

BIOLOGY (COURSE 7)

Undergraduate Subjects

Introductory Biology

All 7.01s include the same core material comprising the majority of the content of the subject, while the remaining material is specialized for each version.

7.012 Introductory Biology

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

5-0-7 units. BIOLOGY

Credit cannot also be received for 7.014, 7.015, 7.016, ES.7012, ES.7016

Discusses core principles including: chemical bonding and molecular interactions, protein structure/function and basic thermodynamics, how information flows in the cell, genetics, tools for studying and manipulating genetic material, sequencing, cell biology, evolution, and how the body fights off harmful disease-causing agents. 7.012 synthesizes the core principles into a coherent whole by following the scientific narrative of recent major advances in medicine. Students complete a final project, with a video and written components, in which they explore an additional medical breakthrough that they choose from a set of options. Enrollment limited to seating capacity of classroom. Admittance may be controlled by lottery.

O. Corradin, E. Lander

7.014 Introductory Biology

U (Spring)

5-0-7 units. BIOLOGY

Credit cannot also be received for 7.012, 7.015, 7.016, ES.7012, ES.7016

Discusses core principles including: chemical bonding and molecular interactions, protein structure/function and basic thermodynamics, how information flows in the cell, genetics, tools for studying and manipulating genetic material, sequencing, cell biology, evolution, and how the body fights off harmful disease-causing agents. 7.014 frames the core principles in the context of environmental life science, including a deeper treatment of evolution and an emphasis on global metabolism, biogeochemistry, ecology, and the impact of climate change on living systems. Enrollment limited to seating capacity of classroom. Admittance may be controlled by lottery.

G. C. Walker, D. Des Marais, B. Weissbourd

7.015 Introductory Biology

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

5-0-7 units. BIOLOGY

Credit cannot also be received for 7.012, 7.014, 7.016, ES.7012, ES.7016

Discusses the core principles including: chemical bonding and molecular interactions, protein structure/function and basic thermodynamics, how information flows in the cell, genetics, tools for studying and manipulating genetic material, sequencing, cell biology, evolution, and how the body fights off harmful disease-causing agents. 7.015 presents the core principles through the lens of modern, trending topics in biology. Students read popular science articles and discuss social and ethical issues surrounding contemporary biology. Limited to 70; admittance may be controlled by lottery.

M. Laub, S. Vos

7.016 Introductory Biology

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

5-0-7 units. BIOLOGY

Credit cannot also be received for 7.012, 7.014, 7.015, ES.7012, ES.7016

Discusses core principles including: chemical bonding and molecular interactions, protein structure/function and basic thermodynamics, how information flows in the cell, genetics, tools for studying and manipulating genetic material, sequencing, cell biology, evolution, and how the body fights off harmful disease-causing agents. 7.016 expands upon the core principles to include specializations such as fluorescent cell imaging, neuroscience, cell cycle, cancer, stem cells, and aging. Enrollment limited to seating capacity of classroom. Admittance may be controlled by lottery.

S. Hrvatin, S. Bell

7.002 Fundamentals of Experimental Molecular Biology

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

1-4-1 units. Partial Lab

Introduces the experimental concepts and methods of molecular biology. Covers basic principles of experimental design and data analysis, with an emphasis on the acquisition of practical laboratory experience. Satisfies 6 units of Institute Laboratory credit. Satisfies biology laboratory credit for pre-health professions. Enrollment limited.

T. Baker, T. Schwartz

7.003[J] Applied Molecular Biology Laboratory

Same subject as 10.7003J

Prereq: 7.002

U (Fall, Spring)

2-7-3 units. Partial Lab

Laboratory-based exploration of modern experimental molecular biology. Specific experimental system studied may vary from term to term, depending on instructor. Emphasizes concepts of experimental design, data analysis and communication in biology and how these concepts are applied in the biotechnology industry. Satisfies 6 units of Institute Laboratory credit. Enrollment limited; admittance may be controlled by lottery.

Fall, C. Drennan, K. Knouse. Spring, L. Case, H. Moura Silva, H. Sikes

7.03 Genetics

Prereq: Biology (GIR)

U (Fall, Spring)

4-0-8 units. REST

The principles of genetics with application to the study of biological function at the level of molecules, cells, and multicellular organisms, including humans. Structure and function of genes, chromosomes, and genomes. Biological variation resulting from recombination, mutation, and selection. Population genetics. Use of genetic methods to analyze protein function, gene regulation, and inherited disease.

Fall: M. Gehring, P. Reddien. Spring: O. Corradin, F. Sánchez-Rivera

7.05 General Biochemistry

Prereq: (Biology (GIR) and 5.12) or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

5-0-7 units. REST

Credit cannot also be received for 5.07[J], 20.507[J]

Contributions of biochemistry toward an understanding of the structure and functioning of organisms, tissues, and cells. Chemistry and functions of constituents of cells and tissues and the chemical and physical-chemical basis for the structures of nucleic acids, proteins, and carbohydrates. Basic enzymology and biochemical reaction mechanisms involved in macromolecular synthesis and degradation, signaling, transport, and movement. General metabolism of carbohydrates, fats, and nitrogen-containing materials such as amino acids, proteins, and related compounds.

A. Ringel, M. Vander Heiden, M. Yaffe

7.06 Cell Biology

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

U (Fall, Spring)

4-0-8 units

Presents the biology of cells of higher organisms. Studies the structure, function, and biosynthesis of cellular membranes and organelles; cell growth and oncogenic transformation; transport, receptors, and cell signaling; the cytoskeleton, the extracellular matrix, and cell movements; cell division and cell cycle; functions of specialized cell types. Emphasizes the current molecular knowledge of cell biological processes as well as the genetic, biochemical, and other experimental approaches that resulted in these discoveries.

