COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY AND BIOINFORMATICS

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http://cbb.yale.edu
M.S., Ph.D.

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Associate Professors Chris Cotsapas (Neurology), Forrest Crawford (Public Health), Thierry Emonet (Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology), Steven Kleinstein (Pathology), Yuval Kluger (Pathology), Michael Krauthammer (Pathology), Jun Lu (Genetics), James Noonan (Genetics), Corey O’Hern (Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science; Physics), Jeffrey Townsend (Public Health), Zuoheng (Anita) Wang (Public Health)

Assistant Professors Murat Acar (Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology), Julien Berro (Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry), Damon Clark (Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology), Smita Krishnaswamy (Genetics)

FIELDS OF STUDY

Computational biology and bioinformatics (CB&B) is a rapidly developing multidisciplinary field. The systematic acquisition of data made possible by genomics and proteomics technologies has created a tremendous gap between available data and their biological interpretation. Given the rate of data generation, it is well recognized that this gap will not be closed with direct individual experimentation. Computational and theoretical approaches to understanding biological systems provide an essential vehicle to help close this gap. These activities include computational modeling of biological processes, computational management of large-scale projects, database development and data mining, algorithm development, and high-performance computing, as well as statistical and mathematical analyses.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are expected (1) to have a strong foundation in the basic sciences, such as biology, chemistry, and mathematics, and (2) to have training in computing/informatics, including significant computer programming experience. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test is required, and the GRE Subject Test in Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology; Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science; or other relevant discipline is recommended. Alternatively, the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) may be substituted for the GRE tests. Applicants for whom English is not their native language are required to submit results from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

To enter the Ph.D. program, students apply to an interest-based track within the interdepartmental graduate program in Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BBS), http://bbs.yale.edu.

INTEGRATED GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL AND ENGINEERING BIOLOGY (PEB)

Students applying to one of the interest-based tracks of the Biological and Biomedical Sciences program may simultaneously apply to be part of the PEB program. See the description under Non-Degree-Granting Programs, Councils, and Research Institutes for course requirements, and http://peb.yale.edu for more information about the benefits of this program and application instructions.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

With the help of a faculty advisory committee, each student plans a program that includes courses, seminars, laboratory rotations, and independent reading. Students are expected to gain competence in three core areas: (1) computational biology and bioinformatics, (2) biological sciences, and (3) informatics (including computer science, statistics, and applied mathematics). While the courses taken to satisfy the core areas of competency may vary considerably, all students are required to take the following courses: CB&B 562, CB&B 740, and CB&B 752. A typical program will include ten courses. Completion of the core curriculum will typically take three to four terms, depending in part on the prior training of the student. With approval of the CB&B director of graduate studies (DGS), students may take one or two undergraduate courses to satisfy areas of minimum expected competency. Students will typically take two to three courses each term and three research rotations (CB&B 711, CB&B 712, CB&B 713) during the first year. After the first year, students will start
working in the laboratory of their Ph.D. thesis supervisor. Students must pass a qualifying examination normally given at the end of the second year or the beginning of the third year. There is no language requirement. Students will serve as teaching assistants in two term courses. In addition to all other requirements, students must successfully complete CB&B 601, Fundamentals of Research: Responsible Conduct of Research (or another course that covers the material) prior to the end of their first year of study. In their fourth year of study, all students must successfully complete B&BS 503, RCR Refresher for Senior BBS Students.

M.D./PH.D. STUDENTS

Students pursuing the joint M.D./Ph.D. degrees must satisfy the course requirements listed above for Ph.D. students. With approval of the DGS, some courses taken toward the M.D. degree can be counted toward the ten required courses. Such courses must have a graduate course number, and the student must register for them as graduate courses (in which grades are received). Laboratory rotations are available but not required. One teaching assistantship is required.

MASTER’S DEGREE

M.S. (en route to the Ph.D.) To qualify for the awarding of the M.S. degree a student must (1) complete two years (four terms) of study in the Ph.D. program, with ten required courses taken at Yale, (2) complete the required course work for the Ph.D. program with an average grade of High Pass or higher, (3) successfully complete three research rotations, and (4) meet the Graduate School’s Honors requirement.

Terminal Master’s Degree Program The CB&B terminal master’s program has limited availability and is intended primarily for postdoctoral fellows supported by training grants and for students with sponsored funding, e.g., from industry. The curriculum requirements are the same as in the CB&B Ph.D. program, except that there are no requirements for fulfilling laboratory research rotations, serving as a teaching assistant, or completing a Ph.D. dissertation. Terminal M.S. students will be expected to complete an M.S. project, including a project report. Completion of the terminal M.S. degree will typically take four terms of full-time study. Applicants should contact the CB&B registrar before submitting an M.S. application.

COURSES

Additional courses focused on the biological sciences and on areas of informatics are selected by the student in consultation with CB&B faculty.