

Abstract Submitted
for the MAR05 Meeting of
The American Physical Society

Phase behavior of semidilute polyelectrolyte mixtures of F-actin and DNA SCOTT SLIMMER, JOHN C. BUTLER, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, OLENA V. ZRIBI, Department of Physics, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, RAMIN GOLASTANIAN, Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences, Cambridge, UK, Institute for Advanced Studies in Basic Sciences, Zanjan, Iran, GERARD C. L. WONG, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Department of Physics, Department of Bioengineering, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign — We investigate the phase behavior of semidilute mixtures of polyelectrolyte DNA coils and F-actin rods. F-actin has a persistence length of ~ 10 microns and a linear charge density of $-1e/0.25\text{nm}$. DNA has a persistence length of $\sim 50\text{nm}$ and a linear charge density of $-1e/0.17\text{nm}$. Confocal and polarized microscopy data show that actin-DNA phase separates into ribbon-like birefringent domains of nematic F-actin and a disordered mesh of DNA coils. Synchrotron Small Angle X-ray Scattering (SAXS) show that DNA compresses F-actin into an ultradense dense nematic phase. The spacing between nematic F-actin domains shows a power-law dependence on DNA concentration.

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Date submitted: 01 Dec 2004

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