Special Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

Students are required to take at least five graduate-level courses. No specific curriculum of courses is required, but CBIO 602 (Molecular Cell Biology) is recommended for all students to attain a solid foundation in molecular cell biology. Also recommended is a seminar course, such as CBIO 603 (Seminar in Molecular Cell Biology), in which students can develop the skill for critical analysis of research papers. Students design their own curriculum of courses to meet individual interests and needs, in consultation with the director of graduate studies. During the first year, students participate in three laboratory rotations. In the second year, a committee of faculty members determines whether each student is qualified to continue in the Ph.D. program. There is an oral qualifying examination by the end of the third term. In order to be admitted to candidacy, students must have met the Graduate School Honors requirement, maintained a High Pass average in course work, passed the qualifying examination, submitted an approved prospectus, and received a positive evaluation of their laboratory work from the thesis committee. All students are required to present a talk at the departmental progress report series each year after passing the qualifying exam. The remaining degree requirements include completion of the dissertation project, submission for publication of at least one first-author paper to a peer-reviewed journal describing the dissertation research, the writing of the dissertation and its oral defense, the formal submission of copies of the written dissertation to the Graduate School, and the deposit of an additional copy with the department.

An important aspect of graduate training in cell biology is the acquisition of teaching skills through participation in courses appropriate for the student’s scientific interests. These opportunities can be drawn from a diverse menu of lecture, laboratory, and seminar courses given at the undergraduate, graduate, and medical school levels. Ph.D. students are required to participate in two terms (or the equivalent) of teaching. Students are not expected to teach during their first year.

In addition to all other requirements, students must successfully complete CBIO 900 and CBIO 901 (Research Skills and Ethics I and II) prior to the end of their first year of study. In their fourth year of study, all students must successfully complete B&B 503 (RCR Refresher for Senior BBS Students).
M.D./PH.D. STUDENTS

M.D./Ph.D. students are required to take a total of five graduate-level courses for a grade, including the CBIO 501/CBIO 502 sequence (Molecules to Systems), CBIO 602 (Molecular Cell Biology), and a seminar course that involves the reading and class discussion of research papers. The remaining courses can be in areas such as Genetics, Neuroscience, Immunology, Microbiology, Pharmacology, and Physiology. Students must meet the Graduate School requirement of a grade of Honors in two courses, if necessary taking additional courses beyond the five required in the department to fulfill this requirement. Students must also maintain an average grade of High Pass in all courses. One term of teaching is required.

M.S. DEGREES

M.S. Degree Requirements for the M.S. degree are the same as for admission to candidacy (see above).

M.S. This degree is normally granted only to students who are withdrawing from the Ph.D. program. To be eligible for the degree, a student must have completed at least five graduate-level term courses at Yale, including CBIO 602 (Molecular Cell Biology) and a seminar course, with a grade of Pass and at least one grade of Honors or three of High Pass. In addition to these five courses, the student must have received a Satisfactory grade in the following five courses: CBIO 900 (Research Skills and Ethics I), CBIO 901 (Research Skills and Ethics II), CBIO 911 (First Laboratory Rotation), CBIO 912 (Second Laboratory Rotation), and CBIO 913 (Third Laboratory Rotation). Students who are eligible for or who have already received the M.S. will not be awarded the M.S.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to visit the BBS website (https://medicine.yale.edu/bbs), MCGD and BQJS tracks. Program materials are available upon request to the Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Cell Biology, Yale University, PO Box 208002, New Haven CT 06520-8002.

COURSES

CBIO 501a and CBIO 502b, Molecules to Systems  Peter Takizawa
This full-year course (CBIO 501/CBIO 502) is designed to provide medical students with a current and comprehensive review of biologic structure and function at the cellular, tissue, and organ system levels. Areas covered include structure and organization of cells; regulation of the cell cycle and mitosis; protein biosynthesis and membrane targeting; cell motility and the cytoskeleton; signal transduction; cell adhesion; cell and tissue organization of organ systems. Clinical correlation sessions, which illustrate the contributions of cell biology to specific medical problems, are interspersed in the lecture schedule. Histophysiologic laboratories provide practical experience with an understanding of exploring cell and tissue structure. The course is offered only to M.D. and M.D./Ph.D. students.

