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Authors
Liu, Y
Tom, K
Wang, X
et al.

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Dynamic Control of Optical Response in Layered Metal Chalcogenide Nanoplates

Yanping Liu,† Kyle Tom,‡ Xi Wang,† Chunming Huang,† Hongtao Yuan,§,‖ Hong Ding,⊥ Changhyun Ko,∥ Joonki Suh,⊥ Lawrence Pan,† Kristin A. Persson,‖⊥ and Jie Yao†,∥

†Department of Materials Science and Engineering, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, United States
‡Materials Sciences Division and ³Environmental Energy Technologies Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, California 94720, United States
§Geballe Laboratory for Advanced Materials, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305, United States
‖Stanford Institute for Materials and Energy Sciences, SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Menlo Park, California 94025, United States

Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Tunable optical transitions in ultrathin layered 2-dimensional (2D) materials unveil the electronic structures of materials and provide exciting prospects for potential applications in optics and photonics. Here, we present our realization of dynamic optical modulation of layered metal chalcogenide nanoplates using ionic liquid (IL) gating over a wide spectral range. The IL gating significantly increased the tuning range of the Fermi level and, as a result, substantially altered the optical transitions in the nanoplates. Using heavily n-doped Bi2Se3 nanoplates, we substantially modulated the light transmission through the ultrathin layer. A tunable, high-transmission spectral window in the visible to near-infrared region has been observed due to simultaneous shifts of both the plasma edge and absorption edge of the material. On the other hand, optical response of multilayer MoSe2 flakes gated by IL has shown enhanced transmission in both positive and negative biases, which is consistent with their ambipolar electrical behavior. The electrically controlled optical property tuning in metal chalcogenide material systems provides new opportunities for potential applications, such as wide spectral range optical modulators, optical filters, and electrically controlled smart windows with extremely low material consumption.

KEYWORDS: Dynamic optical tuning, 2D materials, metal chalcogenides, ionic liquid gating

The emergence of two-dimensional (2D) layered structure materials beyond graphene have opened new scenarios in the exploration of low-dimensional electronic systems.1–6 These materials, such as hexagonal-boron nitride (h-BN)7,8 and transition metal dichalcogenides (TMDCs),9–14 are formed from weak van der Waals interaction between layers and strong covalent bonding within each layer. The rich spectrum of properties in 2D layered structure crystals has created exciting prospects for potential applications in valleytronics,15–18 nonlinear optics, sensing,19–20 and transparent electrodes.21,22 Bismuth selenide (Bi2Se3), one of these layered 2D materials, has been shown to be a topological insulator (TI), characterized by its band insulator behavior in the bulk and gapless linear energy dispersion relationship at the sample boundary that is a result of unbroken time-reversal symmetry.23–27 Recently, some research groups have reported that the optoelectronic properties in Bi2Se3 can be modified via bulk doping,28 intercalation,29–31 and surface deposits.32,33 The dramatic changes in Bi2Se3 optical properties have attracted particular interest in this material system. However, such processes have to be done in the material preparation stage, and the material’s optical properties cannot be changed once an optical device has been made. Dynamic electrical control of the optical properties of layered metal chalcogenides in the visible spectrum has not been reported yet. This is attributed to the difficulty of tuning the Fermi level and carrier density of the chalcogenides over a wide range via traditional electrical gating approaches. To overcome these obstacles, we employed an electric-double-layer (EDL) gating technique at room temperature to dynamically tune the optical properties in layered structure materials from infrared to visible wavelengths. The dynamic optical modulation induced by the EDL gating can be used in potential applications that would not be suitable for the intercalation technique, including wide spectral range optical modulators and large-area electrically controlled smart windows. Since the gating technique is electrically controlled, the devices can easily be controlled using a light sensor and a battery source.

