Low Conductivity Thermal Barrier Coatings

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Abstract

Thermal barrier coatings will be more aggressively designed to protect gas turbine engine hot-section components in order to meet future engine higher fuel efficiency and lower emission goals. A fundamental understanding of sintering and thermal cycling degradation of thermal barrier coating systems under engine high-heat-flux conditions will provide insights into how to further maximize the coating capabilities. In this presentation, thermal barrier coating development considerations and requirements will be discussed. An experimental approach is established to monitor in real time the thermal conductivity of the coating systems subjected to high-heat-flux, steady-state and cyclic temperature gradients. It is demonstrated that the increasing and decreasing trends in thermal conductivity can be closely related to the coating sintering and subsequent delaminations. Advanced low conductivity thermal barrier coatings have also been developed using a multi-component defect clustering approach, and shown to have significantly improved thermal stability due to nano-sized and low mobility defect clusters associated with the paired rare earth dopant additions. The durability and erosion resistance of low conductivity thermal barrier coatings have been improved utilizing advanced coating architecture design, composition optimization, in conjunction with more sophisticated modeling and design tools.
**Motivation**

Thermal and environmental barrier coatings (T/EBCs) can significantly increase gas temperatures, reduce cooling requirements, and improve engine fuel efficiency and reliability.

**Revolutionary Ceramic Coatings Greatly Impact Gas Turbine Engine Technology**

Ceramic coatings are critical to future engine efficiency, power density, and compactness goals.

**NASA UEET Goals**

- 70% NOx reduction
- 8-15% increase in efficiency
- 8-15% reduction in CO2
OBJECTIVES

- Thermal barrier coating high-heat-flux testing
  - Conductivity measurements and coating degradation evaluation
  - Sintering and failure mechanisms

- Low conductivity thermal barrier coating development
  - Requirements and design considerations
  - Advanced oxide defect cluster coatings

- The 3000 °F (1650 °C) thermal and environmental barrier coatings for SiC/SiC ceramic matrix composites
  - Coating concept
  - Radiation conductivity evaluation
  - Advanced 3000 °F (1650 °C) coating durability evaluation

- Thermal barrier coating high-heat-flux testing

- Low conductivity thermal barrier coating development

- The 3000 °F (1650 °C) thermal and environmental barrier coatings for SiC/SiC ceramic matrix composites
Conventional 0.3 Mach Burner Rig

- Thermal barrier coating burner testing: relatively low heat flux ~20 W/cm²

High Heat-Flux Test Approaches

- Oxy-fuel torch (GEAE), plasma torch (Westinghouse) and CO₂ laser (NASA, Purdue) high heat flux rigs are being used to assess coating failure mechanisms and durability
NASA CO₂ Laser High-Heat-Flux Test Approach

- A uniform laser (wavelength 10.6 µm) power distribution achieved using an integrating lens
- Real time conductivity measurements by monitoring the ceramic surface and substrate temperatures at given heat flux

Thermal Conductivity Measurement by a Laser High-Heat-Flux Approach

\[ k_{\text{ceramic}}(t) = \frac{q_{\text{delivered}}}{\Delta T_{\text{ceramic}}(t)} \]

Where

\[ q_{\text{delivered}} = q_{\text{thru}} - q_{\text{reflected}} - q_{\text{radiated}} \]

\[ \Delta T_{\text{ceramic}}(t) = T_{\text{ceramic}} - T_{\text{substrate-back}} - \int \left( \frac{q_{\text{thru}}}{k_{\text{substrate}}(T)} \right) dt \]

8 µm pyrometer for \( T_{\text{ceramic-surface}} \)

Optional miniature thermocouple for additional heat-flux calibration
Laser Heat Flux Testing in Water Vapor Environments for Si-Based Ceramics/Coatings

- Laser heat flux “steam” rig
  - Precise control of heat fluxes and temperatures
  - High temperature and high heat flux testing capabilities
  - Innovative “micro-steam environment” concept
  - Real-time specimen health monitoring capability

Laser High Heat Flux Combustor and Turbine Airfoil Rigs

- Emphasize realistic temperatures, heat flux and stresses
Baseline ZrO₂-(7-8) wt%Y₂O₃ Thermal Barrier Coating Systems

- Relatively low intrinsic thermal conductivity ~2.5 W/m-K
- High thermal expansion to better match superalloy substrates
- Good high temperature stability and mechanical properties
- Additional conductivity reduction by micro-porosity

(a) Plasma-sprayed coating

(b) EB-PVD coating

Thermal Conductivity Increase Kinetics of Plasma-Sprayed ZrO₂-8wt%Y₂O₃ Coatings

- The conductivity reduction by microcracks and micro-porosity can not persist under high temperatures due to coating sintering
- The coating durability can be affected by sintering
**Elastic Modulus of Free-Standing Plasma-Sprayed ZrO$_2$-8wt%Y$_2$O$_3$**

The coating “elastic modulus” also increases significantly with annealing and sintering.

