

Abstract

Transition metal-oxide (TMOs) thin-films are commonly used in optoelectronic devices such as in photovoltaics and light emitting diodes, using both organic, inorganic and hybrid technologies. In such devices, TMOs typically act as an interfacial layer, where its functionality is to facilitate hole or electron extraction/injection from or to the active material under interest. The capability of TMOs to facilitate this functionality is very dependent on the work function of the layer, and therefore also the defect density within the film. In this direction, the ability to control the interfacial properties of metal-oxide thin films through surface defect engineering is vital to fine-tune their optoelectronic properties, and thus also their integration in novel optoelectronic devices.

In this work, MoO_x thin-films with various different phases and compositions were prepared by direct-current reactive sputtering. The composition of the films was controlled mainly through the oxygen partial pressure during growth, and crystallization of the amorphous as-deposited films was obtained through ultra high vacuum annealing. The defect band of as-deposited MoO_x films was studied by photoemission spectroscopy and optical absorption, and a very reliable method to extract the composition of the films by Rutherford Backscattering Spectrometry (RBS) was introduced. Importantly, it was demonstrated that very small changes in the oxygen partial pressure during growth leads to large modifications in both the optical and electrical properties of the films. Atomic Force Microscopy (AFM) and Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM) were applied to assess the surface morphology and crystallography of the films.

In this thesis, changes in the electronic properties of the surface upon crystallization of the films were furthermore studied by probing the density of unoccupied states for different MoO_x compositions ($x \sim 2.57$, $x \sim 3.0$ and $x \sim 3.16$) and different annealing temperatures. Interestingly, a work function increase of almost 2 eV upon annealing was observed by constructing 2D surface maps of the work function from Low Energy Electron Microscopy (LEEM) in nearly stoichiometric films, which is interpreted as an induced *in situ* crystallization of the films via post-annealing, as supported by the TEM investigations.

Applications of the reactive sputtered MoO_x thin-films in organic photovoltaic (OPV) devices based on the small molecules DBP and C70 are also covered in this work. The devices show interesting characteristics for very thin layers of the as-deposited MoO_x films, displaying similar device efficiencies as those of *in situ* prepared MoO_x thin-films formed from thermal evaporation. For the annealed MoO_x films, the formation of a nearly stoichiometric phase (Mo₁₈O₅₂) after post

annealing of superoxidized $\text{MoO}_{3.16}$ films, is demonstrated to present an enhanced thermal stability over thermally deposited MoO_x thin-films, and based on the resulting device efficiencies and the high thermal stability, it is assumed that these could become potential candidates for the next generation metal-oxide based electrodes for PV applications. The results presented in this thesis could assist in the future developments and understanding of modified metal-oxide based functional interfaces for optoelectronic devices.

Dansk Résumé

Overgangsmetaloxid tyndfilm anvendes almindeligvis i opto-elektroniske devices såsom i fotovoltaiske og lys-udsendende enheder som er baseret på både organiske, uorganiske samt hybride teknologier. Metaloxiderne anvendes typisk som grænselag i sådanne devices, hvori de faciliterer hul og elektron udtagning/injektion fra eller til det aktive materiale under interesse. Metaloxiders evne til at facilitere denne funktionalitet er meget afhængig af materialets løsrivelsesarbejde, og derfor også defekt densiteten i lagene. I denne retning er evnen til at kontrollere metaloxid tyndfilms grænselagsegenskaber gennem overflade defekt modificeringer vitale for at kunne finjustere deres opto-elektroniske egenskaber, og dermed også deres integration i opto-elektroniske devices.

I dette arbejde er MoO_x tyndfilm blevet fremstillet med flere forskellige faser og kemiske sammensætninger gennem direkte-strøm reaktiv sputtering. Sammensætningen af filmene er hovedsageligt blevet kontrolleret gennem ilt partialtrykket i vækstprocessen, og krystallisering af de amorfte film er blevet opnået gennem ultrahøj vakuum opvarmning. Defekt båndet for de amorfte MoO_x film er blevet studeret gennem fotoemissions spektroskopi samt optisk absorption, og en meget pålidelig metode til at udtrække den kemiske sammensætning af filmene gennem Rutherford Tilbagesprednings Spektroskopi (RBS) er blevet introduceret. Som en vigtig del af arbejdet er det blevet demonstreret, at meget små ændringer i ilt partialtrykket gennem vækst fører til store modifikationer af lagenes optiske og elektriske egenskaber. Atomar Kraft Mikroskopi (AFM) og Transmission Elektron Mikroskopi (TEM) er blevet anvendt til at evaluere filmenes overflademorfologi og krystallografi.

I denne afhandling blev ændringer i de elektroniske egenskaber af lagene gennem krystallisering desuden undersøgt ved at probe densiteten af de ledige tilstande for forskellige MoO_x sammensætninger ($x \sim 2.57$, $x \sim 3.0$ and $x \sim 3.16$) og forskellige opvarmningstemperaturer. En forøgning af løsrivelsesarbejdet på op til 2 eV efter opvarmning blev fundet ved at konstruere et 2D overfladekort af løsrivelsesarbejdet vha. Lav Energy Elektron Mikroskopi (LEEM) i næsten

støkiometriske lag, hvilket er resultatet af en induceret krystallisering af lagene gennem opvarmning, hvilket understøttes af TEM undersøgelerne.

Anvendelse af de reaktiv sputteret MoO_x lag i organiske solceller (OPV) baseret på de små molekyler DBP og C70 er også gennemgået i dette arbejde. Devicene viser interessante karakteristika for meget tynde lag af de ikke opvarmede MoO_x film, som opnår samme device effektiviteter som MoO_x film fremstillet vha. termisk opvarmning. For de opvarmede MoO_x lag vises det, at formation af en næsten støkiometrisk fase ($\text{Mo}_{18}\text{O}_{52}$) efter opvarmning af superoxiderede $\text{MoO}_{3.16}$ lag giver en forstærket termisk stabilitet sammenlignet med termisk pådampede MoO_x lag, og baseret på de resulterende device effektiviteter samt på den høje termiske stabilitet antages det, at disse kunne blive potentielle kandidater til den næste generations metal-oxid baserede elektroder indenfor PV teknologi. Resultaterne vist i denne afhandling kan assistere i den fremtidige udvikling og forståelse af modificerede metal-oxid baseret funktionelle grænselag indenfor optoelektroniske devices.