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EDL gating using ionic liquids (ILs) as the gate dielectric has been shown to substantially tune the electronic states and the Fermi energy ($E_F$) of semiconductors. Compared to using oxide dielectrics, this technique offers lower-power and larger carrier concentration tuning. When a gate voltage ($V_G$) is applied to the electrodes, an electric double layer (EDL) is generated at the liquid/solid interface after the ionic redistribution, creating a huge capacitance caused by nanogap capacitors. The capacitance of the EDLs exceeds $10 \mu\text{F/cm}^2$, meaning that it can accumulate or deplete larger quantities of charge carriers at the surface of the sample more effectively than an oxide dielectric FET under the same $V_G$. This improvement can lead to advancements in electrostatic modulation of interfacial electronic states, such as electric-field-induced superconductivity in ZrNCl and SrTiO$_3$. The unprecedented gating power of ionic liquids enabled us to realize dynamic enhancement and reduction of optical transmission through Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates by applying positive and negative gate voltages, respectively, which will be shown in the following sections. Similar dynamic tuning of optical properties was also observed in other layered-structured TMDC materials, such as MoSe$_2$. The lightly doped MoSe$_2$, in contrast to the Bi$_2$Se$_3$, shows an optical tuning behavior regardless of the sign of the gate voltage, which is consistent with its ambipolar electrical properties. Our observation indicates that the IL gating (ILG) technique not only provides a powerful method for modulating the electronic transport and other physical properties in materials such as Bi$_2$Se$_3$, but also simplifies device fabrication and reduces energy consumption. The unique EDL gating mechanism based on ion migration and EDL formation allows the gate electrode to be far away from the gated material, which completely removes the light-blocking metal gate that would normally be above the material in traditional gate configurations and provides great advantages for optical measurements and photonic device designs.

Results. Material Preparation and Characterization. Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates were synthesized using solvothermal synthesis with details provided in the Methods section. The thickness of the nanoplates range from several to tens of nanometers. Their lateral dimensions may go up to 80 μm, which is larger than other reported results for solvothermal synthesis and provides a good platform for studying optical properties. An optical image of a typical Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplate on a Si/SiO$_2$ (300 nm) substrate is shown in Figure 1a. The lateral size of the nanoplate is around 50 μm. Its thickness was measured using atomic force microscopy (AFM) as shown in Figure 1b. Figure 1c shows a line profile of the nanoplate from Figure 1b and indicates that the thickness of the nanoplate is around 11 nm. AFM results of multiple nanoplates with different thicknesses were shown in Supplementary Figure S1. To confirm the identity of the grown nanoplates, we carried out Raman spectroscopy (Supplementary Figure S2). The three clear characteristic peaks located at $\sim71$ cm$^{-1}$, $\sim131$ cm$^{-1}$, and $\sim173$ cm$^{-1}$ are in excellent agreement with the reported Raman spectrum of Bi$_2$Se$_3$. To better identify the elements of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates, scanning electron microscope-energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (SEM-EDS) element mapping of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates was performed and is shown in Figure 1d (Se) and Figure 1e (Bi). The electron diffraction results (shown in Figure S3b) further demonstrate the single crystalline nature of the nanoplates. To study the optical modulation in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates controlled with EDL gating, optical spectral measurements were carried out to characterize individual nanoplates with and
without ILG. Figure 1f shows a sketch of the device configuration using EDL for gate modulation. A voltage is applied between a gold gate electrode and the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplate. The cover glass is used to ensure uniform EDL thickness to reduce lensing and effects from liquid motion after application. The arrow indicates the propagation direction of light through the device. The IL utilized in this experiment was N-diethyl-N-(2-methoxyethyl)-N-methylammonium bis-( trifluoromethylsulfonyl)-imide ([DEME]$_2$[TFSI]), an imidazolium-based compound which exhibits rather high ionic conductivity and is widely used in EDL devices. It has a very wide transparent window from visible to mid-IR, which covers the complete frequency range of interest. We have placed a droplet of IL on both a gold electrode and a Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplate with an electrode attached to generate the Au/IL/Bi$_2$Se$_3$/Au configuration shown in Figure 1d. The device dimensions between source and drain electrodes are $W = 50 \, \mu m$ in width and $L = 30 \, \mu m$ in length. The entire device is completely covered by the IL droplet. Applying the IL as the dielectric for EDL transistors (EDLTs) on the surface of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoparticles subsequently allows us to dynamically modulate its electronic states and $E_F$. Figure 2a shows a schematic diagram of the electron accumulation case in Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoparticles. As shown in Figure 2a, when a positive gate voltage is applied, electrons will accumulate at the nanoplate’s interface with the IL. An EDL will then form at the interface, and the corresponding Fermi level will rise. A negative gate voltage, on the other hand, will lower the Fermi level in the gated material.

