BIOCHEMISTRY

The biochemistry major provides interdisciplinary training, education and experience in the chemical and biological sciences. Biochemistry focuses on understanding the chemical processes of living organisms, the reaction pathways that sustain life, the principles of how structure defines function and the physical basis of biomolecular interactions. Students who major in biochemistry are prepared for diverse careers in medicine, scientific research, biotechnology, pharmacy, biomedical consulting, teaching and education, among other professions.

The undergraduate degree in biochemistry emphasizes knowledge and understanding of:

- Foundational principles of biology and chemistry
- The building blocks of life (DNA, RNA and proteins), how they evolved, how they interact, and how organisms make and degrade these building blocks
- How living organisms maintain homeostasis and regulate metabolism
- The molecular mechanisms of how living systems respond to changes, such as environmental perturbations, disease, and chemical therapeutics
- How chemical reactions impact human health

The undergraduate degree in Biochemistry also emphasizes and cultivates development of the following skills:

- Quantitative problem solving
- Critical thinking and analytical reasoning
- Communication of scientific concepts and ideas

Because biochemistry connects to scientific disciplines ranging from genetics, human physiology, microbiology, neuroscience, cell biology, chemistry and geology, biochemistry majors are given the freedom to explore advanced electives in many of these subjects. Additional information about the biochemistry BA can be found on the Biochemistry Department website (https://www.colorado.edu/biochemistry).

Course code for this program is BCHM.

Bachelor’s Degree

- Biochemistry - Bachelor of Arts (BA) (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/biochemistry/biochemistry-bachelor-arts-ba)

Minor

- Biochemistry - Minor (catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/biochemistry/biochemistry-biochemistry-minor)

Faculty

Ahn, Natalie (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_106044)  
Distinguished Professor; PhD, University of California, Berkeley

Batey, Robert T. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_122668)  
Professor; PhD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Cameron, Jeffrey C. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_156473)  
Assistant Professor; PhD, Washington University

Caruthers, Marvin H. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_103328)  
Distinguished Professor; PhD, Northwestern University

Cech, Thomas R. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_103252)  
Distinguished Professor; PhD, University of California, Berkeley

Falke, Joseph J. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_101970)  
Professor; PhD, California Institute of Technology

Goodrich, James (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_109239)  
Professor; PhD, Carnegie Mellon University

Kuchta, Robert (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_100844)  
Professor, PhD, Brandeis University

Kugel, Jennifer F. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_109472)  
Associate Research Professor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Liu, Xuedong (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_118458)  
Professor; PhD, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Mchenry, Charles  
Professor Emeritus; PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara

Palmer, Amy E. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_141901)  
Professor; PhD, Stanford University

Pardi, Arthur (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_105996)  
Professor; PhD, University of California, Berkeley

Parker, Roy Robert (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_151440)  
Distinguished Professor; PhD, University of California, San Francisco

Rinn, John (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_159338)  
Professor; PhD, Yale University

Schnizer-Luger, Karoline (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_156579)  
Endowed Chair, Professor; PhD, Univ of Basel (Switzerland)

Sousa, Marcelo Carlos (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_122806)  
Professor; PhD, Univ of Buenos Aires (Argentina)

Spencer, Sabrina Leigh (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_154911)  
Assistant Professor; PhD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Stephen, Ricardo Hugh (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_145994)  
Instructor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Taatjes, Dylan J. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_102436)  
Professor; PhD, University of Colorado Boulder

Wuttke, Deborah S. (https://experts.colorado.edu/display/fisid_108412)  
Professor, Associate Chair; PhD, California Institute of Technology
Courses

**BCHM 1041 (3) Biotechnology and Society**
Covers recent advances in biotechnology and how those impact society. Content and discussion will focus on both the science behind technological advances, their impact on society, and the ethical issues raised by new technologies. Topics change each semester but can include: GMO crops, genome editing, drug discovery and development, stem cell therapies, development and use of new cancer treatments, human genome sequencing and its impact on diagnosis and treatments, human microbiome, neurodegenerative diseases. Formerly CHEM 1041.

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite courses of CHEM 3311 or CHEM 3451 and BCHM 3500 or CHEM 4700 and MCDB 3135 or CSCI 3104 or CHEM 4700.

**Grading Basis:** Letter Grade

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---

**BCHM 2700 (4) Foundations of Biochemistry**
Covers chemistry of aqueous solutions; energetics in biology; structure of proteins, nucleic acids, carbohydrates, and membranes; protein evolution; macromolecular interactions; enzyme kinetics, mechanism and regulation. Will be taught from a strong chemical perspective and mastery of basic concepts of general and organic chemistry will be required. Familiarity with basic concepts of molecular and cellular biology encouraged. Formerly CHEM 4700.

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite course of CHEM 3311 or CHEM 3451 (minimum grade C-). Restricted to Biochemistry (BCHM) majors and minors only.

**Grading Basis:** Letter Grade

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---

**BCHM 3491 (4) Organic Chemistry 2 for Biochemistry Majors**
Covers amine, alkylation reactions, additions to unsaturated C-C bonds, aromaticity and aromatic reactivity, organic materials, biomolecules, nomenclature of organic compounds, reaction mechanism. Department enforced corequisite: CHEM 3341 or CHEM 3381. Formerly CHEM 3491.

**Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted:** CHEM 3471 and CHEM 3331

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite courses of CHEM 3451 and CHEM 3321 or CHEM 3361 (all minimum grade C-). Restricted to Chemistry (CHEM) or Biochemistry (BCHM) majors only.

