g) m_r^* / m_e^* + (\hbar\omega - E_g) m_r^* / m_h^*$$

$$= E_g + (\hbar\omega - E_g)\left(m_r^* \frac{m_e^* + m_h^*}{m_e^* m_h^*} \right)$$

$$= E_g + (\hbar\omega - E_g)(1)$$

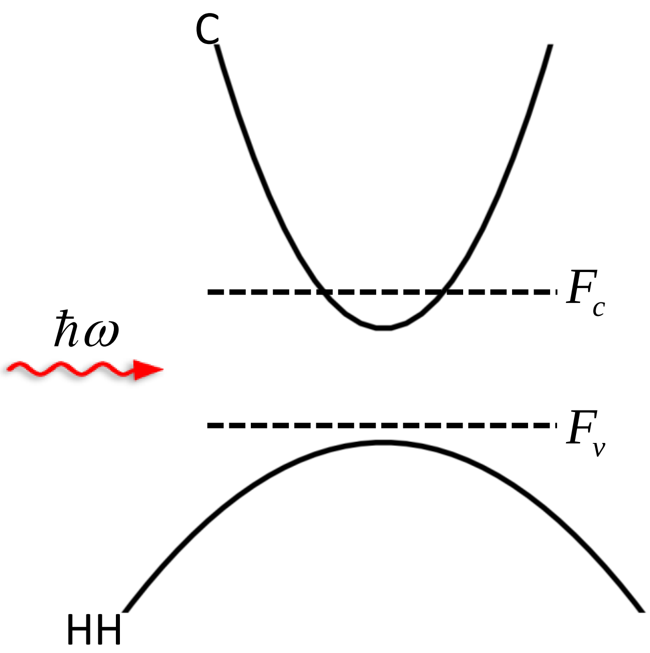
$$F_c - F_v = \hbar\omega$$

$F_c - F_v < \hbar\omega$ **(absorption)**

$F_c - F_v = \hbar\omega$ **(transparency)**

$F_c - F_v > \hbar\omega$ **(gain)**

Transparency carrier concentration (estimation)



Conduction band

Quasi-Fermi level can easily push into the band such that Boltzmann approx. is not valid.

$$n = N_c F_{1/2}\left(\frac{F_c - E_c}{kT}\right)$$

$$\sim N_c \frac{4}{3\sqrt{\pi}}\left(\frac{F_c - E_c}{kT}\right)^{3/2} \quad \text{for } F_C - E_c \gg kT$$

$$F_c \sim n_{tr}^{2/3}\left(\frac{3\sqrt{\pi}}{4N_c}\right)^{2/3} + E_g$$

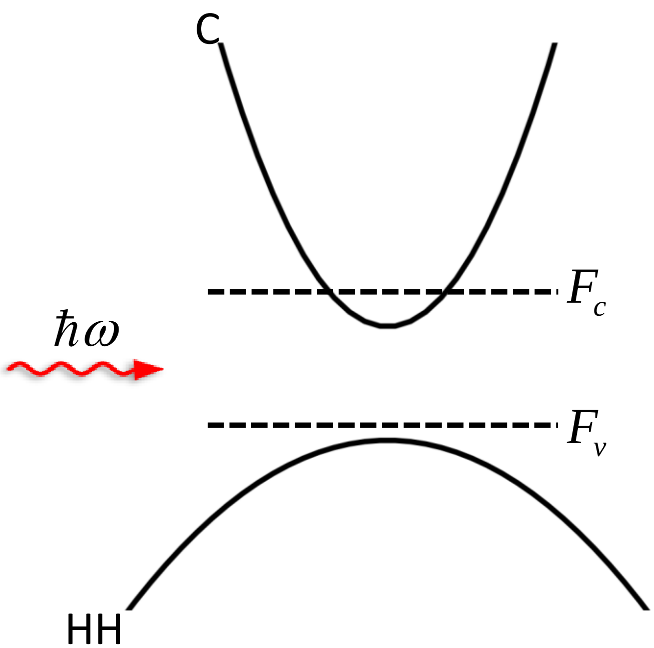
Valence band

At transparency, Quasi-Fermi level does not easily push into band. Boltzmann approx. is often adequate

$$n = N_v \exp\left(\frac{E_v - F_v}{kT}\right)$$

$$F_v = -kT \ln\left(\frac{p}{N_v}\right)$$

Transparency carrier concentration (estimation)

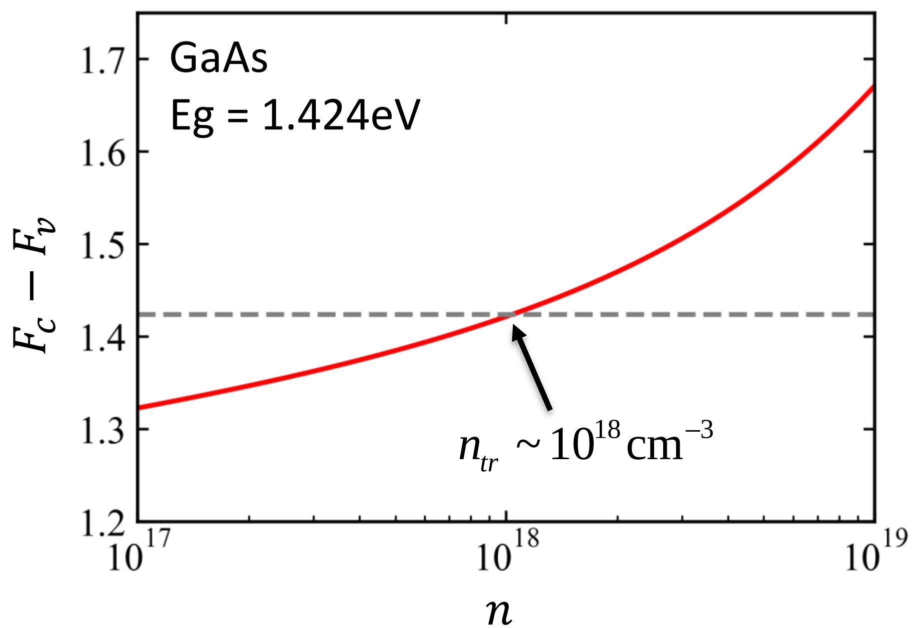


Assume quasi-neutrality applies $n = p$

$$F_c - F_v = \hbar\omega = E_g$$

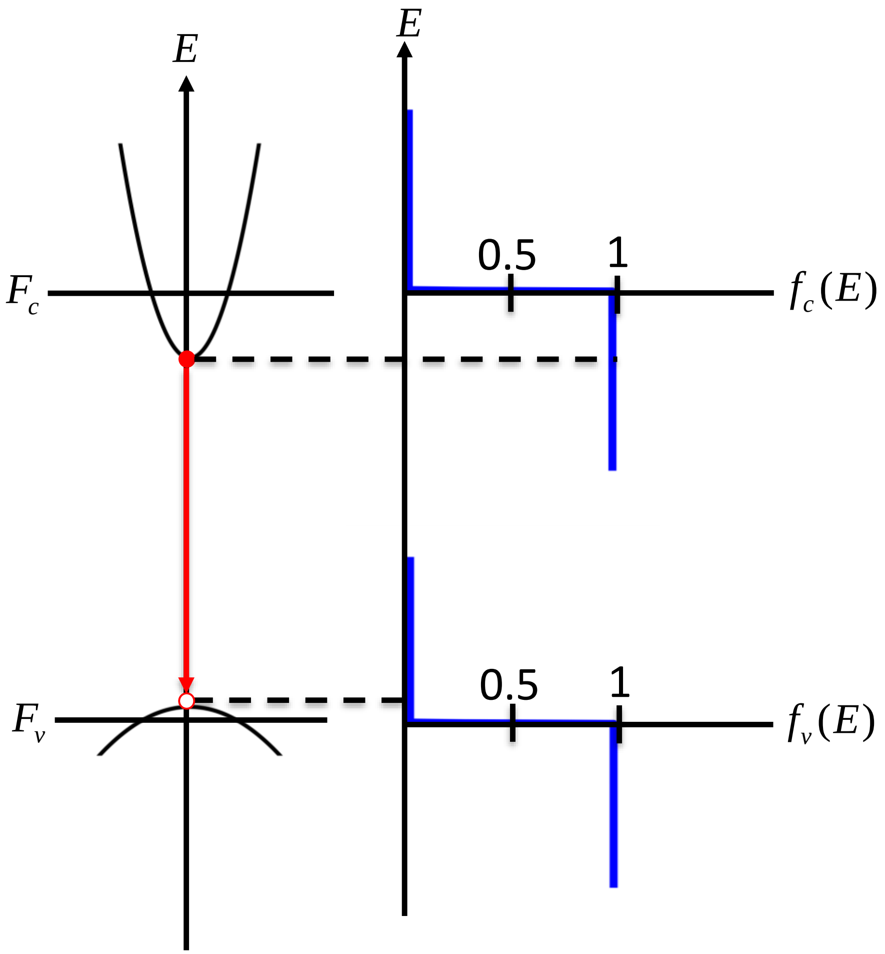
$$\rightarrow \quad kTn_{tr}^{2/3}\left(\frac{3\sqrt{\pi}}{4N_c}\right)^{2/3} + E_g + kT\ln\left(\frac{n_{tr}}{N_v}\right) = E_g$$

