Contents

Preface and outline *page* xiii

1 Introduction 1
- 1.1 Relevance of biomolecular research 1
- 1.2 Proteins 3
  - 1.2.1 The trinity of amino acid sequence, structure, and function 3
  - 1.2.2 Ribosomal synthesis of proteins 6
  - 1.2.3 From sequence to function: The protein folding process 7
- 1.3 Molecular modeling 9
  - 1.3.1 Covalent bonds 9
  - 1.3.2 Effective noncovalent interactions and nanoscopic modeling: Toward a semiclassical all-atom representation 11
- 1.4 All-atom peptide modeling 12
- 1.5 The mesoscopic perspective 14
  - 1.5.1 Why coarse-graining...? The origin of the hydrophobic force 15
  - 1.5.2 Coarse-grained hydrophobic–polar modeling 17
- 1.6 Polymers 20
  - 1.6.1 DNA and RNA 20
  - 1.6.2 Modeling free DNA 22
  - 1.6.3 Flexible, attractively self-interacting polymers 23
  - 1.6.4 Elastic polymers 27

2 Statistical mechanics: A modern review 31
- 2.1 The theory of everything 31
- 2.2 Thermodynamics and statistical mechanics 33
  - 2.2.1 The thermodynamic limit 33
  - 2.2.2 Thermodynamics of closed systems: The canonical ensemble 34
  - 2.2.3 Thermodynamic equilibrium and the statistical nature of entropy 36
- 2.3 Thermal fluctuations and the statistical path integral 43
- 2.4 Phase and pseudophase transitions 46
- 2.5 Relevant degrees of freedom 48
  - 2.5.1 Coarse-grained modeling on mesoscopic scales 48
  - 2.5.2 Macroscopic relevant degrees of freedom: The free-energy landscape 49
- 2.6 Kinetic free-energy barrier and transition state 51

2.7 Microcanonical statistical analysis 53
2.7.1 Temperature as a derived quantity 54
2.7.2 Identification of first-order transitions by Maxwell construction 55
2.7.3 Systematic classification of transitions by inflection-point analysis 62

3 The complexity of minimalistic lattice models for protein folding 67
3.1 Evolutionary aspects 67
3.2 Self-avoiding walks and contact matrices 68
3.3 Exact statistical analysis of designing sequences 69
3.4 Exact density of states and thermodynamics 76

4 Monte Carlo and chain growth methods for molecular simulations 81
4.1 Introduction 81
4.2 Conventional Markov-chain Monte Carlo sampling 82
4.2.1 Ergodicity and finite time series 82
4.2.2 Statistical error and bias 84
4.2.3 Binning–jackknife error analysis 88
4.3 Systematic data smoothing by using Bézier curves 93
4.3.1 Construction of a Bézier curve 93
4.3.2 Smooth Bézier functions for discrete noisy data sets 96
4.4 Markov processes and stochastic sampling strategies 100
4.4.1 Master equation 100
4.4.2 Selection and acceptance probabilities 101
4.4.3 Simple sampling 102
4.4.4 Metropolis sampling 103
4.5 Reweighting methods 104
4.5.1 Single-histogram reweighting 104
4.5.2 Multiple-histogram reweighting 105
4.6 Generalized-ensemble Monte Carlo methods 108
4.6.1 Replica-exchange Monte Carlo method: Parallel tempering 108
4.6.2 Simulated tempering 109
4.6.3 Multicanonical sampling 109
4.6.4 Wang–Landau method 117
4.7 Elementary Monte Carlo updates 118
4.8 Lattice polymers: Monte Carlo sampling vs. Rosenbluth chain growth 123
4.9 Pruned-enriched Rosenbluth method: Go with the winners 126
4.10 Canonical chain growth with PERM 127
4.11 Multicanonical chain-growth algorithm 129
4.11.1 Multicanonical sampling of Rosenbluth-weighted chains 129
4.11.2 Iterative determination of the density of states 130
4.12 Random number generators 133
4.13 Molecular dynamics 134

5 First insights to freezing and collapse of flexible polymers 137
5.1 Conformational transitions of flexible homopolymers 137
5.2 Energetic fluctuations of finite-length polymers 138
5.2.1 Peak structure of the specific heat 138
5.2.2 Simple-cubic lattice polymers 139
5.2.3 Polymers on the face-centered cubic lattice 141
5.3 The Θ transition 144
5.4 Freezing and collapse in the thermodynamic limit 147

6 Crystallization of elastic polymers 149
6.1 Lennard-Jones clusters 149
6.2 Perfect icosahedra 150
6.3 Liquid–solid transitions of elastic flexible polymers 152
6.3.1 Finitely extensible nonlinear elastic Lennard-Jones polymers 152
6.3.2 Classification of geometries 153
6.3.3 Ground states 155
6.3.4 Thermodynamics of liquid–solid transitions toward complete icosahedra 156
6.3.5 Liquid–solid transitions of elastic polymers 158
6.3.6 Long-range effects 162
6.4 Systematic analysis of compact phases 164
6.5 Dependence of structural phases on the range of nonbonded interactions 165