EDL gating impacts the optical response of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ profoundly even in the visible frequency range. Figure 2b shows the transmission spectra of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoparticles with and without EDL gating between 400 and 900 nm. Without an applied gate voltage, the optical transmission is relatively low for the device, about 40%. In contrast, the transmission increases dramatically for all visible wavelengths when positive gate voltages are applied. For example, at a gate voltage of 1.5 V, the transmission increases to around 70% in most of the visible range, meaning that Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates become much more transparent. On the other hand, when a negative gate voltage is applied, the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates become highly opaque. The transmission decreases to around 20% in most of the visible range after applying a gate voltage of $-1.5$ V. Figure 2c shows transmission mode optical images of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates with thicknesses around 15 nm. The observed results clearly demonstrate the optical modulation behavior in layered structure Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates via EDL gating.

Analysis and Discussion. A key feature of this work is that the free carriers induced by the EDL gating modify the conductivity of the materials, which also significantly alters their optical properties. Figure 3a and b shows the transmission and...
reflection spectra of a Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplate under EDL gating in the near-infrared range. In the optical spectrum, the short wavelength (i.e., $\lambda < 2.5 \, \mu m$) absorption edge cutoff corresponds to the fundamental optical gap of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates, and the long wavelength (i.e., $\lambda > 2.5 \, \mu m$) edge corresponds to the free carrier plasma resonance frequency. To better analyze the experimental results, we plot the transmission and reflection values as a function of the EDL voltage at the fixed wavelengths of $\lambda = 1.5 \, \mu m$ and $\lambda = 3.5 \, \mu m$, as shown in Figure 4a and b, which show that the optical transmission and reflection values depend strongly on the EDL voltage. The figures also show the contrasting behavior between short wavelength $\lambda = 1.5 \, \mu m$ and long wavelength $\lambda = 3.5 \, \mu m$ trends. For example, the transmission value increases with increasing EDL voltage at $\lambda = 1.5 \, \mu m$, but at long wavelengths the transmission decreases, indicating that there are two optical processes in effect due to the EDL gating modulation.

These trends can be explained with the Drude model, which makes a direct connection between the optical responses of conducting materials and their electronic states. According to this model, the modulated relative permittivity $\varepsilon$ can be written as

$$\varepsilon = \varepsilon_\infty - \frac{\omega_p^2}{\omega^2 + i \omega \Gamma} = \varepsilon_\infty + \frac{i \omega_p^2 \tau}{\omega(1 - i \omega \tau)} = \varepsilon_r + i \varepsilon_i = (n + ik)^2$$

where $\varepsilon_\infty$ is the high-frequency dielectric constant, $\Gamma = 1/\tau$ is the damping constant of the free electron plasma, and $\tau$ is the relaxation time of the electrons. The plasma resonance frequency is given by $\omega_p^2 = (Ne^2)/(m^*\varepsilon_0)$, where $N$ is the free carrier concentration, $m^*$ is the effective mass of electrons, and $n$ and $k$ are the optical constants which determine the reflection and absorption spectra of the material.

It is worthwhile to consider the Drude model in eq 1 in two limiting cases: low and high frequencies. In the low frequency regime ($\omega \tau \ll 1$), the free carrier term in eq 1 shows a $1/\omega$ dependence as $\omega \rightarrow 0$, indicating that this term dominates in the low frequency limit and the material is a perfect reflector at low frequencies. However, in the high frequency response limit ($\omega \tau \gg 1$), the $1/\omega^2$ dependence of the free carrier contribution becomes less important, and other mechanisms will dominate. Thus, at the high frequency limit ($\omega \gg 1$), the free carrier contribution can be neglected, and the material behaves like a dielectric.$^{42}$

In our case ($1 < \omega \tau < \omega_p \tau$), the free carrier contribution plays an important role in the optical properties of Bi$_2$Se$_3$. The plasma frequency is the characteristic frequency at which the material changes from a metallic to a dielectric optical response, which occurs at the frequency at which the real part of the relative permittivity vanishes, $\text{Re}(\varepsilon) = 0$. The plasma frequency ($\omega_p = (Ne^2)/(m^*\varepsilon_0)$) is dependent on the free carrier concentration and inversely dependent on the effective mass of the free carriers. The plasma edge of a material refers to the region near its plasma frequency, where its reflectivity increases significantly with increasing incident wavelength.$^{52}$ The Drude model predicts that the plasma edge will shift to shorter wavelengths due to a positive EDL modulation of the free carrier concentration.