Fall: P. Li, S. Lourido. Spring: K. Knouse, R. Lamason

7.08[J] Fundamentals of Chemical Biology

Same subject as 5.08[J]

Subject meets with 7.80

Prereq: (Biology (GIR), 5.13, and (5.07[J] or 7.05)) or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

4-0-8 units

See description under subject 5.08[J].

B. Imperiali, M. Shoulders

7.093 Modern Biostatistics

Subject meets with 7.573

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

U (Spring; first half of term)

2-0-4 units

Provides a practical introduction to probability and statistics used in modern biology. Topics covered include discrete and continuous probability distributions, statistical modeling, hypothesis testing, independence, conditional probability, multiple test corrections, nonparametric methods, clustering, correlation, linear regression, principal components analysis with applications to high-throughput DNA sequencing, and image data analysis. Homework is in the R programming language, but prior programming experience is not required. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

A. Jain, H. Wong

7.094 Modern Computational Biology

Subject meets with 7.574

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

U (Spring; second half of term)

2-0-4 units

Introduces modern methods in computational biology, focusing on DNA/RNA/protein analysis. Topics include next-generation DNA sequencing and sequencing data analysis, RNA-seq (bulk and single-cell), and protein dynamics. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

A. Jain, H. Wong

7.102 Introduction to Molecular Biology Techniques

Prereq: None

U (IAP)

0-5-1 units. Partial Lab

Designed primarily for first-year students with little or no lab experience. Introduces basic methods of experimental molecular biology. Specific experiments vary from year-to-year, but will focus on the identification and characterization of bacteria and bacteriophages from the wild using an array of basic methods in molecular biology and microbiology. Biology GIR or Chemistry GIR recommended. Satisfies 6 units of Institute Laboratory credit. Limited to 16; admittance may be controlled by lottery.

J. Lees

7.105 Ethics for Biologists and Engineers

Subject meets with 7.1051

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

2-0-4 units

Credit cannot also be received for 1.082, 2.900, 6.9320, 7.1051, 10.01, 16.676, 20.005

Explores how to apply an ethical framework to working with living systems. Students examine case studies related to biological research and bioengineering alongside readings by foundational ethical thinkers from Aristotle to Martin Luther King, Jr. Topics for consideration include justice, rights, research integrity and bias, human clinical trials, genetic engineering in human diseases and aging, creating human-animal hybrids, and the promise and peril of AI. Discussion-based, with the aim of introducing students to new ways of thinking. Meets with 20.005, a 9-unit version of this subject, which includes a final project.

L. Guarente, P. Hansen

7.1051 Ethics for Biologists and Engineers - Independent Inquiry (New)

Subject meets with 7.105

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

2-0-7 units

Credit cannot also be received for 1.082, 2.900, 6.9320, 7.105, 10.01, 16.676, 20.005

Explores how to apply an ethical framework to working with living systems. Students examine case studies related to biological research and bioengineering alongside readings by foundational ethical thinkers from Aristotle to Martin Luther King, Jr. Topics for consideration include justice, rights, research integrity and bias, human clinical trials, genetic engineering in human diseases and aging, creating human-animal hybrids, and the promise and peril of AI. Discussion-based, with the aim of introducing students to new ways of thinking. Students in 7.1051 will additionally write a paper on a biological or medical topic of their choosing. Meets with 20.005.

L. Guarente, P. Hansen

7.11 Biology Teaching

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

For qualified undergraduate students interested in gaining some experience in teaching. Laboratory, tutorial, or classroom teaching under the supervision of a faculty member. Students selected by interview.

Consult Staff

7.19 Communication in Experimental Biology

Prereq: (7.06 and (5.362, 7.003[JJ], or 20.109)) or permission of instructor

U (Fall, Spring)

4-4-4 units

Students carry out independent literature research. Journal club discussions are used to help students evaluate and write scientific papers. Instruction and practice in written and oral communication is provided.

Fall: F. Batista, D. Housman. Spring: C. Kaiser

7.20[J] Human Physiology

Same subject as HST.540[J]

Prereq: 7.05

U (Fall)

5-0-7 units

Comprehensive exploration of human physiology, emphasizing the molecular basis and applied aspects of organ function and regulation in health and disease. Includes a review of cell structure and function, as well as the mechanisms by which the endocrine and nervous systems integrate cellular metabolism. Special emphasis on examining the cardiovascular, pulmonary, gastrointestinal, renal, reproductive, and muscular skeletal systems, as well as liver function, drug metabolism, and pharmacogenetics.

M. Krieger, O. Yilmaz

7.21 Microbial Physiology

Subject meets with 7.62

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Biochemical properties of bacteria and other microorganisms that enable them to grow under a variety of conditions. Interaction between bacteria and bacteriophages. Genetic and metabolic regulation of enzyme action and enzyme formation. Structure and function of components of the bacterial cell envelope. Protein secretion with a special emphasis on its various roles in pathogenesis. Additional topics include bioenergetics, symbiosis, quorum sensing, global responses to DNA damage, and biofilms. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

G. C. Walker, A. J. Sinskey

7.23[J] Immunology

Same subject as 20.230[J]

Subject meets with 7.63[J], 20.630[J]

Prereq: 7.06

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)

5-0-7 units

Comprehensive survey of molecular, genetic, and cellular aspects of the immune system. Topics include innate and adaptive immunity; cells and organs of the immune system; hematopoiesis; immunoglobulin, T cell receptor, and major histocompatibility complex (MHC) proteins and genes; development and functions of B and T lymphocytes; immune responses to infections and tumors; hypersensitivity, autoimmunity, and immunodeficiencies. Particular attention to the development and function of the immune system as a whole, as studied by modern methods and techniques. Students taking graduate version explore the subject in greater depth, including study of recent primary literature.

