Monday Morning, November 10, 2014

Actinides and Rare Earths Focus Topic
Room: 301 - Session AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM

Spectroscopy, Microscopy and Dichroism of Actinides and Rare Earths
Moderator: David Shuh, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

8:20am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM1 Novel Synthetic and Spectroscopic Techniques in Actinide Materials Chemistry**, ***Stefan Minasian***, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, *E. Batista,* Los Alamos National Laboratory, *C.H. Booth,* Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, *D. Clark,* Los Alamos National Laboratory, *J. Keith,* Colgate University, *W. Lukens,* Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, *S. Kozimor, R.L. Martin,* Los Alamos National Laboratory, *D. Nordlund,* SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, *D. Shuh, T. Tyliszczak,* Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, *D. Sokaras,* SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, *X.-D. Weng,* Los Alamos National Laboratory, *T.-C. Weng*, SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory **INVITED**

The development of a detailed, quantitative understanding of electronic structure and bonding for a broad range actinide materials remains a significant scientific challenge. Recent advances have shown that the 1s to np transition intensities measured by Cl and S K-edge X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS) directly relate to coefficients of covalent orbital mixing in M–Cl and M–S bonds. The scientific progress associated with these Cl and S XAS studies suggests that using synchrotron-generated radiation to quantify covalency for ligands beyond Cl and S would have a wide impact. The nature of chemical bonds between actinides and light atoms such as oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon is of particular interest because these interactions control the physics and chemistry of many technologically important processes in nuclear science. However, obtaining accurate light atom K-edge XAS spectra on non-conducting compounds is notoriously difficult, because the measurement is highly sensitive to surface contamination, self-absorption, and saturation effects. Fortunately, recent upgrades at synchrotron facilities, advancements in beamline instrumentation, and sample preparation methods suggest that these insights are now within reach. Specifically, comparing XAS spectra measured in transmission with a scanning transmission X-ray microscope (STXM) with those from non-resonant inelastic X-ray scattering (NIXS) and time-dependent density functional theory provides a sound basis for validation of bulk-like excitation spectra.

Herein, a new effort is discussed that employs these techniques to understand bonding interactions in two well defined series of f-element materials. The actinide sandwich complexes, “actinocenes,” $(C_8H_8)_2An$ (An = Th, Pa, U, Np, Pu) have played a central role in the development of organoactinide chemistry. Results showed two contrasting trends in actinide–carbon orbital mixing, and evidence that covalency does not increase uniformly as the actinide series is traversed. Additionally, the C K-edge XAS spectrum of thorocene represents the first experimental evidence of a ϕ-type orbital interaction. Oxygen K-edge XAS measurements and DFT studies began the lanthanide dioxides LnO_2 (Ln = Ce, Pr, Tb), because their electronic structures are well-established from hard X-ray spectroscopies. Preliminary efforts to use lanthanide oxides and lanthanide organometallics as experimental benchmarks for quantitative determinations of covalency in d-block and f-block materials will also be discussed.

9:00am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM3 X-ray Magnetic Circular Dichroism of Actinides**, ***Andrei Rogalev***, *F. Wilhelm*, European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF), France **INVITED**

Actinides compounds, which are straddling the magnetic properties of rare-earths and transition metals, have been the subject of increasing interest due to their very different properties, such as Pauli paramagnets, localized and itinerant ferromagnets, and heavy fermion superconductors. The key parameter responsible for the large variety of magnetic properties is obviously degree of localization of the 5f states which are indeed involved in both the chemical bonding and the magnetism. To unravel the details of the electronic structure and magnetic properties of these 5f states, polarization dependent X-ray spectroscopy at the $M_{4,5}$ edges appears as the most suitable experimental tools. At the third generation synchrotron radiation facilities, small x-ray beam with flexible polarization sized down to few microns can be routinely achieved. This technique is thus perfectly suited for studying minute samples (a few micrograms) of transuranium materials. This talk reviews recent advances in use of polarized x-rays to study local magnetic properties and electronic structure of actinides compounds.

The magnetic properties are mostly studied with X-ray Magnetic Circular Dichroism (XMCD). The great advantage of this technique is its capability to probe the orbital and spin magnetization of 5f states separately. XMCD experiments have been reported for a great number of uranium compounds and have permitted to understand, at least qualitatively, which is the ground state despite the difficulty over assigning a valency. It has also revealed differences between localized and itinerant systems that are not yet fully understood. To our knowledge there are very few reports on XMCD measurements on other trans-uranium materials. This is unfortunate, as the questions of localization of 5*f* states become more interesting as the 5*f* count increases. In order to improve our understanding of the magnetism of actinides, which is based up to now solely on uranium compounds, and thus better to describe the differences between localized and itinerant 5*f* systems, we report a thorough XMCD study of a series of ferromagnetic $AnFe_2$ Laves-phase compounds. Moreover, we show that additional information regarding exchange interaction between neighboring actinides atoms can be extracted from the XMCD measurements performed at absorption edges of other "nonmagnetic" atoms in the compounds.