As shown in Figure 3, the reflection and transmission spectra show a substantial blue shift of the plasma edge induced by the positive EDL modulation. Such behavior provides direct...
evidence of the increasing amount of free electrons inside the materials induced by the EDL, which is consistent with the Drude model we described above. We applied the Drude model to our measured results, and it was found to perfectly fit with the experimental data at long wavelengths (Supplementary Figure S4). The value of the plasma frequency can be obtained from the numerical fitting of each curve. As shown in Figure 4c, the plasma frequency is nonlinearly dependent on the EDL voltage due to free electron concentration and effective mass changes induced by the evolution of the Fermi level within the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates. For example, the plasma frequency reaches $\omega_p = 3.12 \times 10^{13}$/s with best fit parameters $\epsilon_{\infty} = 9.1$ and $\Gamma = 2.1 \times 10^{14}$/s, at the bias voltage $V_G = 1.5$V. The corresponding electron carrier density can be calculated from the plasma frequency, which yields an extremely high electron concentration on the order of $10^{26}$ cm$^{-3}$. This level of electron concentration modulation is one of the great advantages of using the EDL gating with 2D material systems. To further study the dynamic optical response of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates under EDL modulation, we calculate the relative permittivity ($\epsilon$) of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ under the bias of the EDL voltage (seen in Figure S5). Im($\epsilon$) dramatically increases with increasing plasma frequency. This is expected from the Drude model when the carrier density is extremely high. Such behavior further confirms the increasing amount of free electrons induced by the EDL inside the materials.

The second effect of the free carrier density modulation is to significantly shift the absorption edge. The absorption edge originates from the onset of optical transitions across the fundamental band gap of a material, which manifests at short wavelengths as a significant increase in the transmission with increasing incident wavelength. The optical modulation behavior of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates from visible to near-infrared is mainly caused by a substantially altered dynamic optical bandgap, which is a result of the large free electron concentration modulation in the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates via EDL gating. This phenomenon is known as the Burstein–Moss shift. As the electron concentration increases, the Fermi level of the material rises into the conduction band, and empty states at the band edge become unavailable. Therefore, optical transitions to the bottom of the conduction band are less likely to occur, resulting in an increased effective bandgap.

For a quantitative study of the correlation between Fermi level shift and EDL voltage, we computed the electronic structure of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ using density functional theory (DFT). Assuming EDL gating voltages do not significantly alter the density of states (DOS) shape around the conduction band minimum, we calculated the corresponding Fermi level energy from experimentally derived carrier densities. As shown in Figure 3c, our calculations estimated an increase of the Fermi level energy by 0.34 eV when the bias changes from $-1.5$ to 1.5 V. It can be seen that, when the EDL is unbiased, the Fermi level is located inside the conduction band due to the heavily n-doped nature of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates (middle panel in Figure 3c). While the EDL is positively biased, more electrons will accumulate at the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplate surface, and the increased effective bandgap leads to a blue shift of the absorption edge. A negative bias can lower the Fermi level by reducing the free electron concentration, which frees more low energy optical transitions and shifts the absorption edge to lower energies. This is shown in the near-infrared part of the experimental spectra in Figure 3a and b, providing direct evidence of the optical modulation behavior we observed in the experiments. It is noted that the number of lines in the band structure varies due to subband formation. However, our previous research confirmed that, based on the density of states (DOS) calculation, the energy separation scale in the subbands is too small to affect the optical measurements. The measured onset of the absorption as a function of gate voltage is also shown in Figure 4d. The blue shift of the transmission maximum positions is consistent with the increase in the effective bandgap derived from carrier concentration calculations.