S. Spranger, M. Birnbaum

7.24 Advanced Concepts in Immunology

Subject meets with 7.84

Prereq: 7.23[J]

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Provides a comprehensive and intensified understanding of the relevance of the immune system beyond immunity. Focuses on how the immune system intersects with all aspects of body homeostasis/physiology or disease and how the immune system can be manipulated therapeutically. New advances in the intersection of immunology with cancer biology, neurosciences, metabolism, aging, and maternal-fetal immunology or similar explored. Presents new modern methods and techniques applicable beyond immunology. Includes critical analysis and discussion of assigned readings. Students apply principles learned in class to generate a potential research project, presented in a written form. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

H. Moura Silva, E. Chen

7.25 Breakthroughs in Longevity and Rejuvenation

Subject meets with 7.55

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

U (Spring)

2-0-7 units

Stresses skills in reading, discussing, and writing scientific papers, with a focus on new findings in the field of aging, including the consequences of immune decline on health, the clearance of senescent cells, and the possibility of immortality by applying epigenetic reprogramming to humans. Culminates in an oral presentation for undergraduate students and a mini-review by graduate students. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

*L. Guarente, A. Ringel***7.26 Molecular Basis of Infectious Disease**

Subject meets with 7.66

Prereq: 7.06

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Focuses on the principles of host-pathogen interactions with an emphasis on infectious diseases of humans. Presents key concepts of pathogenesis through the study of various human pathogens. Includes critical analysis and discussion of assigned readings. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*E. Chen, R. Lamason***7.27 Principles of Human Disease and Aging**

Prereq: 7.06

U (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Covers modern approaches to human diseases and aging, emphasizing the molecular and cellular basis of genetic diseases, infectious diseases, aging, and cancer. Topics include the genetics of simple and complex traits; karyotypic analysis and positional cloning; genetic diagnosis; evolutionary determination of aging, genetic and molecular aspects of aging, HIV/AIDs and other infectious diseases; the roles of oncogenes and tumor suppressors; the interaction between genetics and environment; animal models of human disease, cancer, and aging; and treatment strategies for diseases and aging. Includes a paper describing novel treatment options for a specific disease chosen by each student.

*D. Housman, Y. Soto-Feliciano***7.28 Molecular Biology**

Subject meets with 7.58

Prereq: 7.03; Coreq: 7.05

U (Spring)

5-0-7 units

Detailed analysis of the biochemical mechanisms that control the maintenance, expression, and evolution of prokaryotic and eukaryotic genomes. Topics covered in lecture and readings of relevant literature include: gene regulation, DNA replication, genetic recombination, and mRNA translation. Logic of experimental design and data analysis emphasized. Presentations include both lectures and group discussions of representative papers from the literature. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*E. Calo, Y. Soto-Feliciano***7.29[J] Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology**

Same subject as 9.09[J]

Prereq: 7.05 or 9.01

U (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Introduction to the structure and function of the nervous system. Emphasizes the cellular properties of neurons and other excitable cells. Includes the structure and biophysical properties of excitable cells, synaptic transmission, neurochemistry, neurodevelopment, integration of information in simple systems, and detection and information coding during sensory transduction.

*T. Littleton, S. Prescott***7.30[J] Fundamentals of Ecology**

Same subject as 1.018[J], 12.031[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

4-0-8 units. REST

See description under subject 1.018[J].

D. McRose, C. Teller

7.31 Current Topics in Mammalian Biology: Medical Implications

Prereq: 7.06 or permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Covers recent advances in mammalian cell and developmental biology with particular emphasis on approaches that utilize mouse genetics. Combines formal lectures on selected topics with readings of original papers which are discussed in class. Major emphasis on the implications of mechanisms of human genetic diseases. Topics include early mammalian development; genomic imprinting; X inactivation; embryonic stem cells; nuclear reprogramming of somatic cells; cell migration; nervous system development; and central nervous system degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Huntington's disease. Limited to 20.

F. Gertler, R. Jaenisch

7.32 Systems Biology

Subject meets with 7.81[J], 8.591[J]

Prereq: (18.03 and 18.05) or permission of instructor

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Introduction to cellular and population-level systems biology with an emphasis on synthetic biology, modeling of genetic networks, cell-cell interactions, and evolutionary dynamics. Cellular systems include genetic switches and oscillators, network motifs, genetic network evolution, and cellular decision-making. Population-level systems include models of pattern formation, cell-cell communications, and evolutionary systems biology. Students taking graduate version explore the subject in more depth.

J. Gore

7.33[J] Evolutionary Biology: Concepts, Models and Computation

Same subject as 6.4710J

Prereq: (6.100A and 7.03) or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Explores and illustrates how evolution explains biology, with an emphasis on computational model building for analyzing evolutionary data. Covers key concepts of biological evolution, including adaptive evolution, neutral evolution, evolution of sex, genomic conflict, speciation, phylogeny and comparative methods, life's history, coevolution, human evolution, and evolution of disease.

