This concentration places you at the intersection of biology and society where biosciences shape and are shaped by societal values and traditions. Because this program draws from many areas, you'll develop the skills of a critical, independent, interdisciplinary thinker. Graduates choose careers in higher education, research, administration, policy and science communication.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Biology (Biology and Society)

In the biology and society concentration of the PhD program in biology, students examine topics with biological and social dimensions that are best understood together, rather than in isolation. The concentration provides plans of study tailored to individual needs and interests. It encompasses a solid foundation in life sciences and related sciences and provides a rigorous analytical and interdisciplinary education. Students may further specialize in one of four tracks:

Bioethics, policy and law -- This track focuses on pressing moral, policy and legal issues raised by biosciences and biomedicine and on the methods needed to address them.

History and philosophy of science -- This track focuses on the conceptual foundations of science, especially the epistemological and methodological assumptions that shape science and its progress.

Ecology, economics and ethics of the environment -- This track focuses on the theory and empirical methods for understanding, analyzing and shaping policy that steer society toward a more productive, equitable and sustainable ecological future.

Biology education research -- This track focuses on using education research to identify ways to broadly improve undergraduate biology education.

At a Glance
College/School: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Location: Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Required Core (3-4 credit hours)
BIO 614 Biometry (4) or
BIO 620 Research Prospectus Writing (3)

Electives (68-69 credit hours)

Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)
BIO 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information
An individual student program is developed in consultation with the student's advisor and committee.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution. Students are expected to have completed the equivalent of core requirements for an undergraduate major in biology or a related discipline (typically evolution, genetics and other courses appropriate to the student's particular interests). Students without an undergraduate-level competency in the sciences may be considered for conditional admission to the biology and society concentration.

Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. academic record form
4. personal statement
5. curriculum vitae or resume
6. writing sample
7. GRE scores
8. three letters of recommendation
9. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency.

Global Opportunities
PLuS Alliance
Global Experience
Global Degree

Career Opportunities

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