Solve graphically



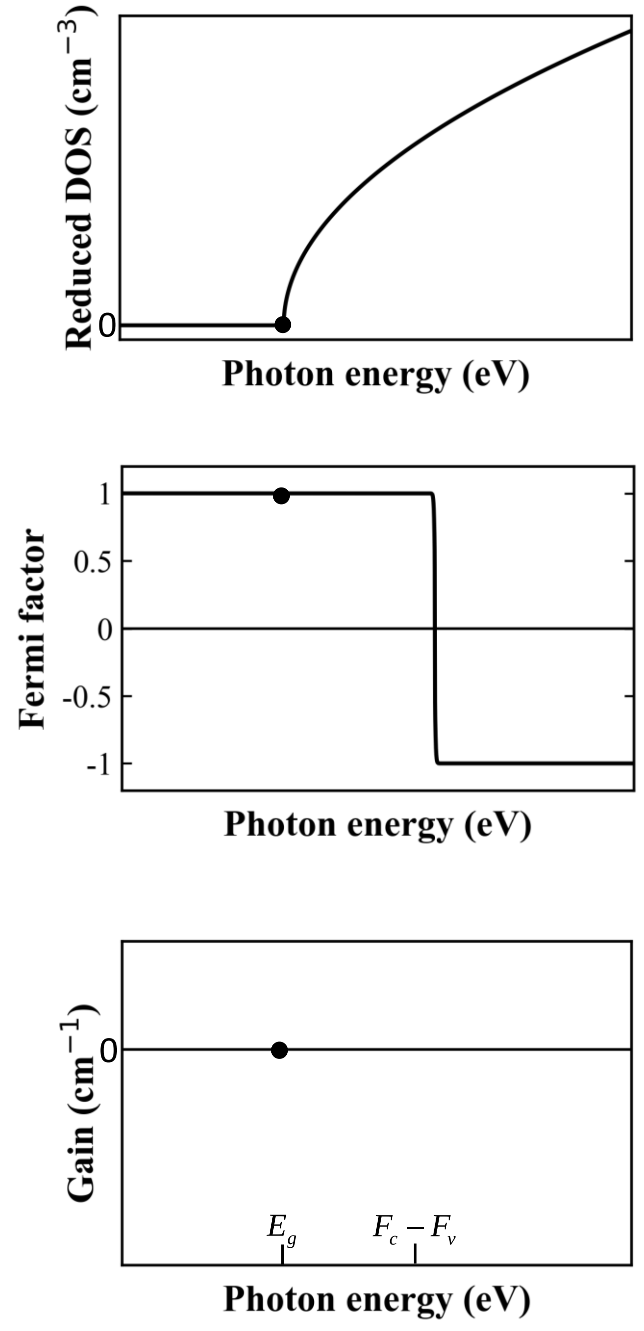
Note that n_{tr} depends only weakly upon effective mass therefore transparency carrier concentration is similar for different direct bandgap semiconductors.

Gain spectrum (T=0K)



$$g(\hbar\omega) = -\alpha(\hbar\omega)$$
$$= C_0 M_b^2 \rho_r(\hbar\omega)\left[f_c(\hbar\omega) - f_v(\hbar\omega)\right]$$

Fermi inversion factor



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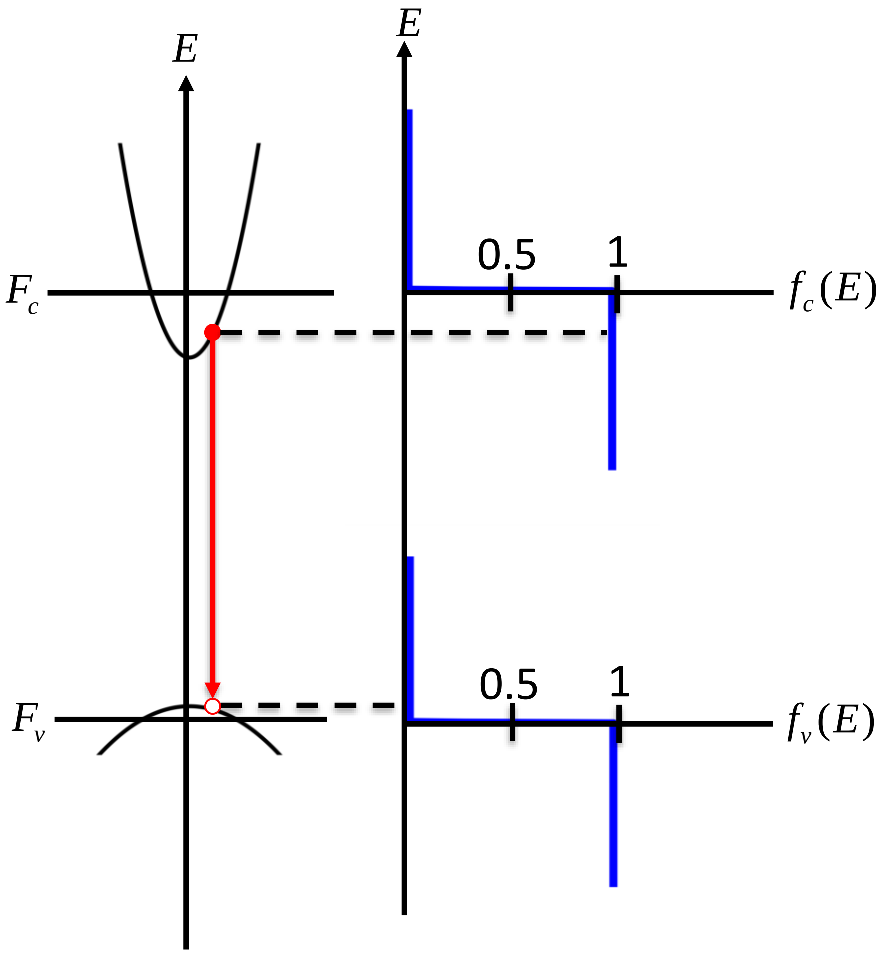