D. Bartel, Y. Hwang

7.340-7.344 Advanced Undergraduate Seminar

Prereq: 7.06 or 7.28

U (Fall, Spring)

2-0-4 units

Can be repeated for credit.

Seminars covering topics of current interest in biology with a focus on how to understand experimental methods and design and how to critically read the primary research literature. Small class size facilitates discussions and interactions with an active research scientist. Students visit research laboratories to see firsthand how biological research is conducted. Contact Biology Education Office for topics.

H. R. Horvitz

7.345-7.349 Advanced Undergraduate Seminar

Prereq: 7.06 or 7.28

U (Fall, Spring)

2-0-4 units

Can be repeated for credit.

Seminars covering topics of current interest in biology with a focus on how to understand experimental methods and design and how to critically read the primary research literature. Small class size facilitates discussions and interactions with an active research scientist. Students visit research laboratories to see firsthand how biological research is conducted. Contact Biology Education Office for topics.

H. R. Horvitz

7.35 Human Genetics and Genomics

Subject meets with 7.75

Prereq: 7.06, (7.03 and 7.05), or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Upper-level seminar offering in-depth analysis and engaged discussion of primary literature on the dimensions and phenotypic consequences of variation in human genes, chromosomes, and genomes. Topics include the human genome project; pedigree analysis; mutation and selection; linkage and association studies; medical genetics and disease; sex chromosomes and sex differences; the biology of the germ line; epigenetics, imprinting, and transgenerational inheritance; human origins; and evolutionary and population genetics. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20 total for versions meeting together.

D. Page

7.36 The CRISPR Revolution: Engineering the Genome for Basic Science and Clinical Medicine

Subject meets with 7.91

Prereq: 7.06 or permission of instructor

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Provides a conceptual and technical understanding of genome editing systems and their research and clinical applications. Focuses on fundamental CRISPR biology in bacteria, methodologies for manipulating the genome with CRISPR, and the application of genome engineering in research and medicine. Combines lectures and literature discussions with critical analysis and assigned readings, with the goal of better understanding how key discoveries were made and how these are applied in the real work. Class work includes brief writing assignments as well as a final research proposal and scientific presentation. Students taking the graduate version explore the subject in greater depth, in part through additional assignments.

*F. Sánchez-Rivera, J. Weissman***7.37[I] Molecular and Engineering Aspects of Biotechnology**

Same subject as 10.441[I], 20.361[I]

Prereq: (7.06 and (2.005, 20.110[I], 3.012, or 5.60)) or permission of instructor

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

4-0-8 units

Covers biological and bioengineering principles underlying the development and therapeutic use of recombinant proteins and stem cells; glycoengineering of recombinant proteins; normal and pathological signaling by growth factors and their receptors; receptor trafficking; monoclonal antibodies as therapeutics; protein pharmacology and delivery; stem cell-derived tissues as therapeutics; RNA therapeutics; combinatorial protein engineering; and new antitumor drugs.

*Staff***7.371[I] Biological and Engineering Principles Underlying Novel Biotherapeutics**

Same subject as 20.371[I]

Prereq: 7.06

U (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Covers biological and bioengineering principles underlying the development and therapeutic use of recombinant proteins and immune cells. Special attention to monoclonal antibodies and engineered immune system cells as therapeutics; protein- and glyco-engineering to enhance protein function; protein pharmacology and delivery; nucleic acid- based biotherapeutics; generation of functional cells and tissues from embryonic stem cells and iPS cells; and immune cell-cancer cell interactions in cancer immunotherapy.

*J. Chen, H. Lodish***7.38 Design Principles of Biological Systems**

Subject meets with 7.83

Prereq: 7.06 or permission of instructor

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Introduces students to biological control mechanisms governing decision-making and tools to decipher, model, and perturb these mechanisms. Systems presented include signal transduction, cell cycle control, developmental biology, and the immune system. These systems provide examples of feedback and feedforward control, oscillators, kinetic proofreading, spatial and temporal averaging, and pattern formation. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

*D. Lew, H. Wong***7.45 The Hallmarks of Cancer**

Subject meets with 7.85

Prereq: None. *Coreq:* 7.06

U (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the fundamentals of cancer biology and cancer treatment. Topics include cancer genetics, genomics, and epigenetics; familial cancer syndromes; signal transduction, cell cycle control, and apoptosis; cancer metabolism; stem cells and cancer; metastasis; cancer immunology and immunotherapy; conventional and molecularly-targeted therapies; and early detection and prevention. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

M. Hemann, T. Jacks

7.458[J] Advances in Biomanufacturing

Same subject as 10.03[J]
 Subject meets with 7.548[J], 10.53[J]
 Prereq: None
 U (Spring; second half of term)
 1-0-2 units

Seminar examines how biopharmaceuticals, an increasingly important class of pharmaceuticals, are manufactured. Topics range from fundamental bioprocesses to new technologies to the economics of biomanufacturing. Also covers the impact of globalization on regulation and quality approaches as well as supply chain integrity. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

J. C. Love, S. Springs

7.46 Building with Cells

Subject meets with 7.86
 Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05
 U (Fall)
 4-0-8 units

Focuses on fundamental principles of developmental biology by which cells build organs and organisms. Analyzes the pivotal role of stem cells in tissue maintenance or repair, and in treatment of disease. Explores how to integrate this knowledge with engineering tools to construct functional tissue structures. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments

L. Boyer, P. Li

7.48 Cancer Therapeutics (New)

Prereq: Biology (GIR)
 U (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Provides students with an in-depth exploration of how underlying mechanisms of cancer biology informs real-world therapeutic strategies. Students examine key classes of cancer treatments and their modes of action, critically assess preclinical and clinical trial data, and discuss the challenges of drug development — from resistance and toxicity to patient stratification. Highlights emerging therapies, such as immunotherapy and targeted treatments, while addressing the ethical and economic factors that influence clinical decision-making in cancer care. Limited to 20.