**Constitutive relation**

**Thermal Conductivity Response of Plasma-Sprayed ZrO$_2$-8wt%Y$_2$O$_3$ Coatings under Thermal Gradients**

Sintered coating delamination under thermal cycling.
ZrO₂-8wt%Y₂O₃/Mullite+BSAS/Si System under Steady-State Heat-Flux Testing

- Plasma-sprayed ZrO₂-8wt%Y₂O₃/mullite+BSAS TEBC system on SiC/SiC tested at 1482 °C (2700 °F)
- Coating delaminates at temperature due to sintering/creep

T_{\text{surface}}=1482°C
T_{\text{interface}}=1250°C

Measured thermal conductivity
Predicted thermal conductivity

 Conductivity reduction due to sintering cracking induced delamination cracking
After 20h testing

Sintering Cracks and Delaminations

- High heat flux surface sintering cracking and resulting coating delaminations


T_{\text{surface}}=1280°C
T_{\text{interface}}=1095°C
Thickness=130 µm

Increased Surface Sintering under Pulsed Heat Flux

— More severe surface sintering expected under pulsed heat flux

Surface Sintering Cracks and Delamination Under Pulsed Heat Flux Conditions

— Surface sintering, cracking and delaminations under pulsed heat flux
• Thermal barrier coating high-heat-flux testing

- Low conductivity thermal barrier coating development

• The 3000 °F (1650 °C) thermal and environmental barrier coatings for SiC/SiC ceramic matrix composites

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**Low Conductivity Thermal Barrier Coating Design Requirements**

— Low conductivity ("1/2" of the baseline) retained under thermal gradient

— Improved sintering resistance and phase stability

— Better durability and mechanical properties
  • Cyclic life
  • Erosion/impact resistance

— Preferably use existing infrastructure and easy processing systems

— Other design considerations
  • Favorable optical properties
  • Suitable for various metal and ceramic components
  • Affordable and safe
Low Conductivity Thermal Barrier Coating
Design Approaches

- Many efforts on modifying coating microstructures and porosity, composite TBCs, or alternative oxide compounds
- Emphasize ZrO₂ or HfO₂-based alloy systems – defect cluster approach
- Advantages of defect cluster approach
  - Advanced design approach: design of the defect clustering at the molecular level
  - Better thermal stability: point defects are thermodynamically stable
  - Improved sintering resistance: effective defect concentration reduced and activation energies increased by clustering
  - Easy to fabricate: plasma-sprayed or EB-PVD processes

Toughness Consideration

- The alloy based systems have higher fracture toughness than oxide compounds such as perovskite and pyrochlore oxides

Development of Advanced Defect Cluster Low Conductivity Thermal Barrier Coatings

— Multi-component oxide defect clustering approach (Zhu and Miller, US Patent No. 6,812,176)

\[ \text{e.g.: } \text{ZrO}_2\cdot\text{Y}_2\text{O}_3\cdot\text{Nd}_2\text{O}_3\cdot\text{Gd}_2\text{O}_3\cdot\text{Sc}_2\text{O}_3 \]

Oxide cluster dopants with distinctive ionic sizes

— Defect clusters associated with dopant segregation

— The 5 to 100 nm size defect clusters for significantly reduced thermal conductivity and improved stability

Defect Clusters in a Plasma-Sprayed Y\(_2\)O\(_3\), Nd\(_2\)O\(_3\) and Yb\(_2\)O\(_3\) Co-Doped ZrO\(_2\) Thermal Barrier Coating

— Yb, Nd rich regions consisting of small clusters with size of 5 to 20 nm

EELS elemental maps of EB-PVD ZrO\(_2\)-14mol% (Y, Gd, Yb)\(_2\)O\(_3\)
Low Conductivity Defect Cluster Coatings
Demonstrated Improved Thermal Stability

- Thermal conductivity significantly reduced at high temperatures for the low conductivity thermal barrier coatings
- Phase stability also improved

![Plasma-sprayed coatings](chart1)

ZrO$_2$-4.55mol%Y$_2$O$_3$ (ZrO$_2$-8wt%Y$_2$O$_3$)
rate increase: $2.65 \times 10^{-6}$ W/m-K-s

