

Gang Xiao

Ford Foundation Professor of Physics, Brown University

Gang Xiao is an experimental condensed matter physicist whose research explores the fundamental interplay between magnetism, electronic transport, and disorder in condensed matter systems. His work spans amorphous materials, high-temperature superconductors, and spin-dependent transport in nanostructures, with a consistent focus on uncovering the physical principles governing emergent phenomena in complex materials.

Xiao's early research established key insights into magnetism in disordered and nanoscale systems. Through studies of amorphous alloys and granular materials, he elucidated how magnetic order evolves in the presence of structural disorder, identifying mechanisms of spin glass behavior, magnetic relaxation, and percolation-driven phase transitions. These works contributed to a broader understanding of how reduced dimensionality and disorder fundamentally modify magnetic interactions.

During the formative years of high-temperature superconductivity, Xiao made important contributions to understanding the relationship between electronic structure, disorder, and superconducting behavior in cuprate systems. His work on chemical substitution, carrier density, and magnetic pair-breaking effects helped clarify the microscopic factors controlling superconducting transition temperatures and transport properties. He also contributed to the experimental foundation of universal scaling relations linking superconductivity to carrier dynamics, advancing the physics of strongly correlated electron systems.

Xiao's later research has focused on spin-dependent transport phenomena in magnetic nanostructures. His studies of giant magnetoresistance (GMR) in granular systems provided insight into how spin-dependent scattering emerges from nanoscale heterogeneity and how electronic transport is governed by magnetic correlations. In parallel, his work on complex oxide materials exhibiting colossal magnetoresistance (CMR) revealed rich phase behavior arising from the competition between charge, spin, and lattice degrees of freedom, contributing to the understanding of emergent electronic phases in correlated materials.

Building on these fundamental themes, Xiao has investigated quantum transport and spin-dependent tunneling in magnetic heterostructures, particularly magnetic tunnel junctions (MTJs). His work has explored the microscopic origins of tunneling magnetoresistance, electronic noise, and nonequilibrium transport in nanoscale systems, providing insight into how quantum and thermal fluctuations influence measurable properties.

More recently, his research has examined nanoscale magnetic textures and their dynamics, including vortex states and spatially inhomogeneous energy landscapes. These studies aim to understand how local defects, disorder, and topology shape the energy landscape of condensed matter systems, and how such landscapes can be probed and reconstructed through electronic measurements.

Across these areas, Xiao's work is unified by a central theme: understanding how complex collective behavior emerges from simple microscopic interactions in real, imperfect materials. His contributions have advanced the fundamental physics of disordered magnetism, superconductivity, and spin-dependent transport, while also informing the development of experimental platforms that probe these phenomena with increasing precision.

His research has been widely recognized, with over 23,000 citations (Google Scholar, h-index 74), and publications in leading journals including Nature and Physical Review Letters, reflecting sustained impact on the fundamental understanding of condensed matter systems.