M. Hemann, W. Henry

7.49[J] Developmental Neurobiology

Same subject as 9.18[J]
 Subject meets with 7.69[J], 9.181[J]
 Prereq: 7.03, 7.05, 9.01, or permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Considers molecular control of neural specification, formation of neuronal connections, construction of neural systems, and the contributions of experience to shaping brain structure and function. Topics include: neural induction and pattern formation, cell lineage and fate determination, neuronal migration, axon guidance, synapse formation and stabilization, activity-dependent development and critical periods, development of behavior. Students taking graduate version complete additional readings that will be addressed in their mid-term and final exams.

E. Nedivi

7.390 Practical Internship Experience in Biology

Prereq: None
 U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
 0-1-0 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

For Course 7, 5-7, and 6-7 students participating in curriculum-related off-campus internship experiences in biology. Before enrolling, students must consult the Biology Education Office for details on procedures and restrictions, and have approval from their faculty advisor. Subject to department approval. Upon completion, the student must submit a write-up of the experience, approved by their faculty advisor.

Staff

7.391 Independent Study in Biology

Prereq: None
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall, Spring, Summer)
 Units arranged [P/D/F]
 Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

Staff

7.392 Independent Study in Biology

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

*Staff***7.393 Independent Study in Genetics**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

*Staff***7.394 Independent Study in Biochemistry**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

*Staff***7.395 Independent Study in Cell and Molecular Biology**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

*Staff***7.396 Independent Study in Experimental Biology**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

*Staff***7.Co1 Machine Learning in Molecular and Cellular Biology**

Subject meets with 3.Co1[], 3.C51[], 7.C51, 10.Co1[], 10.C51[], 20.Co1[], 20.C51[]

Prereq: Biology (GIR), 6.100A, 6.Co1, and 7.05

U (Spring)

2-0-4 units

Introduces machine learning as a tool to understand natural biological systems, with an evolving emphasis on problems in molecular and cellular biology that are being actively advanced using machine learning. Students design, implement, and interpret machine learning approaches to aid in predicting protein structure, probing protein structure/function relationships, and imaging biological systems at scales ranging from the atomic to cellular. Students taking graduate version complete an additional project-based assignment. Students cannot receive credit without completion of the core subject 6.Co1.

*J. Davis***7.S391 Special Subject in Biology**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

*Staff***7.S392 Special Subject in Biology**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

*Staff***7.S399 Special Subject in Biology**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

Staff

7.UR Undergraduate Research

Prereq: Permission of department
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Undergraduate research opportunities in the Department of Biology.
Staff

7.URG Undergraduate Research

Prereq: Permission of department
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Undergraduate research opportunities in the Department of Biology.
Staff

Graduate Subjects

MIT-WHOI Joint Program in Oceanography

7.410 Applied Statistics

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Provides an introduction to modern applied statistics. Topics include likelihood-based methods for estimation, confidence intervals, and hypothesis-testing; bootstrapping; time series modeling; linear models; nonparametric regression; and model selection. Organized around examples drawn from the recent literature.

WHOI Staff

7.411 Seminars in Biological Oceanography

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Selected topics in biological oceanography.
WHOI Staff

7.421 Problems in Biological Oceanography

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Advanced problems in biological oceanography with assigned reading and consultation.

Information: M. Neubert (WHOI)

7.430 Topics in Quantitative Marine Science

Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussions on quantitative marine ecology. Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.431 Topics in Marine Ecology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussions on ecological principles and processes in marine populations, communities, and ecosystems. Topics vary from year to year.

M. Neubert

7.432 Topics in Marine Physiology and Biochemistry

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussions on physiological and biochemical processes in marine organisms. Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.433 Topics in Biological Oceanography

Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussions on biological oceanography. Topics vary from year to year.

S. Laney, M. Hahn

7.434 Topics in Zooplankton Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)
 2-0-4 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussions on the biology of marine zooplankton.
 Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.435 Topics in Benthic Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)
 2-0-4 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussions on the biology of marine benthos. Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.436 Topics in Phytoplankton Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)
 2-0-4 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussion on the biology of marine phytoplankton.
 Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.437 Topics in Molecular Biological Oceanography

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)
 2-0-4 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussion on molecular biological oceanography.
 Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.438 Topics in the Behavior of Marine Animals

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered
 2-0-4 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussion on the behavioral biology of marine animals. Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.439 Topics in Marine Microbiology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)
 2-0-4 units
 Can be repeated for credit.

Lectures and discussion on the biology of marine prokaryotes. Topics vary from year to year.

WHOI Staff

7.440 An Introduction to Mathematical Ecology

Prereq: Calculus I (GIR), 1.018[J], or permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 Acad Year 2026-2027: Not offered
 3-0-9 units

Covers the basic models of population growth, demography, population interaction (competition, predation, mutualism), food webs, harvesting, and infectious disease, and the mathematical tools required for their analysis. Because these tools are also basic to the analysis of models in biochemistry, physiology, and behavior, subject also broadly relevant to students whose interests are not limited to ecological problems.