ZrO$_2$-13.5mol%(Y,Nd,Yb)$_2$O$_3$
rate increase: $2.9 \times 10^{-7}$ W/m-K-s

![Thermal Conductivity of Dense Monolithic Specimens](chart2)

- Lower conductivity observed for the N1 composition that has only slightly higher Gd, Yb concentrations

![Baseline ZrO$_2$-4.5mol%Y$_2$O$_3$](chart3)

ZrO$_2$-10mol%(Y,Gd,Yb)$_2$O$_3$

- N1-1
- N1-6-1
- N1-6-2
- N1-6-3
- N1-11-1
- N1-11-2,3
- N2-5-1
- N2-5-2
- N2-8-1
- N2-8-2,3

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Advantages of Four-Component Defect Cluster Low Conductivity Coating Approach Demonstrated

The coatings showed significantly lower thermal conductivity compared to two- or three-component systems under higher temperatures.

Thermal Conductivity of Oxide Defect Cluster Coatings Tested at Higher Temperatures

Cubic and t’ phase coatings showed lower thermal conductivity than baseline ZrO₂-8wt%Y₂O₃. Both composition regions are important for various applications.
The cubic-phase ZrO$_2$-based low conductivity TBC durability can be further improved by an 8YSZ or low k t'-phase interlayer. The t'-phase low conductivity TBCs achieved at least baseline 8YSZ life.

**Advanced Low Conductivity Coatings Showed Excellent High Temperature Cyclic Durability**

The low conductivity turbine airfoil thermal barrier coatings successfully tested under simulated engine thermal gradient cyclic conditions.
Advanced 2800 to 3000 °F Low Conductivity Coatings
Developed for Metallic Combustor Applications

- The low conductivity combustor coatings showed better performance than baseline coating at the 2700 to 2800 °F
- The 3000 °F (1650 °C) capable ZrO₂ and HfO₂ based combustor thermal barrier coatings also successfully developed

![Graph showing thermal conductivity over time for various coatings.]

Development of Advanced Erosion Resistant Turbine Blade Thermal Barrier Coatings

- High toughness, multi-component defect cluster erosion resistant low conductivity thermal barrier coatings also under development

![Graph showing erosion and impact resistance for different coatings.]

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Advanced Impact/Erosion Resistant Thermal Barrier Coatings

— Improved toughness and strain tolerance

Burner rig erosion and impact test results at 2200 °F

- Thermal barrier coating high-heat-flux testing

- Low conductivity thermal barrier coating development

- The 3000 °F (1650 °C) thermal and environmental barrier coatings for SiC/SiC ceramic matrix composites
Advanced 3000 °F (1650 °C) Coatings For SiC/SiC CMCs

- Low thermal conductivity
- High temperature stability
- Excellent thermal stress resistance
- Enhanced radiative flux resistance and radiation cooling
- Improved environmental protection
- Designed functional capability

Coating Radiation Performance Evaluation and Radiation Barrier Coatings Development

- Radiation conductivity evaluated using the laser heat flux approach
- Significant conductivity increase due to increased radiation at high temperatures especially under thermal gradients
Evaluation of Radiation Thermal Conductivity of T/EBC Systems at High Temperatures

- Advanced HfO₂ coatings demonstrated improved radiation resistance compared to the baseline ZrO₂-8wt%Y₂O₃ coating.

Advanced 3000 °F (1649 °C) Coatings Development for SiC/SiC Combustor Liner and Vane Applications

- The hafnia (zirconia) top coating/modified mullite intermediate layer systems demonstrated excellent cyclic durability and radiation resistance at 1650 °C (3000 °F).
- Advanced high temperature ceramic bond coats also developed.

Sintering and cyclic durability evaluations:

Normalized thermal conductivity \( k/k_0 \)

- \( k_0 \) is the initial thermal conductivity.

Time, hours

- Tsurface=1650 °C, Tinterface=1316 °C

3100°F coatings

Modified mullite nano-composite intermediate coating
Summary and Conclusions

- High-heat-flux testing approaches established for low conductivity thermal barrier coating development
- Real-time monitoring of coating thermal conductivity demonstrated as an effective technique to assess coating performance
- The low conductivity thermal barrier coatings demonstrated improved thermal stability and cyclic durability
- High toughness, erosion resistant turbine airfoil thermal barrier coating development showed significant progress
- Advanced 1650 °C (3000 °F) thermal/environmental systems developed for Si-based ceramics
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