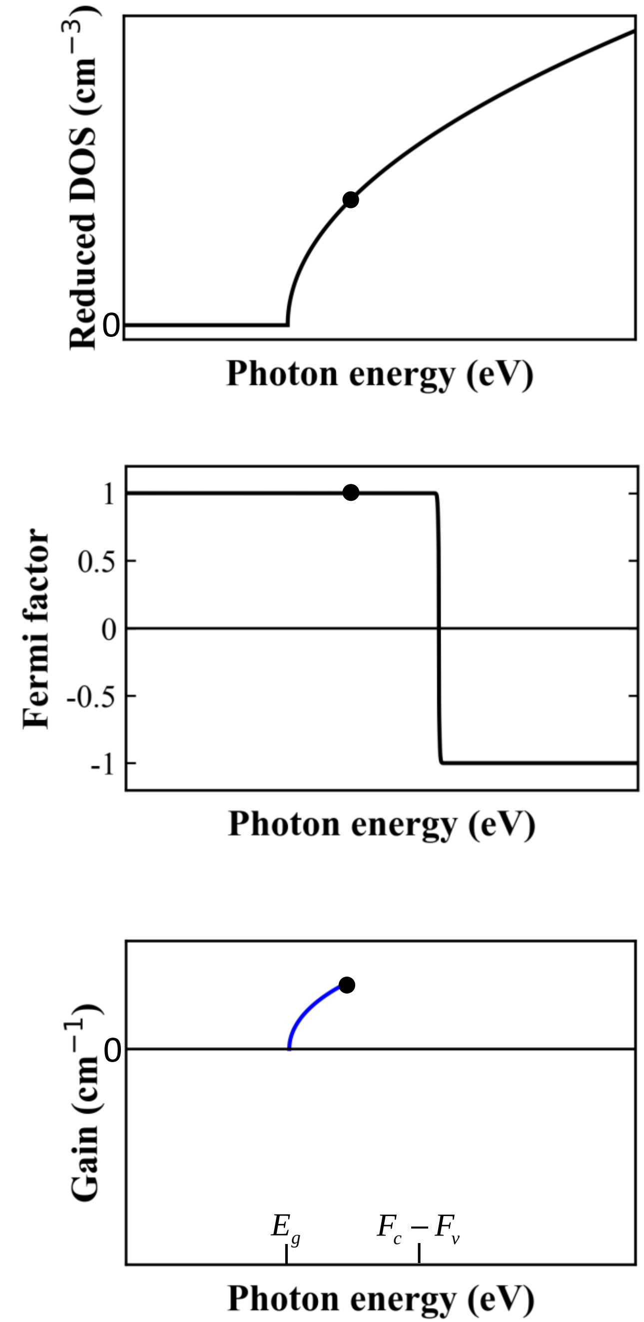

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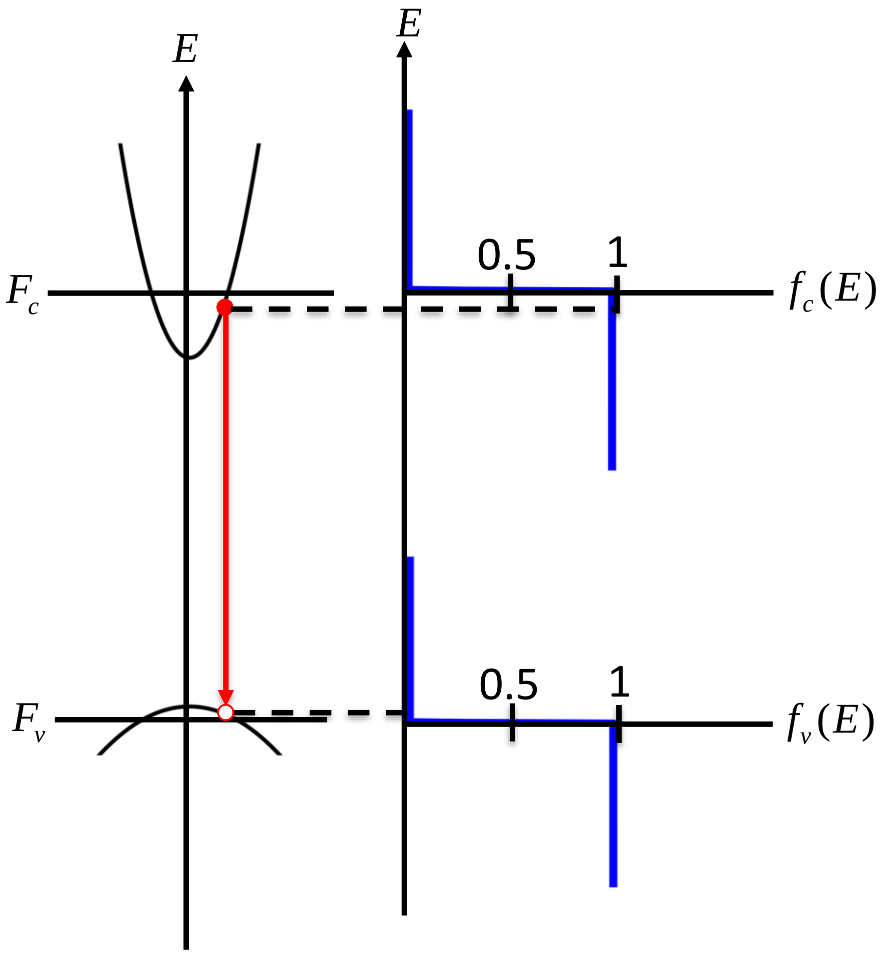

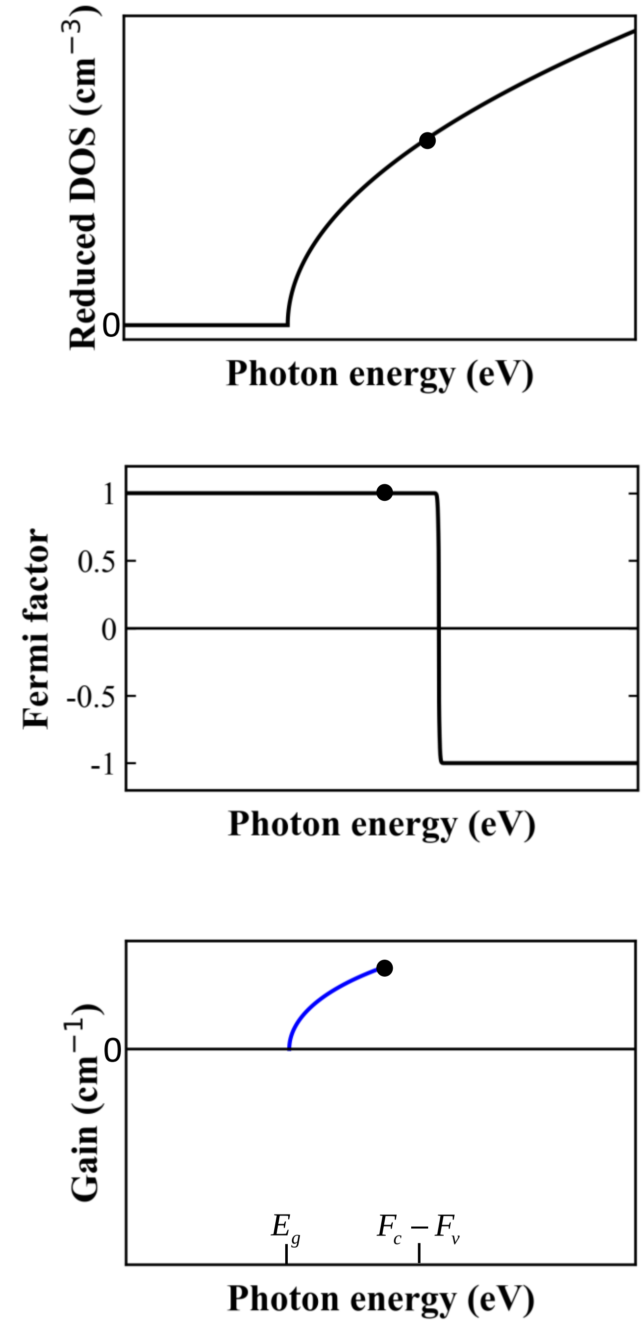

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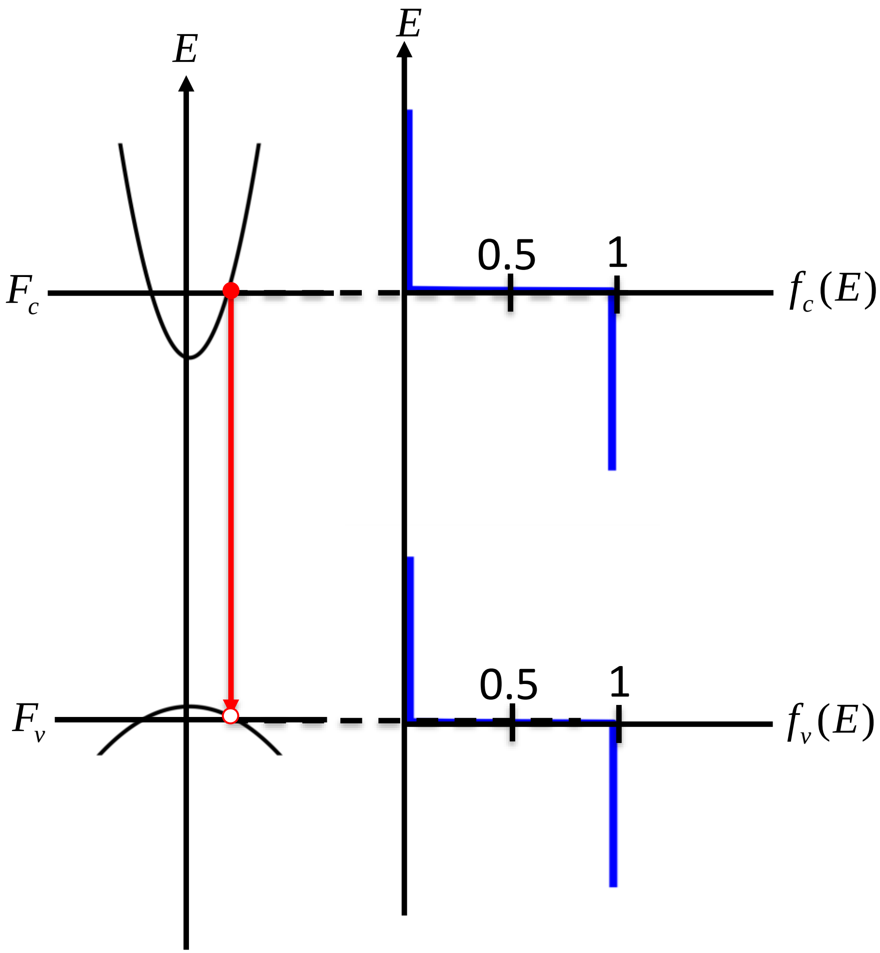