Finally, we demonstrate that the study of the branching ratio in $M_{4,5}$ absorption spectra can bring valuable information regarding the coupling scheme, within which to discuss the electronic and magnetic properties of actinides atoms.

9:40am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM5 Magnetic Circular Dichroism Measured with Transmission Electron Microscope**, ***Jan Rusz***, Uppsala University, Sweden **INVITED**

X-ray magnetic circular dichroism (XMCD; [1]) is an established experimental probe of atom-specific magnetic properties of lanthanides and actinides. In XMCD, a photon of well-defined energy and polarization is absorbed by an atom in the sample with a probability that is proportional to the number available unoccupied states with an energy that allows fulfilling the energy conservation and selection rules. An essential element of XMCD are so called sum rules [2,3], which relate the XMCD spectra to the spin and orbital angular momenta, respectively.

Recently, a new experimental method has been developed that is closely related to XMCD. It was named electron magnetic circular (or chiral) dichroism (EMCD) and it is measured with a transmission electron microscope (TEM) instead of a synchrotron beam-line. We will review the short history of this method starting from its proposal in 2003 [4], first experimental proof-of-the-concept in 2006 [5], formulation of the theory [6] and sum rules [7,8] in 2007 to the present state-of-the-art and early applications, for example [9-12]. Yet, despite intense efforts, EMCD is still in its development phase, particularly from the point of view of quantitative studies. On the other hand, qualitative EMCD experiments have reached resolutions below 2nm [13].

The primary advantages of the EMCD, when compared to XMCD, are costs, availability and lateral resolution. Even a state-of-the-art TEM is a device considerably cheaper than a synchrotron beam-line and as such it can be available locally to a research group. TEM is also a very versatile instrument that combines diffraction experiments, elemental analysis, local electronic structure studies via electron energy loss spectroscopy [14] and now also magnetism via EMCD.

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10:40am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM8 The Microstructure of Plutonium Hydride Growth Sites**, ***Martin Brierley***, *J.P. Knowles,* AWE, UK, *M. Preuss, A.H. Sherry*, University of Manchester, UK

Under certain conditions plutonium is able to form plutonium hydride during long term storage [1]. Plutonium is radioactive, decaying via release of an alpha particle. Alpha particles are particularly damaging within the body and every attempt should be made to limit the distribution of loose material. Plutonium hydrides have been shown to be pyrophoric when exposed to oxygen; a reaction that could potentially liberate loose particulate outside of suitable containment.

Previous work into the hydriding rate of plutonium has investigated the reaction rate of various hydrides on the surface of these materials; specifically the nucleation rate, the lateral growth rate and the specific hydriding rate [2, 3]. Plutonium is a reactive metal and quickly forms a semi-protective oxide layer in air. Upon exposure of an oxide-covered sample to hydrogen, hydride is formed at discrete sites on the surface, which then grow radially across the surface [1]. Recent work has suggested a grain boundary enhanced growth rate [4].

In the present study, the microstructure associated with selected plutonium hydride growth sites was studied to provide information regarding the nucleation and growth mechanisms that govern the formation of plutonium-hydride. The samples were ground to 600 grit and evacuated before being exposed to ultra-pure hydrogen at pressures between 10 mbar and 1000 mbar for sufficient time to have nucleated a number of hydride sites.

Post-test analysis was performed using Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) and Optical Microscopy (OM) to determine the microstructure of the hydride growth sites. The morphology of individual hydride growth sites indicates that the hydride-metal interface has a highly discontinuous boundary, resulting from enhanced grain boundary diffusion and spears of transformed material; the microstructure within the plutonium hydride growth sites indicates that a preferred growth habit was adopted by the hydride product.