**Grading Basis:** Letter Grade

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---

**BCHM 4312 (3-4) Quantitative Optical Imaging**
Explores the fundamentals of optical imaging in biology, especially molecular and cellular biology. Covered topics include an introduction to optics and microscopes, fluorescence microscopy and image analysis, and biological applications. MATLAB will be taught at the beginning of the course and used throughout for image processing. Prior experience with MATLAB (or Python) is highly recommended but not required.

**Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted:** MCDB 4312, MCDB 5312 and BCHM 5312

**Grading Basis:** Letter Grade

---

**BCHM 4400 (4) Core Concepts in Physical Chemistry for Biochemists**
Introduces thermodynamics, kinetics and spectroscopy, emphasizing macromolecule and biochemical applications. Includes thermodynamics, chemical and physical equilibriums, solution chemistry, rates of chemical and biochemical reactions, chemical bonds and principles and selected examples of spectroscopies applied to biological systems. Department enforced prerequisite or corequisite: PHYS 1120 or PHYS 2020. Formerly CHEM 4411.

**Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted:** BCHM 5400 and CHEM 4511

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite courses BCHM 2700 or CHEM 4700 and PHYS 1110 or PHYS 2010 and MATH 2300 or APPM 1360 (all minimum grade C-).

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---

**BCHM 4491 (3) Modern Biophysical Methods**
Covers the basic theory of biophysical methods widely employed in biochemistry and biology, including: electrophoresis, mass spec, calorimetry, evanescent waves, plasmon resonance, Xray diffraction, absorbance and fluorescence spectroscopy, magnetic resonance, electron and optical microscopy and single molecule methods. Discusses ways to maximize rigor and reproducibility in biophysical studies. Department enforced prerequisites: undergraduate chemistry (general, organic physical); physics; calculus.

**Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted:** BCHM 5491

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite courses of CHEM 3311 or CHEM 3451 and PHYS 1110 or PHYS 2010 and MATH 2300 or APPM 1360 and CHEM 4400 (formerly CHEM 4411) or CHEM 4511 or corequisite of CHEM 4400 or CHEM 4511 (all minimum grade C).

**Grading Basis:** Letter Grade

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---

**BCHM 4611 (3) Principles of Biochemistry**
Lec. One-semester survey of the main themes of modern biochemistry: biomolecular structure/function, metabolism, biosynthesis, DNA from genome to proteome and cellular signaling. For biology and engineering majors and others wanting a survey of biochemistry. Formerly CHEM 4611.

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite course of CHEM 3311 or CHEM 3451 (minimum grade C-).

**Grading Basis:** Letter Grade

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---

**BCHM 4621 (3) Genome Databases: Mining and Management**
Lec. Develops essential skills for performing genomic analyses, with focus on developing practical research tools. Introduces human genome and microbiome projects, Python/Sql scripting, accessing and understanding genomic data, sequence alignment and search, evolutionary models, expression data, biological networks, and macromolecular structure.

**Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted:** MCDB 4621, MCDB 5621 and BCHM 5621

**Requisites:** Requires prerequisite course of BCHM 4700 or CSCI 3104 or MCDB 3500 (minimum grade C).

**Recommended:** Prerequisite MCDB 3135 or CSCI 3104 or CHEM 4700 and recommended corequisite of CSCI 2270.

**Additional Information:** Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

---
BCHM 4720 (4) Metabolic Pathways and Human Disease
Covers energy metabolism and anabolic/catabolic pathways; metabolism of carbohydrates, lipids, amino acids, and nucleic acids; photosynthesis; special topics on human diseases with pathologies and metabolic pathways. Formerly CHEM 4720.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: BCHM 5720
Requisites: Requires prerequisite courses of BCHM 2700 or CHEM 4700 and CHEM 3331 or CHEM 3471 (all minimum grade C-).
Additional Information: Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

BCHM 4740 (4) Biochemistry of Gene Transmission, Expression and Regulation
Covers biosynthesis and function of macromolecules including DNA, RNA and proteins; molecular basis of replication, transcription and translation; biochemistry of subcellular systems; signaling and regulation of gene expression in eukaryotes; and special topics. Formerly CHEM 4740.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: BCHM 5740
Requisites: Requires a prerequisite course of BCHM 2700 or CHEM 4700 (minimum grade C-).
Additional Information: Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

BCHM 4751 (3) Current Topics in Biochemical Research
Lec. Covers current topics in modern biochemical research through lectures, reading recent research articles, critical thinking and class discussion. Topics include protein and nucleic acid structure and function, biomolecular interactions, enzyme function and cellular signaling and regulation. Formerly CHEM 4751.
Equivalent - Duplicate Degree Credit Not Granted: BCHM 5751
Requisites: Requires prerequisite courses of BCHM 4700 and BCHM 4740 or MCDB 3135 (all minimum grade C-).
Additional Information: Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

BCHM 4761 (3) Biochemistry Laboratory
Two 4-hour periods per week. Introduction to modern biochemical techniques. Topics include enzymology, spectrophotometry, electrophoresis, multi-step protein purification, recombinant DNA techniques and molecular cloning. Formerly CHEM 4761.
Requisites: Requires prerequisite courses of BCHM 2700 or CHEM 4700 and CHEM 3341 or 3381 (all minimum grade C). Restricted to Chemistry (CHEM) or Biochemistry (BCHM) majors only.
Additional Information: Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sci Lab
Arts Sci Gen Ed: Distribution-Natural Sciences

BCHM 4901 (1-6) Independent Study in Biochemistry
For undergraduate study. Department consent required.
Repeatable: Repeatable for up to 8.00 total credit hours.