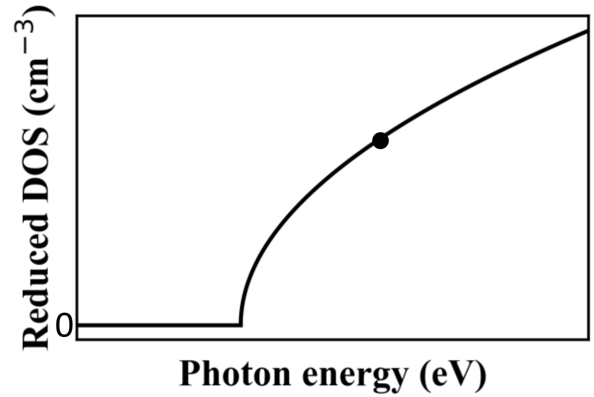

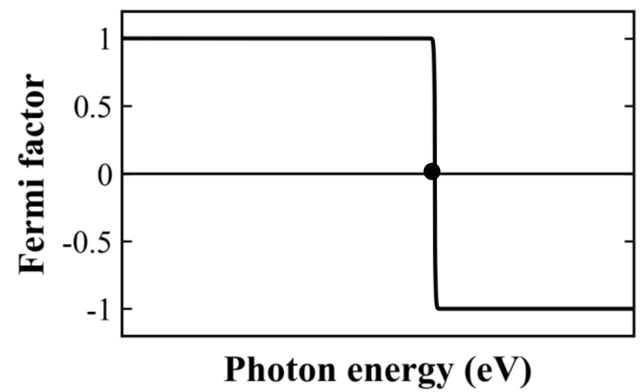

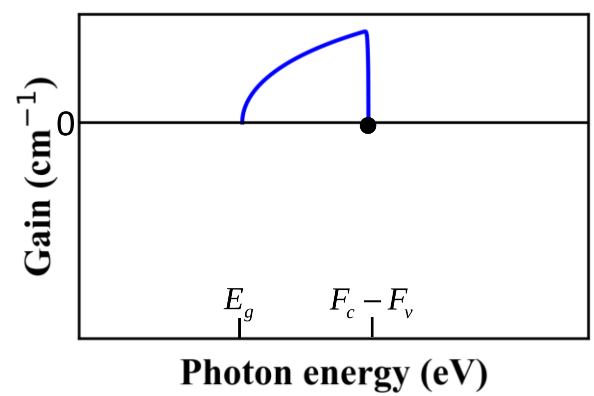

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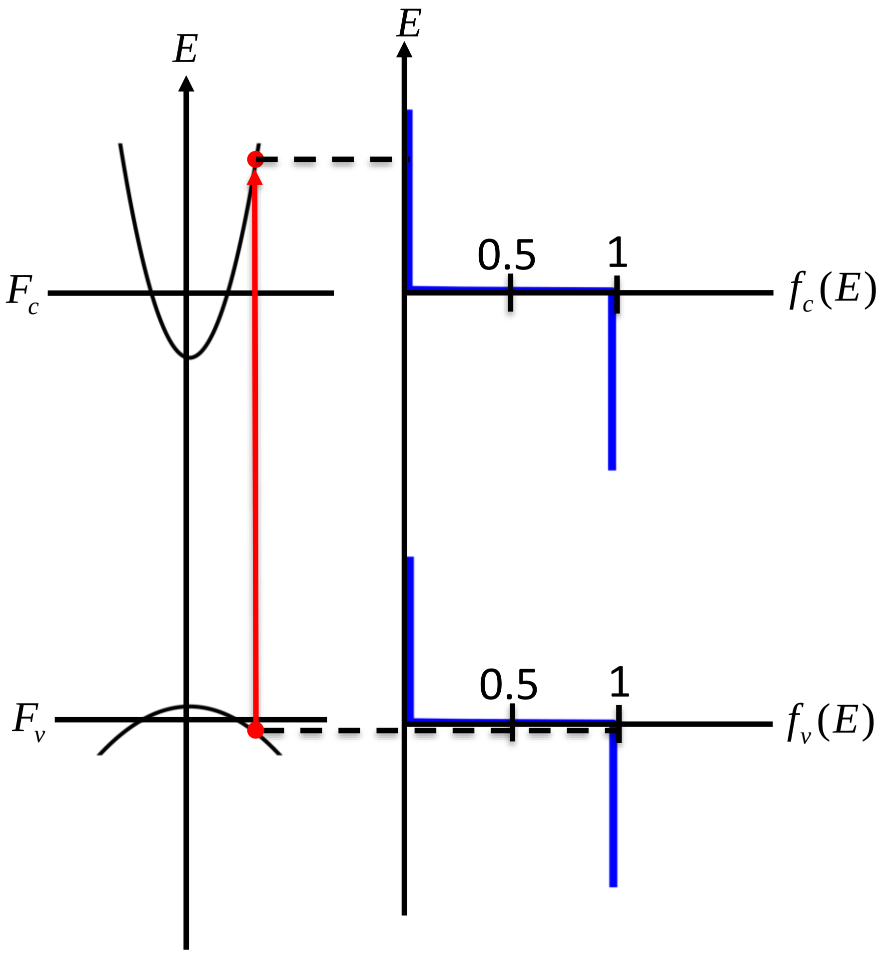