To better demonstrate the universal nature of the EDL technique, we performed similar gating experiments on another layered-structured TMD material, MoSe$_2$. Dynamic tuning of optical properties was also observed in MoSe$_2$ flakes over similar gating voltages. Modulated transmission spectra of the layered structure MoSe$_2$ flakes (thickness: ~30 nm) in the near-infrared region are shown in Figure 5a and b with an applied positive and negative voltage, respectively. In contrast to the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates, the Burstein–Moss shift in multilayer MoSe$_2$ involves both electrons (conduction band) and holes (valence band), as illustrated in Figure 5c. The Fermi level is located in the bandgap for lightly n-doped MoSe$_2$ flakes without any bias (middle panel in Figure 5c) but lies within the conduction band with a positive gate voltage (top diagram in Figure 5c). On the other hand, when the gate is negatively biased, holes will accumulate in the MoSe$_2$ flakes. The Fermi level will then lie within the valence band (VB) (bottom panel in Figure 5c). The increased free electron (hole) density induced by EDL gating results in moving the Fermi level into the conduction (valence) band. In either case, the effective bandgap will be increased, in contrast to the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ behavior. The gating

Figure 4. Optical properties of Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates as functions of ILG voltage. Transmission (a) and reflection (b) values of a Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplate as functions of the ILG voltage at the short wavelength of $\lambda = 1.5$ $\mu$m and the long wavelength of $\lambda = 3.5$ $\mu$m. (c). Plasma frequency extracted from the experimental results based on the Drude model. (d). Experimentally measured onsets of absorption (maximum transmission value) and calculated direct optical transition energies near the Fermi level (effective bandgap) as functions of the ILG voltage. The blue empty circles are the experimentally measured onsets of absorption, and the red solid circles are calculated direct optical transition energies near the gate controlled Fermi level. The increasing effective bandgap is consistent with the observed blue shift of the transmission maximum position.
induced optical property changes involve the Burstein–Moss shift in either the conduction or valence band, showing a symmetric ambipolar behavior. The observed results indicate that EDL gating can be used to enhance the free carrier concentration to extremely large values in 2D material systems without any chemical reactions. Because of the simultaneous shift of the absorption edge at short wavelengths and the electron plasma edge at long wavelengths via the applied EDL gate voltage, the modulated optical responses of both Bi$_2$Se$_3$ and MoSe$_2$ exhibit a tunable transparent spectral window in the infrared to visible range. Since the Fermi level shifts due to EDL gating are much larger than shifts caused by regular chemical doping, this technique creates intense optical modulation over a large wavelength range, including visible wavelengths, which can be used for applications that require tunable optical properties. Such behaviors can be observed in other ILs as well.

As shown in Figure 6a, the electronic state changes that cause the above optical effects were also verified by the transport characteristics, i.e., $V_G$ as a function of the source–drain current ($I_{DS}$) of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ device with EDL gating at room temperature. With increasing positive $V_G$, the cations in the EDL accumulate at the top of the thin film surface and induce large amounts of electrons at the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ surface, resulting in an intense increase of the $I_{DS}$ from enhanced electron conduction (shown in Figure 6a). Alternatively, on the condition of a...
negative bias, electrons are depleted in the nanoplate at the interface, meaning that the $I_{SD}$ decreases due to a lower electron concentration. The electric charge accumulation results in an electric field at the interface, which can be used to tune the Fermi level and the density of electrons in the surface—electron-accumulation layer at the surface of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ samples.$^{47}$ Figure 6b shows the transfer characteristics of the MoSe$_2$ flakes under EDL gating at room temperature. A typical ambipolar behavior was observed at room temperature, which is consistent with the lightly n-doped nature of MoSe$_2$ flakes. Multiple samples were measured, and similar transfer characteristics were found in each sample (Supplementary Figure S6), showing high reproducibility.

**Conclusion.** In summary, we have observed dynamic optical modulation of ultrathin Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates. Dramatic transmission and reflection changes are achieved in nanoplates as thin as 10 nm. Such drastic optical properties are due to widening of the effective optical band gap enabled by tuning of the electronic states and the $E_F$ of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ samples using EDL gating. A similar dynamic tuning of optical properties in layered-structure MoSe$_2$ further confirms the nature of the optical modulation behavior via the EDL gating technique. The subtle difference in their gating voltage dependence is consistent with the difference of $E_F$ positions inside those two materials. The simultaneous tuning of both absorption edge and plasma edge will lead to potential applications in wide spectral range optical modulators and electrically controlled smart windows. However, currently our devices still operate at relatively low speeds due to the relaxation time for ion motion. In order to overcome the limitation of a low switching rate, further investigations will be needed, such as a dual-gate EDL-FET configuration which may be employed to improve the switching rate in a small tuning range.$^{48}$