M. Neubert (WHOI)

7.470 Biological Oceanography

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Intended for students with advanced training in biology. Intensive overview of biological oceanography. Major paradigms discussed, and dependence of biological processes in the ocean on physical and chemical aspects of the environment examined. Surveys the diversity of marine habitats, major groups of taxa inhabiting those habitats, and the general biology of the various taxa: the production and consumption of organic material in the ocean, as well as factors controlling those processes. Species diversity, structure of marine food webs, and the flow of energy within different marine habitats are detailed and contrasted.

WHOI Staff

7.491 Research in Biological Oceanography

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 G (Fall, Spring, Summer)
 Units arranged [P/D/F]
 Can be repeated for credit.

Directed research in biological oceanography not leading to graduate thesis and initiated prior to the qualifying exam.

WHOI Staff

Microbiology (MICRO)

7.492[J] Methods and Problems in Microbiology

Same subject as 1.86[J], 20.445[J]

Prereq: None

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Students will read and discuss primary literature covering key areas of microbial research with emphasis on methods and approaches used to understand and manipulate microbes. Preference to first-year Microbiology and Biology students.

M. Laub

7.493[J] Microbial Genetics and Evolution

Same subject as 1.87[J], 12.493[J], 20.446[J]

Prereq: 7.03, 7.05, or permission of instructor

G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Covers aspects of microbial genetic and genomic analyses, central dogma, horizontal gene transfer, and evolution.

A. D. Grossman, O. Cordero

7.494 Research Problems in Microbiology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Directed research in the fields of microbial science and engineering.

Staff

7.498 Teaching Experience in Microbiology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For qualified graduate students in the Microbiology graduate program interested in teaching. Classroom or laboratory teaching under the supervision of a faculty member.

Staff

7.499 Research Rotations in Microbiology

Prereq: None. *Coreq: 7.492[J] or 7.493[J]*; permission of instructor
G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Introduces students to faculty participating in the interdepartmental Microbiology graduate program through a series of three lab rotations, which provide broad exposure to microbiology research at MIT. Students select a lab for thesis research by the end of their first year. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the program and the many research programs available, students may be able to work jointly with more than one research advisor. Limited to students in the Microbiology graduate program.

Staff

7.MTHG Microbiology Graduate Thesis

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of research leading to the writing of a PhD thesis. To be arranged by the student and the appropriate MIT faculty member.

Staff

Biology

7.50 Method and Logic in Molecular Biology

Prereq: None. *Coreq: 7.51 and 7.52*; or permission of instructor
G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Logic, experimental design and methods in biology, using discussions of the primary literature to discern the principles of biological investigation in making discoveries and testing hypotheses. In collaboration with faculty, students also apply those principles to generate a potential research project, presented in both written and oral form. Limited to Course 7 graduate students.

I. Cheeseman, R. Lehmann, D. Lew, S. Vos, J. Weissman, Y. Yamashita

7.51 Principles of Biochemical Analysis

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

6-0-6 units

Principles of protein biochemistry, emphasizing structure, equilibrium studies, kinetics, and experimental design. Topics include macromolecular binding and specificity, allosteric systems, mechanisms of inhibition, enzyme principles, single-molecule studies, structure-function relationships, molecular evolution, and library methods. Case studies examine mechanisms of transcription factors, kinases, molecular machines, and other proteins.

*L. Case, A. Keating, J. Davis***7.52 Genetics for Graduate Students**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Principles and approaches of genetic analysis, including Mendelian inheritance and prokaryotic genetics, yeast genetics, developmental genetics, neurogenetics, and human genetics.

*C. Kaiser***7.540[J] Advances in Chemical Biology**

Same subject as 5.54[J], 20.554[J]

Prereq: 5.07[J], 5.13, 7.06, and permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 5.54[J].

*L. Kiessling, O. Johnson***7.546[J] Science and Business of Biotechnology**

Same subject as 15.480[J], 20.586[J]

Prereq: None. Coreq: 15.401; permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-6 units

Covers the new types of drugs and other therapeutics in current practice and under development, the financing and business structures of early-stage biotechnology companies, and the evaluation of their risk/reward profiles. Includes a series of live case studies with industry leaders of both established and emerging biotechnology companies as guest speakers, focusing on the underlying science and engineering as well as core financing and business issues. Students must possess a basic background in cellular and molecular biology.

*J. Chen, A. Koehler, A. Lo, H. Lodish***7.548[J] Advances in Biomanufacturing**

Same subject as 10.53[J]

Subject meets with 7.458[J], 10.03[J]

Prereq: None

G (Spring; second half of term)

1-0-2 units

Seminar examines how biopharmaceuticals, an increasingly important class of pharmaceuticals, are manufactured. Topics range from fundamental bioprocesses to new technologies to the economics of biomanufacturing. Also covers the impact of globalization on regulation and quality approaches as well as supply chain integrity. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

*J. C. Love, S. Springs***7.549[J] Case Studies and Strategies in Drug Discovery and Development**

Same subject as 15.137[J], 20.486[J], HST.916[J]

Prereq: None

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

2-0-4 units

See description under subject 20.486[J].