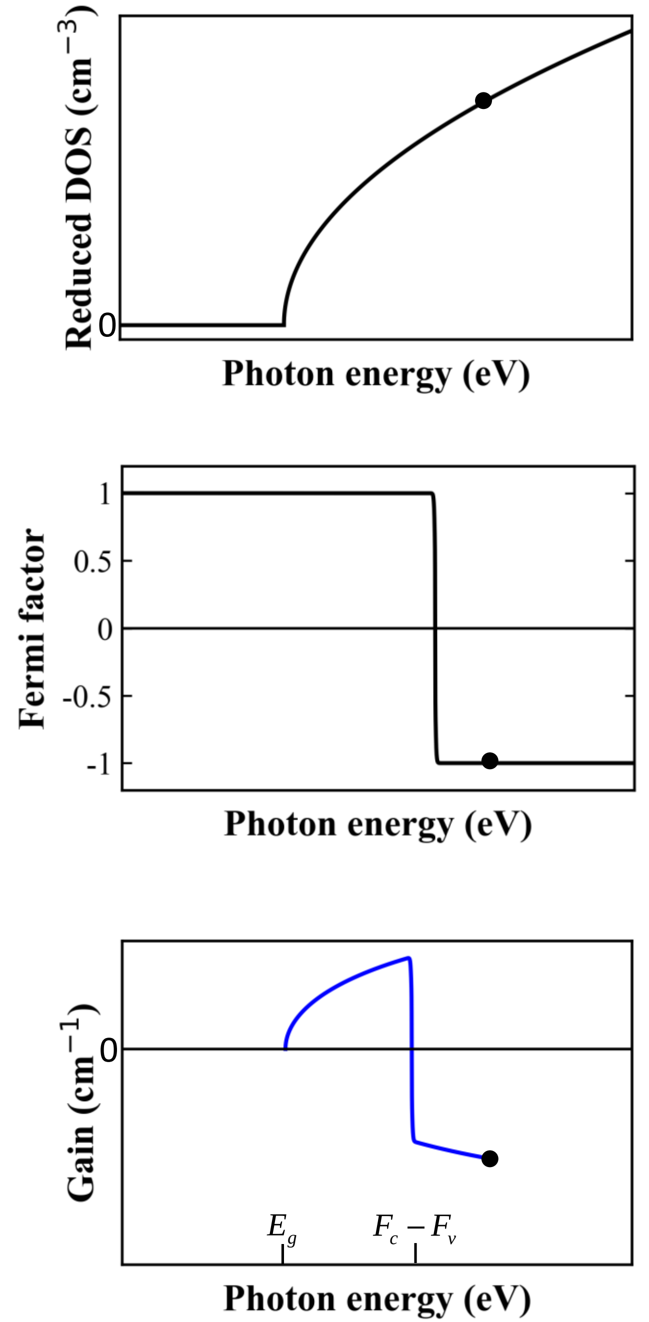

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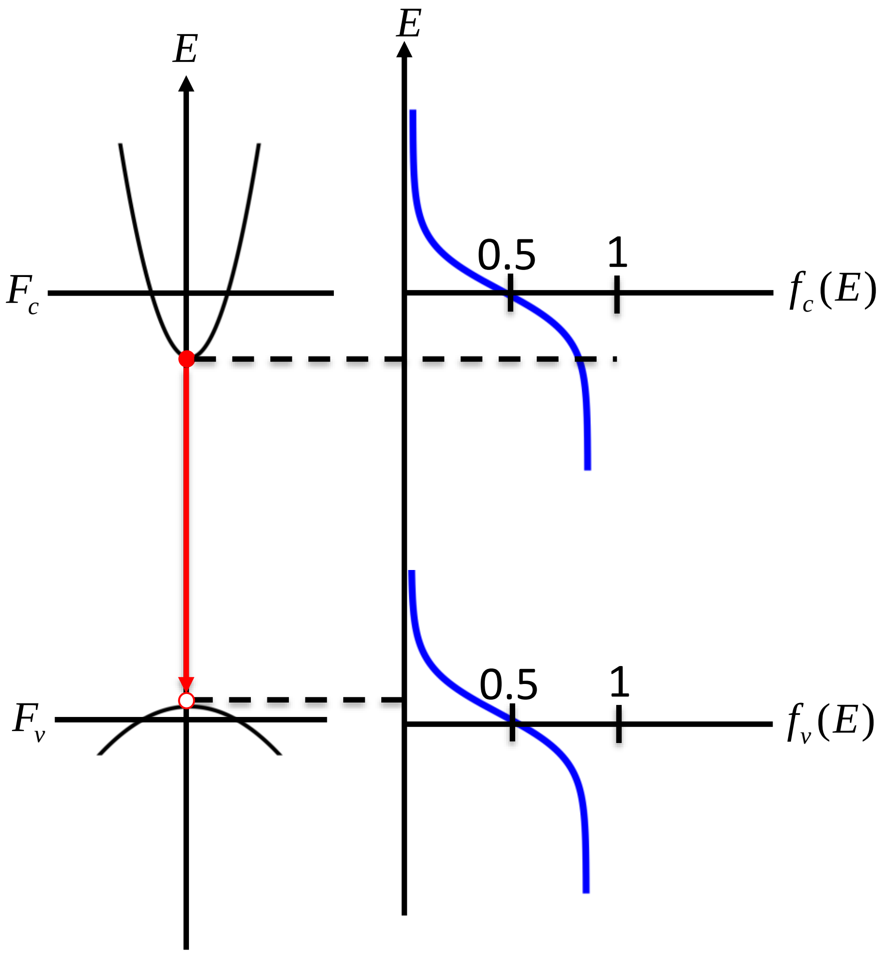
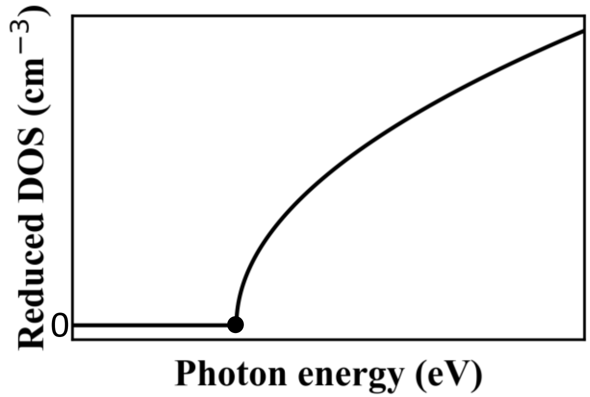
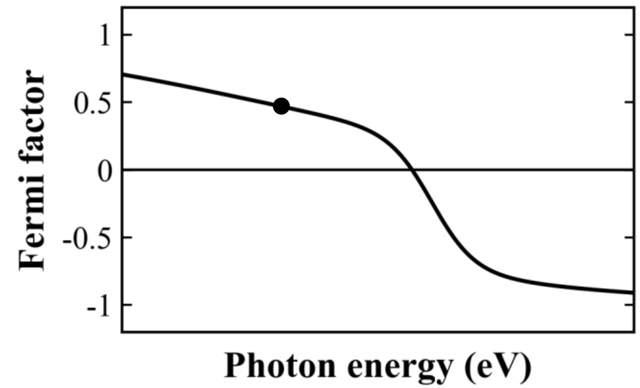
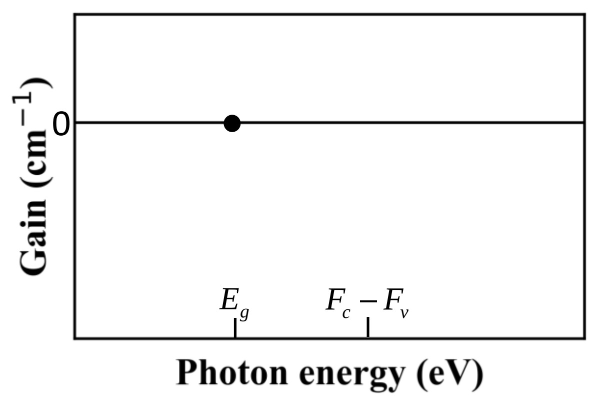
Gain spectrum (T=300K)









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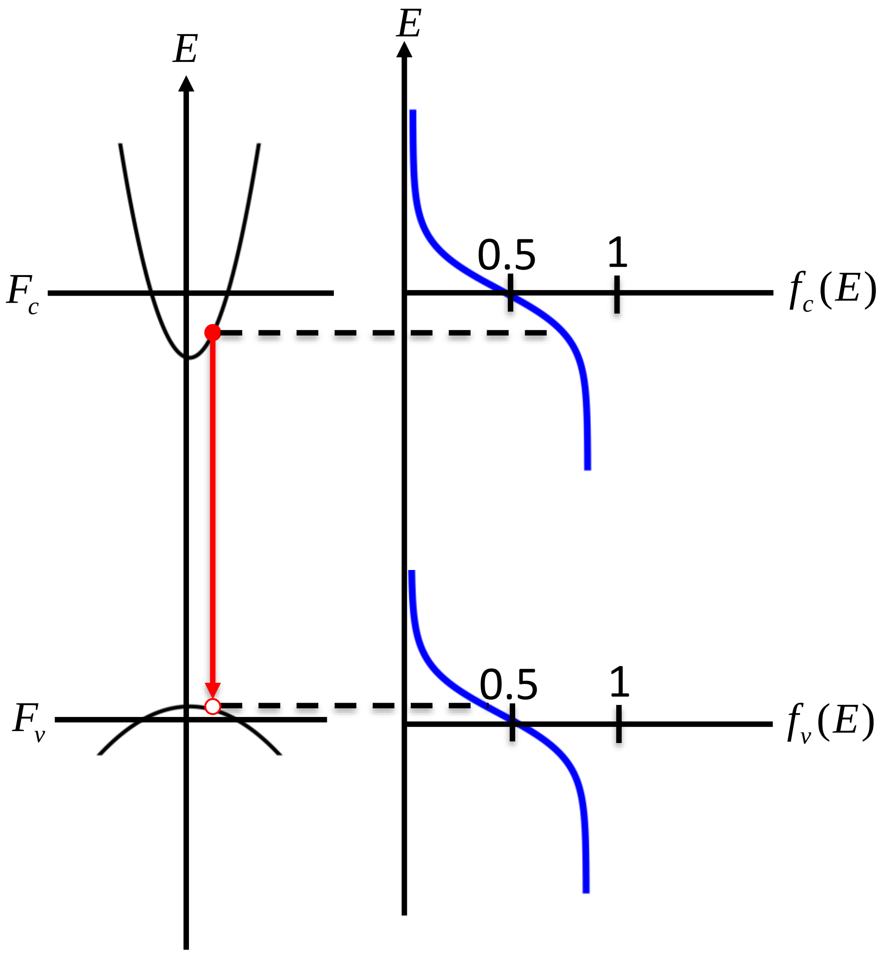

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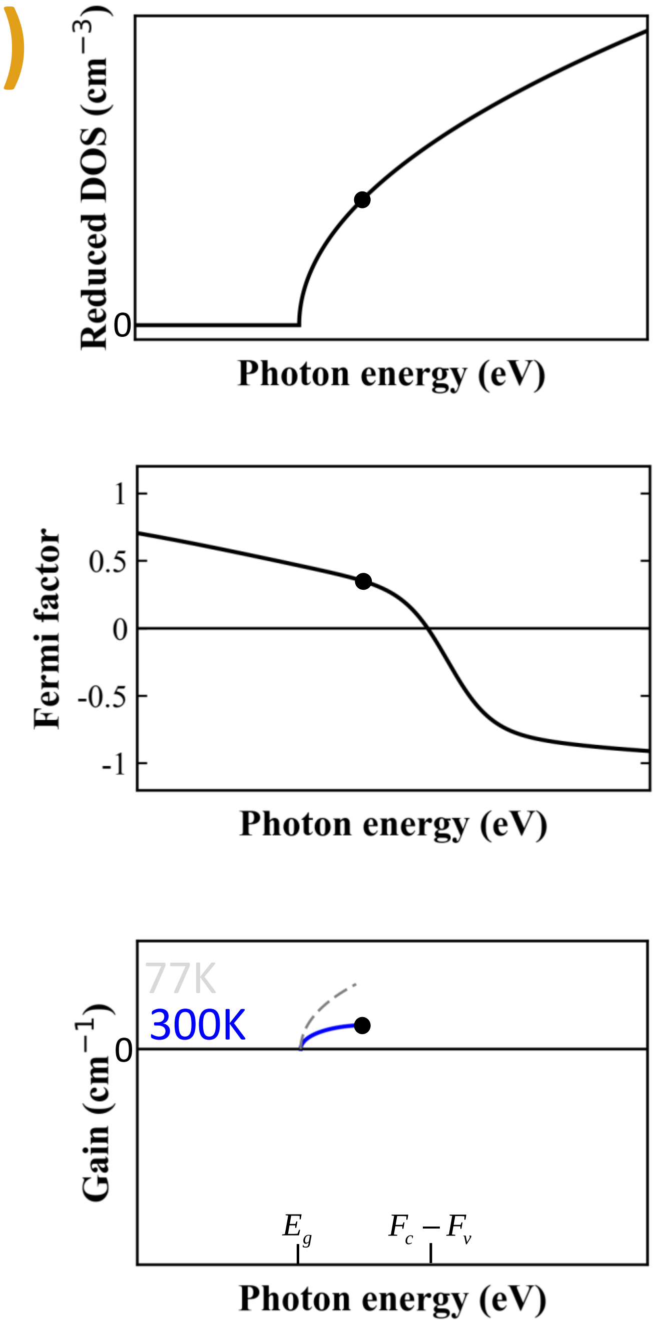