References

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11:00am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM9 Hydrides of U-Mo and U-Zr Alloys: Structure and Electronic Properties**, ***Ladislav Havela***, *M. Paukov, I. Tkach, D. Drozdenko, M. Cieslar, Z. Matej*, Charles University, Czech Republic

When U metal (α-U) is exposed to H gas, it forms a stable hydride β-UH_3. The lattice expansion stabilizes the ferromagnetic order with the Curie temperature around 170 K. The metastable form, α-UH_3, could not be synthesized as a pure phase, and the admixture of β-UH_3 did not allow to determine reliably its intrinsic magnetic properties. We have been testing the reaction to H exposure of γ-U (bcc), which was synthesized as a single phase by combination of Mo or Zr doping into U and ultrafast cooling. We found that such alloys need high H_2 pressure and long exposure to absorb hydrogen. The products can be characterized by the formula $UH_3Mo(Zr)_x$. The hydrides with Mo have a structure corresponding to β-UH_3 with grain size around 1 nm, i.e. almost amorphous. Its ordering temperatures increase to 200 K for $UH_3Mo_{0.18}$ and then decrease for higher Mo concentrations. The hydrides UH_3Zr_x exhibit the UH_3 structure (bcc U lattice filled with H atoms). Their Curie temperature weakly decreases with increasing Zr concentration and the extrapolation to Zr-free state indicates T_C = 170 K, i.e. identical to β-UH_3. The results can be compared with numerous hydrides obtained by hydrogenation of U_6X compounds (X = Mn, Fe, Co, Ni), all probably having similar magnetic properties. We present a detailed study of magnetic properties, electrical resistivity and specific heat. The structure characterization of initial alloys and the hydrides has been done by means of XRD, SEM with EBSD and TEM. The hydrides represent and new class of U materials, which exhibit, irrespective of details of composition or crystal structure, strong ferromagnetism with relatively very high ordering temperatures, quite surprising at materials at which the inter-U spacing does not exceed appreciably the Hill limit 340-360 pm. At last, the variations using double doping (both Mo and Zr) will be presented.

11:20am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM10 Unraveling the Mystery of Reactively-Sputtered UO(4+x)**, ***David Allred***, *R.S. Turley, B.S. McKeon, A. Diwan, E.A. Scott, R.R. Vanfleet*, Brigham Young University

We recently found EDX and XPS evidence in reactive sputtered uranium oxide thin films of higher oxygen-to-uranium ratios than the 3-to-1 allowed by stoichiometry. We used reactive, DC-magnetron sputtering in 100% oxygen to prepare uranium-oxide thin films on silicon wafer with the highest possible oxygen content to investigate this. Both EDX & XPS showed that the ratio of oxygen-to-uranium in freshly samples was at least 4-to-1, with compositions approached 5 to 1. The potential explanations are uranates or peroxides. Detecting hydrogen- and an element difficult to detect in thin films-is crucial in understanding what is happening chemically. Uranates require cations. The only one possible in our films would be hydrogen. Similarly, bulk uranium peroxides without water/ hydrogen peroxide of hydration are not known. (We have found evidence of uranium trioxide being weekly hygroscopic and stored samples in a dry environment, nonetheless these samples show high oxygen contents as prepared.) We report our chemistry and structural (TEM and XRD) attempts to solve this mystery. We also report are measurement of extreme ultraviolet reflectance of this material. (ALS-beamline 6.3.2)

11:40am **AC+AS+MI+SA+SS-MoM11 Cathodoluminescence and Band Gap Studies of Single Crystal $U_xTh_{1-x}O_2$ (x = 0.00, 0.01, 0.22)**, ***David Turner***, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, *J. Reding, R. Hengehold, T. Kelly,* Air Force Institute of Technology, *J.M. Mann,* Air Force Research Laboratory, *J. Kolis,* Clemson University, *J. Petrosky*, Air Force Institute of Technology

Analyses of depth- and temperature-resolved cathodoluminescence experimental techniques have identified many previously unobserved spectral characteristics in $U_xTh_{1-x}O_2$ compounds grown using a slow growth hydrothermal method. Three $U_xTh_{1-x}O_2$ (x = 0.00, 0.01, 0.22) hydrothermally grown, single crystals were examined using cathodoluminescence. Unique luminescence features were identified as a function of uranium concentration. In the undoped and x = 0.01 $U_xTh_{1-x}O_2$, an electronic phase transition is observed as a 20 nm (0.21 eV) red-shift in the wavelength of maximum emission. This red-shift appears when the crystals are heated during both 5 and 10 keV electron beam irradiation. Conversely, a similar phase transition is not observed in the $U_xTh_{1-x}O_2$ alloy (x = 0.22). Instead, the wavelength of maximum emission remains constant at 305 nm (4.07 eV). Ultimately, the addition of uranium to the ThO_2 lattice increases the band gap of the material which is identified as a 10 nm (0.13 eV) blue shift if the luminescence. Finally, a quadrupole transition is observed in the uranium-containing crystals (O 2p to U 5f) at approximately 600 nm (2.07 eV).

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