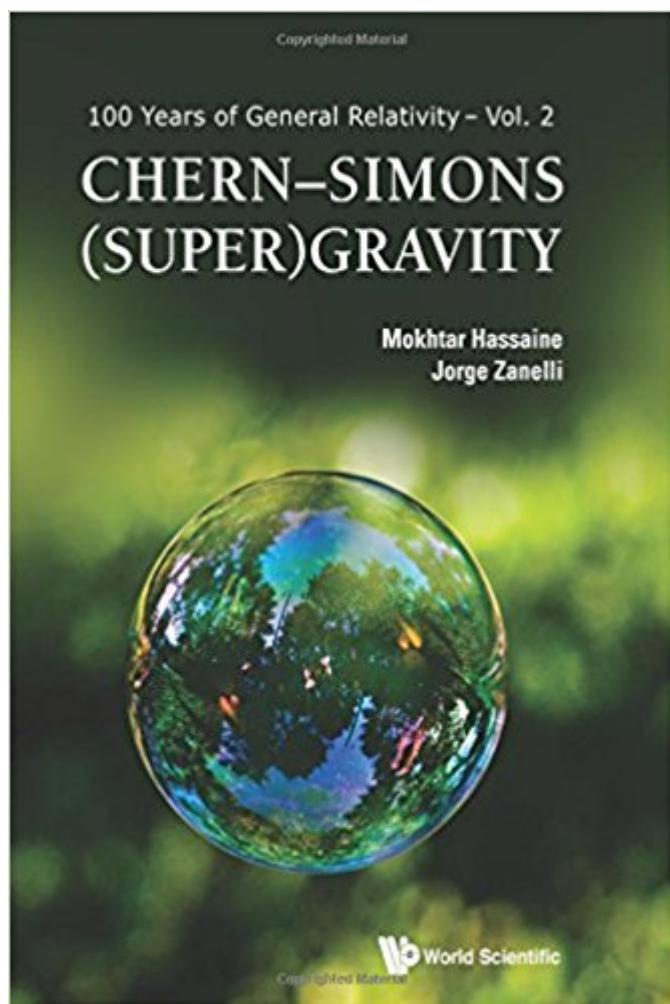


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Chern Simons (Super)Gravity (100 Years Of General Relativity)



Synopsis

This book grew out of a set of lecture notes on gravitational Chern Simons (CS) theories developed over the past decade for several schools and different audiences including graduate students and researchers. CS theories are gauge-invariant theories that can include gravity consistently. They are only defined in odd dimensions and represent a very special class of theories in the Lovelock family. Lovelock gravitation theories are the natural extensions of General Relativity for dimensions greater than four that yield second-order field equations for the metric. These theories also admit local supersymmetric extensions where supersymmetry is an off-shell symmetry of the action, as in a standard gauge theory. Apart from the arguments of mathematical elegance and beauty, the gravitational CS actions are exceptionally endowed with physical attributes that suggest the viability of a quantum interpretation. CS theories are gauge-invariant, scale-invariant and background independent; they have no dimensional coupling constants. All constants in the Lagrangian are fixed rational coefficients that cannot be adjusted without destroying gauge invariance. This exceptional status of CS systems makes them classically interesting to study, and quantum mechanically intriguing and promising.

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