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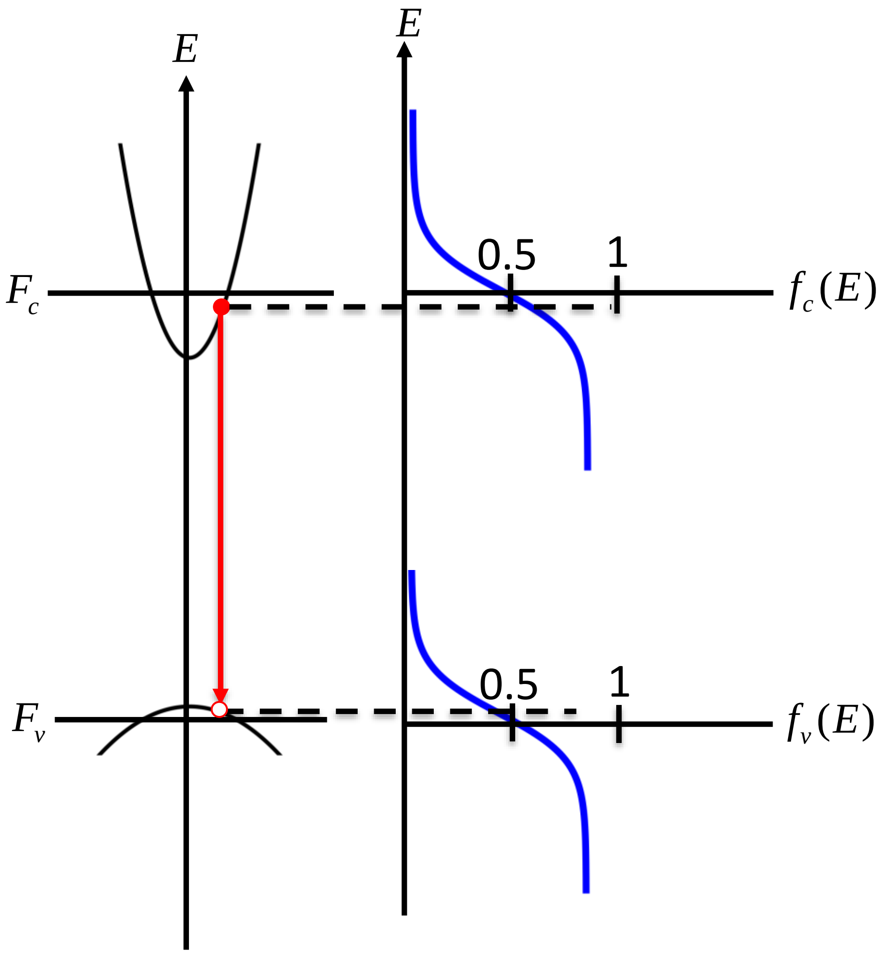

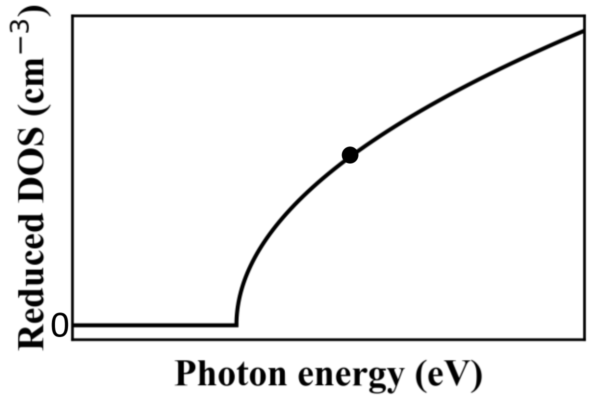

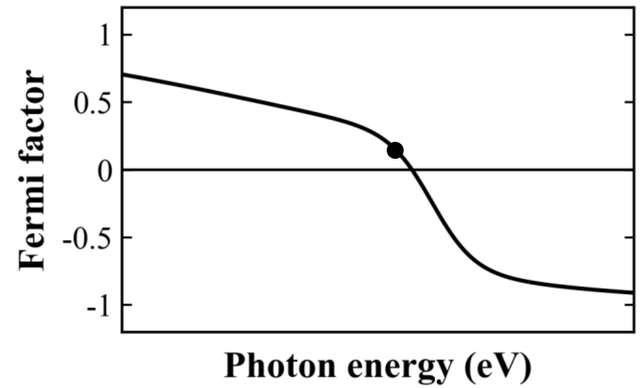

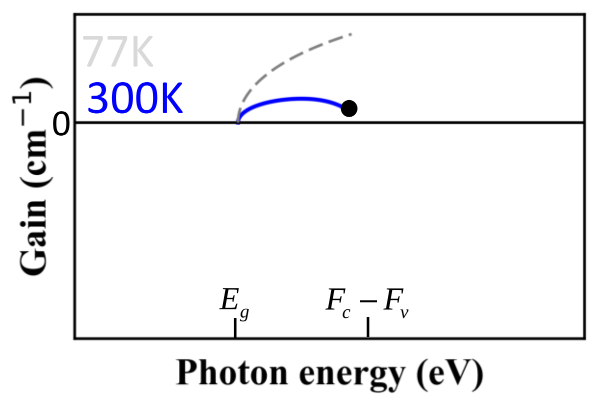

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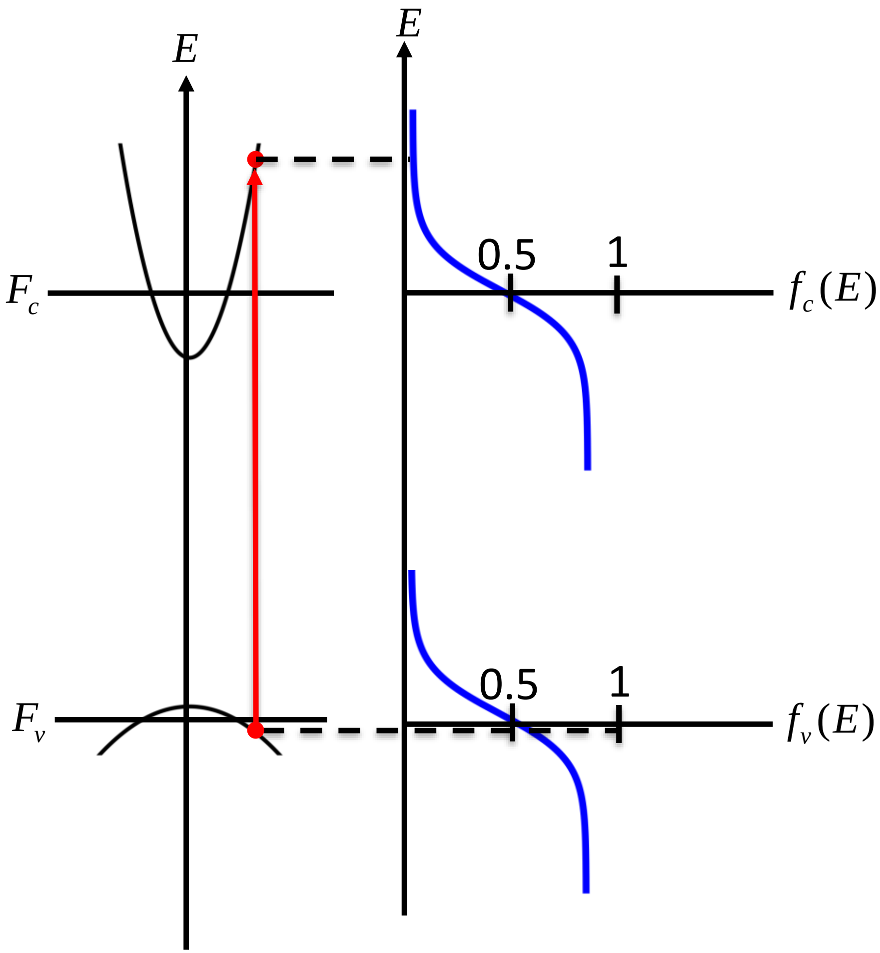