**Methods.** Solvothermal Synthesis of Bismuth Selenide Nanoplates and Device Fabrication. Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates were prepared using solvothermal synthesis.$^{49}$ Selenium powder (3 mmol, metal basis) and Bi$_2$O$_3$ powder (1 mmol, metal basis) were dissolved in ethylene glycol (30 mL), followed by the additions of ethylene diamine tetraacetic acid (EDTA, (HO$_2$CCH$_2$)$_2$NCH$_2$CH$_2$N(CH$_2$N(CH$_2$CO$_2$H)$_2$), Alfa Aesar company) powder and high-purity polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP, (C$_n$H$_{2n+1}$NO)$_m$, Alfa Aesar company). The resulting suspension was sonicated and then sealed in a steel autoclave. Afterward, the autoclave was heated in an oven at a temperature of around 200 °C for 24 h and then gradually cooled to room temperature. The resulting black solution was collected by filtration, washed with ethanol several times, and then dried in a vacuum (10$^{-3}$ Torr) oven at 90 °C. The resulting black powder was diluted with ethanol to create a suspension and then deposited on glass substrates using a pipet. The average thickness and lateral size of the nanoplates can be optimized by modifying the concentration of EDTA and temperature. The multilayer MoSe$_2$ flakes were prepared by mechanical exfoliation. The electrical devices were fabricated using photolithography to pattern the electrodes. The nanoplates were then subjected to reactive-ion etching in order to remove any organic residue and surface oxide. E-beam evaporation of 5 nm/100 nm of chromium/gold was used to create the source/drain and gate electrodes. Subsequently, the samples were attached to a chip holder using wire bonding. The thicknesses of the samples were confirmed by AFM measurements, and the thickness of the hexagonal flakes ranged from around 8–22 nm. The chemical identity of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates and quality of multiple MoSe$_2$ flakes were confirmed by Raman spectroscopy (Supplementary Figure S2). To confirm the crystallinity of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates, we also performed transmission electron microscopy (Supplementary Figure S3).

**Optical Transmission, Reflection, and Electric Transport Measurements.** Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates were deposited onto glass substrates by drop-casting. All electron transport property measurements were performed in a standard probe station in air at room temperature. Before the electrical measurements, AFM measurements were used to measure the thickness of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates and multilayer MoSe$_2$ flakes. We measured their optical transmission images and spectra at visible wavelengths under EDL gating effects using a Nikon Eclipse CI-L and Nikon confocal C1 microscope, respectively. The applied gate voltage was provided by a source meter (Keithley-2400). Reflection and transmission spectra at near-infrared regions were measured using a Bruker Hyperion 2000 infrared microscope and IFS-125/HR Fourier transform infrared spectrometer at room temperature. A transparent knife-edge aperture was used to adjust the beam size such that all of the detected transmitted and reflected light was from the nanoplate sample and not from the nearby substrate. All infrared reflection and transmission results are normalized to the reflection of pure gold and transmission of a bare glass substrate, respectively.

**Computational Details.** Density functional theory calculations were carried out with the Vienna ab initio software package (VASP),$^{49}$ using the projector augmented-wave method,$^{50,51}$ and the Perdew–Burke–Ernzerhof (PBE) exchange–correlation functional.$^{52}$ Electronic band structure and density of state analyses were performed based on static calculations of relaxed structure from the Materials Project$^{53}$ with higher $k$-point sampling densities. All data analyses (e.g., band structure, electronic density of state, and carrier concentration analyses) were implemented within the pymatgen python package.$^{54}$

**ASSOCIATED CONTENT**

$^\dagger$ Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.nanolett.5b04140.

Detailed information on the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates synthesis and device fabrication, characterization of the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates, and details about the numerical calculation of the relative permittivity based on the Drude model (PDF)

**AUTHOR INFORMATION**

**Corresponding Author**

E-mail: yaojie@berkeley.edu.

**Author Contributions**

J.Y. and H.Y. conceived the project. Y.L., X.W., and J.Y. designed the experiment. Y.L. and C.H. prepared the Bi$_2$Se$_3$ nanoplates, Y.L., C.K., J.S., and K.T. fabricated the devices. Y.L., X.W., K.T., H.D., and K.A.P. performed DFT calculations and the corresponding analyses, and H.Y. and J.Y. carried out experimental measurements and analyzed the experimental data. All authors contributed to discussions and manuscript revision.

**Notes**

The authors declare no competing financial interest.
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