

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOLOGY

The Biology Department provides a broad range of courses emphasizing scientific inquiry and current experimental approaches. These research areas provide essential information as we address the urgent challenges of biodiversity conservation, global climate change, epidemiology, and human health and well-being. Students consider real-world issues at the heart of how we understand ourselves as human beings in relation to other living things.

The Biology Department offers graduate work leading to the degree of Master of Arts through the BA/MA program. The department may also grant the Master of Arts degree to students in the biology PhD program who do not complete the PhD.

Candidates for the BA/MA in Biology will follow a program that includes coursework, seminars, and, in some cases, teaching. Wesleyan undergraduate life science majors may apply to earn their MA in Biology alongside their BA through an intensive course of study and research. Admission to the BA/MA program is competitive, and students are encouraged to begin research by their sophomore year. Students hoping to enter the program should discuss their intention with a research advisor in the first semester of their junior year to permit the design of an acceptable program.

Students in the BA/MA or terminated Ph.D. programs must earn at least six credits in addition to the 32 necessary for the Wesleyan BA in Biology.

Course requirements include two journal clubs, two credits of advanced research (BIOL549 and BIOL550) and .50 credit in the Research Seminar (BIOL557). Remaining credits will be earned through lecture, lab, or seminar courses determined by the student and their mentor. Students will submit a master's thesis and give a public presentation describing their research.

COURSES

Students in the BA/MA or terminated Ph.D. programs are required to earn a minimum of 6 credits in addition to the 32 necessary for the Wesleyan BA.

Three credits will be earned through the following:

FALL

- Required: one Journal Club – BIOL505, BIOL507, BIOL509, or BIOL547 (0.25 credits)
- Required: Advanced Research – BIOL549 (1.0 credit)
- *Optional: Research Seminar – BIOL557 (0.50 credits)*

SPRING

- Required: one Journal Club – BIOL506, BIOL508, BIOL510, or BIOL548 (0.25 credits)
- Required: Advanced Research – BIOL550 (1.0 credit)
- Required: Research Seminar – BIOL557 (0.50 credits)

The remaining credits will be earned through lecture, lab, or seminar courses (200, 300, or 500-level) determined by the student and mentor; a minimum of two of these must be one-credit courses. MA credit will only be awarded for academic work in which grades of B minus or higher have been earned. A student in the BA/MA program who earns more than 32 credits during the BA may apply any excess credits toward the MA, providing that

they are relevant to the research area and they have not been used to fulfill an undergraduate major requirement.

PROGRESS AND QUALIFYING EXAMS

A 3-member committee of the faculty will be established upon acceptance into the BA/MA program. The candidate will be in contact with their committee in early stages of research and meet with them in the second semester of their MA year. This committee determines when sufficient experimental work has been completed and must approve the final written document. Students in this program will be expected to submit a MA thesis describing the research which they have carried out in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements.

TEACHING

There are no requirements for BA/MA candidates to teach although the opportunity may arise.

RESEARCH

All MA students will present their research during a meeting of the department's BIOL557 seminar attended by all members of the department to encourage students to become fluent and comfortable with their presentation skills.

THESIS AND DEFENSE

Students in this program will submit a MA thesis describing their research and give a public presentation during the BIOL557 seminar describing the research they have carried out as partial fulfillment of the degree requirements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BA/MA PROGRAM

This program provides an attractive option for life science majors to substantially enrich their research and course background and to earn an advanced degree while at Wesleyan. Students are encouraged to begin research by their sophomore year if they intend to pursue the BA/MA in biology. Admission is competitive and based on GPA, faculty recommendations, and research experience.

For information about the BA/MA Program please visit: https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/graduate-programs/bama_program.html