7 Structural phases of semiflexible polymers 175
7.1 Structural hyperphase diagram 175
7.2 Variation of chain length 180

8 Generic tertiary folding properties of proteins on mesoscopic scales 181
8.1 A simple model for a parallel β helix lattice protein 181
8.2 Protein folding as a finite-size effect 184
8.3 Hydrophobic–polar off-lattice heteropolymers 185

9 Protein folding channels and kinetics of two-state folding 191
9.1 Similarity measure and order parameter 192
9.2 Identification of characteristic folding channels 195
9.3 Gō kinetics of folding transitions 198
9.3.1 Coarse-grained Gō modeling 199
9.3.2 Thermodynamics 201
9.3.3 Kinetics 204
9.3.4 Mesoscopic heteropolymers vs. real proteins 208
9.4 Microcanonical effects 209
9.5 Two-state cooperativity in helix–coil transitions 213

10 Inducing generic secondary structures by constraints 217
10.1 The intrinsic nature of secondary structures 217
10.2 Polymers with thickness constraint 218
10.2.1 Global radius of curvature 218
10.2.2 Modeling flexible polymers with constraints 219
10.2.3 Thickness-dependent ground-state properties 220
10.2.4 Structural phase diagram of tube-like polymers 222
10.3 Secondary-structure phases of a hydrophobic–polar heteropolymer model 223

11 Statistical analyses of aggregation processes 227
11.1 Pseudophase separation in nucleation processes of polymers 227
11.2 Mesoscopic hydrophobic–polar aggregation model 228
11.3 Order parameter of aggregation and fluctuations 229
11.4 Statistical analysis in various ensembles 230
11.4.1 Multicanonical results 230
11.4.2 Canonical perspective 233
11.4.3 Microcanonical interpretation: The backbending effect 235
11.5 Aggregation transition in larger heteropolymer systems 239

12 Hierarchical nature of phase transitions 243
12.1 Aggregation of semiflexible polymers 243
12.2 Structural transitions of semiflexible polymers with different bending rigidities 244
12.3 Hierarchies of subphase transitions 247
12.4 Hierarchical peptide aggregation processes 249
12.5 Hierarchical aggregation of GNNQQNY 252

13 Adsorption of polymers at solid substrates 255
13.1 Structure formation at hybrid interfaces of soft and solid matter 255
13.2 Minimalistic modeling and simulation of hybrid interfaces 256
13.3 Contact-density chain-growth algorithm 258
13.4 Pseudophase diagram of a flexible polymer near an attractive substrate 259
13.4.1 Solubility–temperature pseudophase diagram 260
13.4.2 Contact-number fluctuations 261
13.4.3 Anisotropic behavior of gyration tensor components 263
13.5 Alternative view: The free-energy landscape 264
13.6 Continuum model of adsorption 269
13.6.1 Off-lattice modeling 269
13.6.2 Energetic and structural quantities for phase characterization by canonical statistical analysis 270
13.6.3 Comparative discussion of structural fluctuations 271
13.6.4 Adsorption parameters 273
13.6.5 The pseudophase diagram of the hybrid system in continuum 274
13.7 Comparison with lattice results 277

13.8 Systematic microcanonical analysis of adsorption transitions 279
13.8.1 Dependence on the surface attraction strength 280
13.8.2 Chain-length dependence 282
13.8.3 Translational entropy 284
13.9 Polymer adsorption at a nanowire 286
13.9.1 Modeling the polymer–nanowire complex 287
13.9.2 Structural phase diagram 288

14 Hybrid protein–substrate interfaces 293
14.1 Steps toward bionanotechnology 293
14.2 Substrate-specific peptide adsorption 294
14.2.1 Hybrid lattice model 294
14.2.2 Influence of temperature and solubility on substrate-specific peptide adsorption 295
14.3 Semiconductor-binding synthetic peptides 301
14.4 Thermodynamics of semiconductor-binding peptides in solution 303
14.5 Modeling a hybrid peptide–silicon interface 307
14.5.1 Introduction 307
14.5.2 Si(100), oxidation, and the role of water 308
14.5.3 The hybrid model 309
14.6 Sequence-specific peptide adsorption at silicon (100) surface 312
14.6.1 Thermal fluctuations and deformations upon binding 312
14.6.2 Secondary-structure contents of the peptides 313
14.6.3 Order parameter of adsorption and nature of adsorption transition 315

15 Concluding remarks and outlook 319

References 323
Index 337