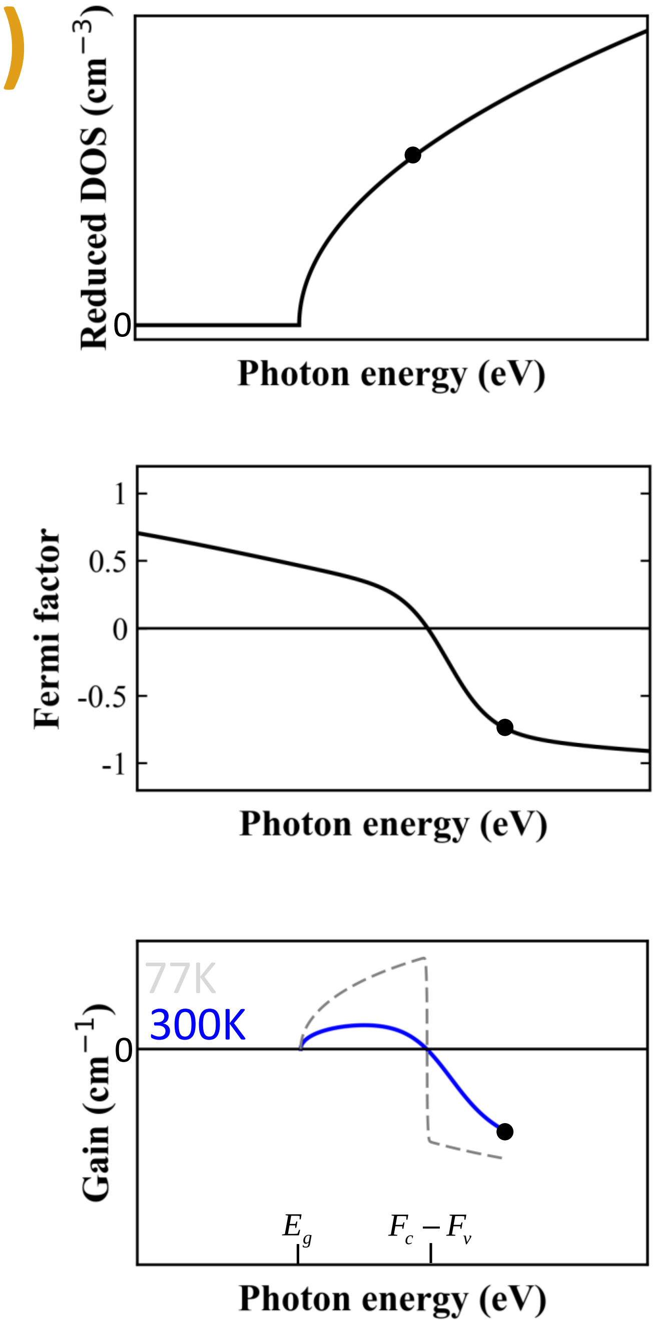

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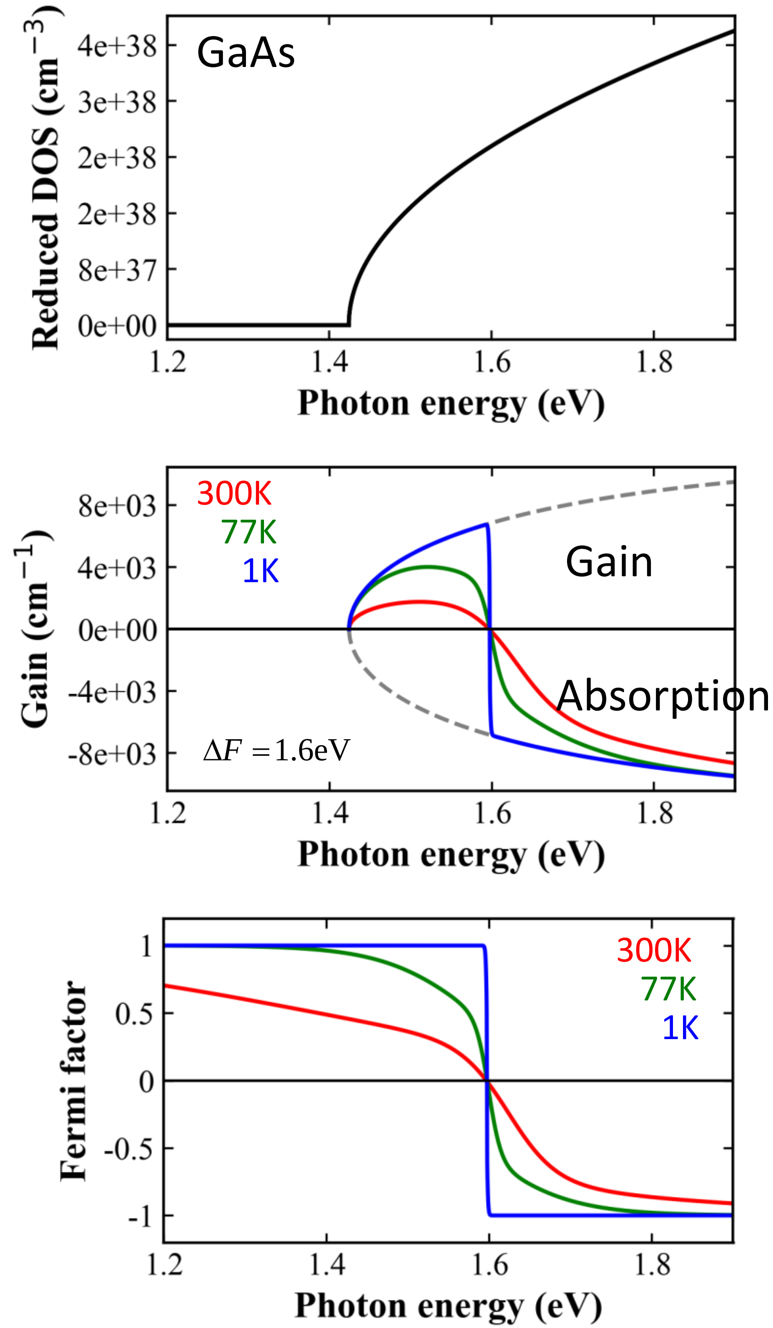
Fermi inversion factor

Calculated values
for gallium arsenide (GaAs)