*A. W. Wood***7.55 Breakthroughs in Longevity and Rejuvenation**

Subject meets with 7.25

Prereq: (7.03 and 7.05) or permission of instructor

G (Spring)

2-0-7 units

Stresses skills in reading, discussing, and writing scientific papers, with a focus on new findings in the field of aging, including the consequences of immune decline on health, the clearance of senescent cells, and the possibility of immortality by applying epigenetic reprogramming to humans. Culminates in an oral presentation for undergraduate students and a mini-review by graduate students. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

L. Guarente, A. Ringel

7.571 Quantitative Analysis of Biological Data

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring; first half of term)

2-0-4 units

Application of probability theory and statistical methods to analyze biological data. Topics include: descriptive and inferential statistics, an introduction to Bayesian statistics, design of quantitative experiments, and methods to analyze high-dimensional datasets. A conceptual understanding of topics is emphasized, and methods are illustrated using the Python programming language. Although a basic understanding of Python is encouraged, no programming experience is required. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*S. Ovchinnikov***7.572 Quantitative Measurements and Modeling of Biological Systems**

Prereq: None

G (Spring; second half of term)

2-0-4 units

Quantitative experimental design, data analysis, and modeling for biological systems. Topics include absolute/relative quantification, noise and reproducibility, regression and correlation, and modeling of population growth, gene expression, cellular dynamics, feedback regulation, oscillation. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*G. W. Li***7.573 Modern Biostatistics**

Subject meets with 7.093

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

G (Spring; first half of term)

2-0-4 units

Provides a practical introduction to probability and statistics used in modern biology. Topics covered include discrete and continuous probability distributions, statistical modeling, hypothesis testing, independence, conditional probability, multiple test corrections, nonparametric methods, clustering, correlation, linear regression, principal components analysis with applications to high-throughput DNA sequencing and image data analysis. Homework is in the R programming language, but prior programming experience is not required. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*A. Jain, H. Wong***7.574 Modern Computational Biology**

Subject meets with 7.094

Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05

G (Spring; second half of term)

2-0-4 units

Introduces modern methods in computational biology, focusing on DNA/RNA/protein analysis. Topics include next-generation DNA sequencing and sequencing data analysis, RNA-seq (bulk and single-cell), and protein dynamics. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*A. Jain, H. Wong***7.58 Molecular Biology**

Subject meets with 7.28

Prereq: 7.03, 7.05, and permission of instructor

G (Spring)

5-0-7 units

Detailed analysis of the biochemical mechanisms that control the maintenance, expression, and evolution of prokaryotic and eukaryotic genomes. Topics covered in lecture and readings of relevant literature include: gene regulation, DNA replication, genetic recombination, and mRNA translation. Logic of experimental design and data analysis emphasized. Presentations include both lectures and group discussions of representative papers from the literature. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*E. Calo, Y. Soto-Feliciano***7.59[J] Teaching College-Level Science and Engineering**

Same subject as 1.95[J], 5.95[J], 8.395[J], 18.094[J]

Subject meets with 2.978

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

2-0-2 units

See description under subject 5.95[J].

*J. Rankin***7.60 Cell Biology: Structure and Functions of the Nucleus**

Prereq: 7.06 or permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Eukaryotic genome structure, function, and expression, processing of RNA, and regulation of the cell cycle. Emphasis on the techniques and logic used to address important problems in nuclear cell biology. Lectures on broad topic areas in nuclear cell biology and discussions on representative recent papers.

L. Boyer, R. Young

7.61[J] Eukaryotic Cell Biology: Principles and Practice

Same subject as 20.561[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Emphasizes methods and logic used to analyze structure and function of eukaryotic cells in diverse systems (e.g., yeast, fly, worm, mouse, human; development, stem cells, neurons). Combines lectures and in-depth roundtable discussions of literature readings with the active participation of faculty experts. Focuses on membranes (structure, function, traffic), organelles, the cell surface, signal transduction, cytoskeleton, cell motility and extracellular matrix. Ranges from basic studies to applications to human disease, while stressing critical analysis of experimental approaches. Enrollment limited.

*M. Krieger, M. Yaffe***7.62 Microbial Physiology**

Subject meets with 7.21

Prereq: 7.03, 7.05, and permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Biochemical properties of bacteria and other microorganisms that enable them to grow under a variety of conditions. Interaction between bacteria and bacteriophages. Genetic and metabolic regulation of enzyme action and enzyme formation. Structure and function of components of the bacterial cell envelope. Protein secretion with a special emphasis on its various roles in pathogenesis. Additional topics include bioenergetics, symbiosis, quorum sensing, global responses to DNA damage, and biofilms. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

*G. C. Walker, A. J. Sinskey***7.63[J] Immunology**

Same subject as 20.630[J]

Subject meets with 7.23[J], 20.230[J]

Prereq: 7.06 and permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)

5-0-7 units

Comprehensive survey of molecular, genetic, and cellular aspects of the immune system. Topics include innate and adaptive immunity; cells and organs of the immune system; hematopoiesis; immunoglobulin, T cell receptor, and major histocompatibility complex (MHC) proteins and genes; development and functions of B and T lymphocytes; immune responses to infections and tumors; hypersensitivity, autoimmunity, and immunodeficiencies. Particular attention to the development and function of the immune system as a whole, as studied by modern methods and techniques. Students taking graduate version explore the subject in greater depth, including study of recent primary literature.

*S. Spranger, M. Birnbaum***7.64 Molecular Mechanisms, Pathology and Therapy of Human Neuromuscular Disorders**

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

Investigates the molecular and clinical basis of central nervous system and neuromuscular disorders with particular emphasis on strategies for therapeutic intervention. Considers the in-depth analysis of clinical features, pathological mechanisms, and responses to current therapeutic interventions. Covers neurodegenerative diseases, such as Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Frontal Temporal Dementia, and neuromuscular disorders, such as Myotonic Dystrophy, Facio Scapular Humeral Dystrophy, and Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

*D. Housman***7.65[J] Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience Core I**

Same subject as 9.015[J]

Prereq: None

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 9.015[J].