CBIO 600a and CBIO 601b, Science at the Frontiers of Medicine  Staff
This full-year graduate seminar (CBIO 600/CBIO 601) for first-year M.D./Ph.D. students—an elective course for M.D. students—matches the progression of topics in the eighteen-month preclinical medical school curriculum and emphasizes the connections between basic and clinical science, human physiology, and disease. It is directed by M.D./Ph.D. program faculty, and many class discussions are led by expert Yale School of Medicine faculty members who select the papers to be read. Students explore scientific topics in depth, learn about cutting-edge research, and improve their presentation skills. The curriculum provides a framework for critically reading and analyzing papers drawn broadly from the biomedical sciences; this breadth of knowledge is also leveraged in team-based exercises that promote peer-to-peer teaching and learning. Enrollment limited to students who have taken or are currently taking CBIO 501/CBIO 502.

CBIO 602a / MB&B 602a / MCDB 602a, Molecular Cell Biology  Thomas Melia, Xiaolei Su, James Rothman, Valerie Horsley, Megan King, Patrick Lusk, Martin Schwartz, Shawn Ferguson, Christopher Burd, Malaiyalam Mariappan, Shaul Yogev, Min Wu, Nadya Dimitrova, and David Breslow
A comprehensive introduction to the molecular and mechanistic aspects of cell biology for graduate students in all programs. Emphasizes fundamental issues of cellular organization, regulation, biogenesis, and function at the molecular level. Prerequisites: none, but some knowledge of basic cell biology and biochemistry is assumed. Students who have not taken courses in these areas can prepare by reading relevant sections in basic molecular cell biology texts. We recommend Pollard et al., Cell Biology (3rd ed., 2016), Alberts et al., Molecular Biology of the Cell (6th ed., 2014), or Lodish et al., Molecular Cell Biology (8th edition, 2016).

CBIO 603a / MCDB 603a, Seminar in Molecular Cell Biology  Megan King, Xiaolei Su, James Rothman, Valerie Horsley, Thomas Melia, Patrick Lusk, Martin Schwartz, Shawn Ferguson, Christopher Burd, Malaiyalam Mariappan, Shaul Yogev, Min Wu, Nadya Dimitrova, and David Breslow
A graduate-level seminar in modern cell biology. The class is devoted to the reading and critical evaluation of classical and current papers. The topics are coordinated with the CBIO 602 lecture schedule. Thus, concurrent enrollment in CBIO 602 is required.

CBIO 604b, Systems Cell Biology  Agnes Vignery
Introduction to the organization and function of cells within complex multicellular systems as encountered in the human body. Covers major tissues and organs as well as the cardiovascular, immune, and nervous systems, with special emphasis on the molecular and cellular bases of developmental processes and human diseases. Lectures supplemented by electronic-based tutorials on the histology of tissues and organs.

CBIO 606b, Advanced Topics in Cell Biology  Xiaolei Su and Julia von Blume
This seminar course, which meets once weekly, covers advanced topics in cell biology. Each topic is spread over two or three sessions, which start with an introductory overview and are followed by a discussion of key papers led by an expert in the field.
CBIO 701b, Illuminating Cellular Function  Derek Toomre
The focus of the course is on the technical treatment of light microscopy and its applications. The course provides biology and bioengineering students with the knowledge and skills necessary to design and undertake advanced light microscopy experiments. It covers conceptual elements of fluorescence microscopy imaging and analysis (without going too heavily into the theory and math); new advances in super-resolution modalities; biological applications; and hands-on practical work. Enrollment limited to fifteen.

CBIO 900a / GENE 900a / MCDB 900a, Research Skills and Ethics I  Shirin Bahmanyar
This course consists of a weekly seminar that covers ethics, writing, and research methods in cellular and molecular biology as well as student presentations ("rotation talks") of work completed in the first and second laboratory rotations.

CBIO 901b / GENE 901b / MCDB 901b, Research Skills and Ethics II  Joerg Bewersdorf
This course consists of a weekly seminar that covers ethics, writing, and research methods in cellular and molecular biology as well as student presentations ("rotation talks") of work completed in the third laboratory rotation.

CBIO 911a / GENE 911a / MCDB 911a, First Laboratory Rotation  Shirin Bahmanyar
First laboratory rotation for Molecular Cell Biology, Genetics, and Development track students.

CBIO 912a / GENE 912a / MCDB 912a, Second Laboratory Rotation  Shirin Bahmanyar
Second laboratory rotation for Molecular Cell Biology, Genetics, and Development track students.

CBIO 913b / GENE 913b / MCDB 913b, Third Laboratory Rotation  Shirin Bahmanyar
Third laboratory rotation for Molecular Cell Biology, Genetics, and Development track students.

CBIO 914b / GENE 914b / MCDB 914b, Fourth Laboratory Rotation  Shirin Bahmanyar
Fourth laboratory rotation for Molecular Cell Biology, Genetics, and Development track students.