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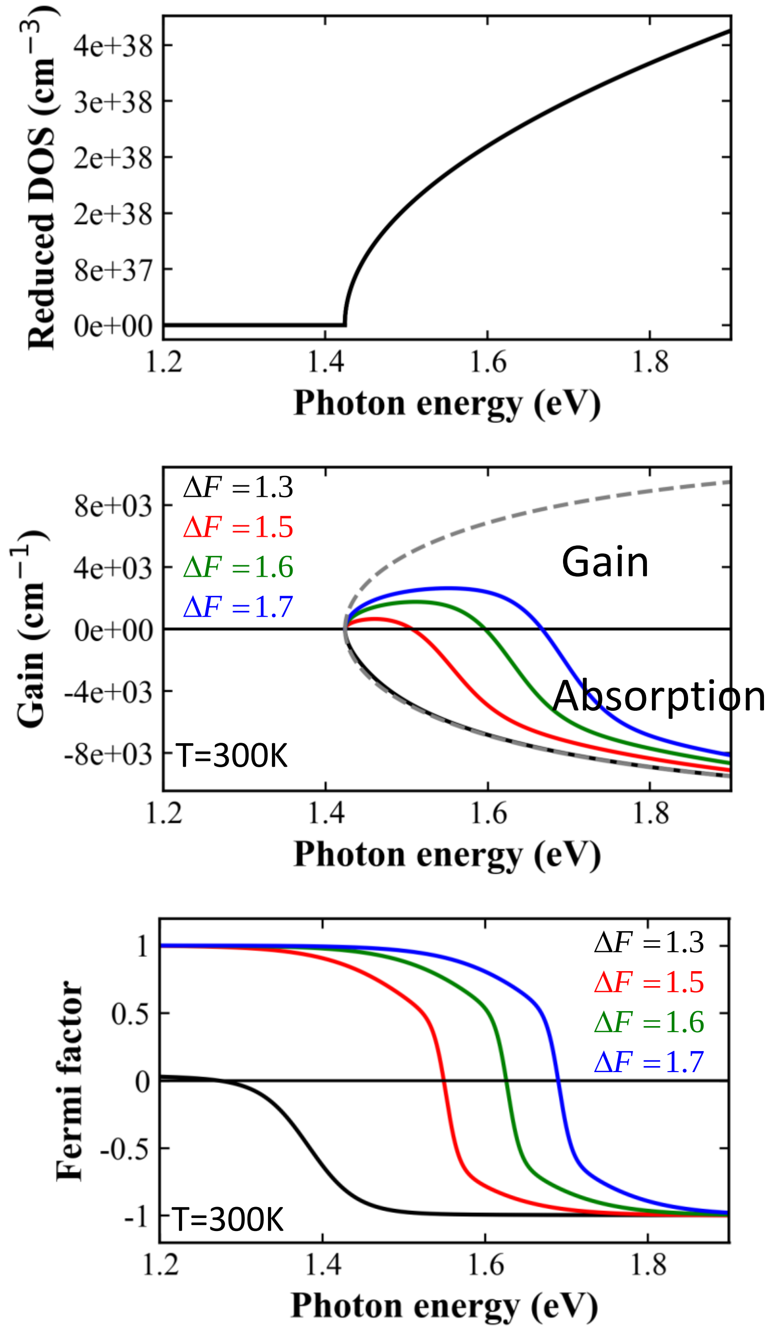
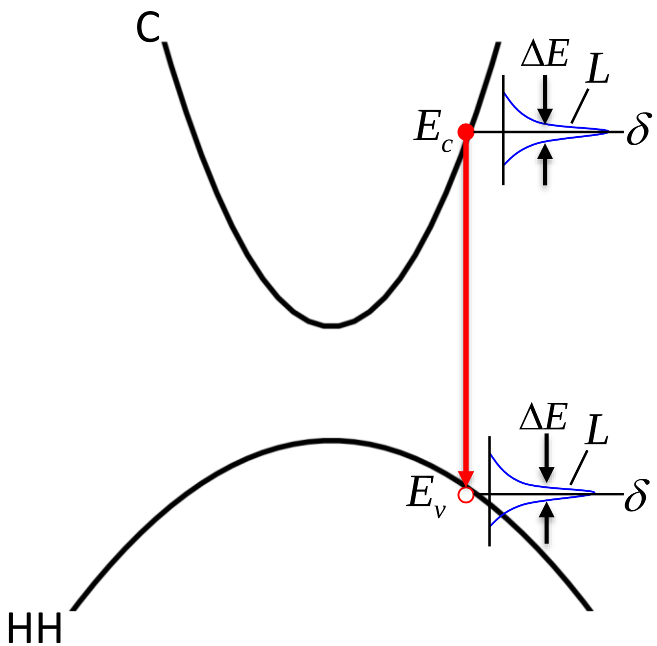


Linewidth broadening



- Electron and hole have a finite lifetime in a state due to various intraband scattering processes.

$$\delta(E_e - E_h - \hbar\omega) \rightarrow L(E_e - E_h - \hbar\omega, \tau_{in})$$

L: lineshape function

τ_{in}: intraband scattering time (~100 fs)

- Lorentzian lineshape if probability of finding an electron/hole in a given state decreases exponentially with time.

$$\mathcal{L}(E_e - E_h - \hbar\omega) = \frac{1}{\pi} \frac{\hbar\tau_{in}}{\left(\hbar/\tau_{in}\right)^2 + \left(E_e - E_h - \hbar\omega\right)^2}$$

- Consequences
  - ➢ Gain/absorption below the bandgap
  - ➢ Gain is “smeared” out

Linewidth broadening

$$\alpha = C_0 \frac{2}{V} \sum_{k_c} \sum_{k_v} |\hat{e} \cdot \mathbf{p}_{cv}|^2 \mathcal{L}(E_e - E_h - \hbar\omega)\left(f_v - f_c\right)$$

$$= C_0 |\hat{e} \cdot \mathbf{p}_{cv}|^2 \int \rho_r(E)\mathcal{L}(E_e - E_h - \hbar\omega)\left[f_v(E) - f_c(E)\right]dE$$

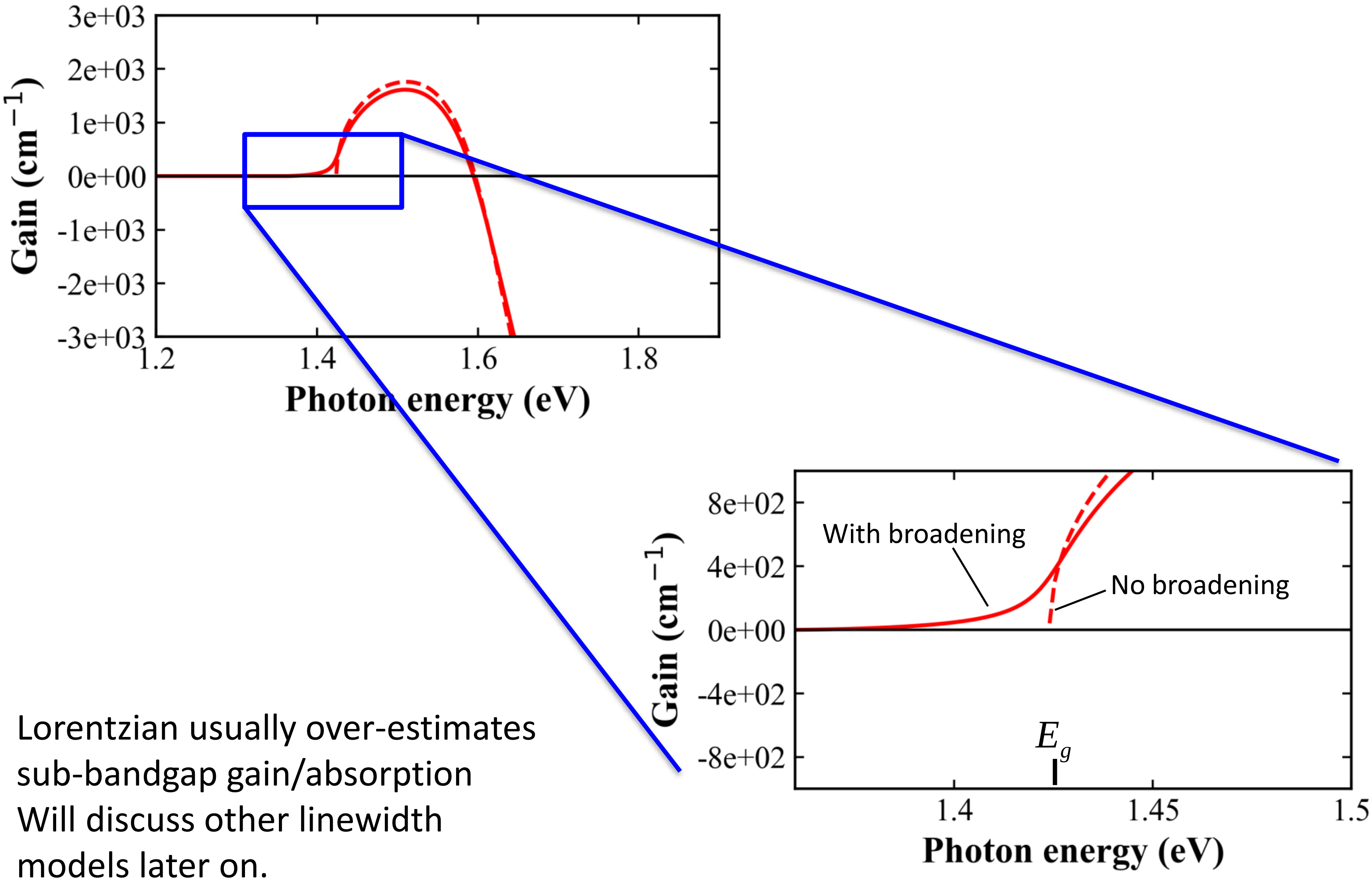
$$\boxed{\alpha = C_0 |\hat{e} \cdot \mathbf{p}_{cv}|^2 \int \rho_r(E)\mathcal{L}(E + E_g - \hbar\omega)\left[f_v(E) - f_c(E)\right]dE}$$

Recall $E_e - E_h = E_g + \dfrac{\hbar^2 k^2}{2m_r^*} = E + E_g$

$$f_c(E) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp[(E_g + E\, m_r^* / m_e^* - F_c)/kT]}$$

$$f_v(E) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp[(-E\, m_r^* / m_h^* - F_v)/kT]}$$

Linewidth broadening



- Lorentzian usually over-estimates sub-bandgap gain/absorption
- Will discuss other linewidth models later on.