J. T. Littleton, M. Sheng, B. Weissbourd

7.66 Molecular Basis of Infectious Disease

Subject meets with 7.26

Prereq: 7.06 and permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Focuses on the principles of host-pathogen interactions with an emphasis on infectious diseases of humans. Presents key concepts of pathogenesis through the study of various human pathogens. Includes critical analysis and discussion of assigned readings. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

E. Chen, R. Lamason

7.68[J] Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience Core II

Same subject as 9.013[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 9.013[J].

G. Feng, L.-H. Tsai

7.69[J] Developmental Neurobiology

Same subject as 9.181[J]

Subject meets with 7.49[J], 9.18[J]

Prereq: 9.011 or permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 9.181[J].

E. Nedivi, M. Heiman

7.70 Regulation of Gene Expression

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Seminar examines basic principles of biological regulation of gene expression. Focuses on examples that underpin these principles, as well as those that challenge certain long-held views. Topics covered may include the role of transcription factors, enhancers, DNA modifications, non-coding RNAs, and chromatin structure in the regulation of gene expression and mechanisms for epigenetic inheritance of transcriptional states. Limited to 40.

Staff

7.71 Biophysical Technique

Subject meets with 5.78

Prereq: 5.13, 5.60, (5.07[J] or 7.05), and permission of instructor

G (Spring)

5-0-7 units

Introduces students to modern biophysical methods to study biological systems from atomic, to molecular and cellular scales. Includes an in-depth discussion on the techniques that cover the full resolution range, including X-ray crystallography, electron-, and light microscopy. Discusses other common biophysical techniques for macromolecular characterizations. Lectures cover theoretical principles behind the techniques, and students are given practical laboratory exercises using instrumentation available at MIT. Meets with 5.78 when offered concurrently.

C. Drennan, T. Schwartz

7.72 Stem Cells, Regeneration, and Development

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Topics include diverse stem cells, such as muscle, intestine, skin, hair and hematopoietic stem cells, as well as pluripotent stem cells. Topics address cell polarity and cell fate; positional information and patterning of development and regeneration; limb, heart and whole body regeneration; stem cell renewal; progenitor cells in development; responses to wounding; and applications of stem cells in development of therapies. Discussions of papers supplement lectures.

P. Reddien

7.73 Principles of Chemical Biology

Prereq: 7.05 and permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Spanning the fields of biology, chemistry and engineering, class addresses the principles of chemical biology and its application of chemical and physical methods and reagents to the study and manipulation of biological systems. Topics include bioorthogonal reactions and activity-based protein profiling, small molecule inhibitors and chemical genetics, fluorescent probes for biological studies, and unnatural amino acid mutagenesis. Also covers chemical biology approaches for studying dynamic post-translational modification reactions, natural product biosynthesis and mutasynthesis, and high-throughput drug screening. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

B. Imperiali, J. K. Weng

7.74[J] Topics in Biophysics and Physical Biology

Same subject as 8.590[J], 20.416[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall)

2-0-4 units

Provides broad exposure to research in biophysics and physical biology, with emphasis on the critical evaluation of scientific literature. Weekly meetings include in-depth discussion of scientific literature led by distinct faculty on active research topics. Each session also includes brief discussion of non-research topics including effective presentation skills, writing papers and fellowship proposals, choosing scientific and technical research topics, time management, and scientific ethics.

J. Gore, N. Fakhri

7.75 Human Genetics and Genomics

Subject meets with 7.35

Prereq: 7.52 or permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Upper level seminar offering in-depth analysis and engaged discussion of primary literature on the dimensions and phenotypic consequences of variation in human genes, chromosomes, and genomes. Topics include the human genome project; pedigree analysis; mutation and selection; linkage and association studies; medical genetics and disease; sex chromosomes and sex differences; the biology of the germ line; epigenetics, imprinting, and transgenerational inheritance; human origins; and evolutionary and population genetics. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 20 total for versions meeting together.

D. Page

7.76 Topics in Macromolecular Structure and Function

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)

3-0-6 units

In-depth analysis and discussion of classic and current literature, with an emphasis on the structure, function, and mechanisms of proteins and other biological macromolecules.

Staff

7.77 Nucleic Acids, Structure, Function, Evolution, and Their Interactions with Proteins

Prereq: 7.05, 7.51, or permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Surveys primary literature, focusing on biochemical, biophysical, genetic, and combinatorial approaches for understanding nucleic acids. Topics include the general properties, functions, and structural motifs of DNA and RNA; RNAs as catalysts and as regulators of gene expression; RNA editing and surveillance, and the interaction of nucleic acids with proteins, such as zinc-finger proteins, modification enzymes, aminoacyl-tRNA synthetases and other proteins of the translational machinery. Includes some lectures but is mostly analysis and discussion of current literature in the context of student presentations.

D. Bartel, A. Jain

7.80 Fundamentals of Chemical Biology

Subject meets with 5.08[J], 7.08[J]

Prereq: 5.13 and (5.07[J] or 7.05)

G (Spring)

4-0-8 units

Spanning the fields of biology, chemistry, and engineering, this class introduces students to the principles of chemical biology and the application of chemical and physical methods and reagents to the study and manipulation of biological systems. Topics include nucleic acid structure, recognition, and manipulation; protein folding and stability, and proteostasis; bioorthogonal reactions and activity-based protein profiling; chemical genetics and small-molecule inhibitor screening; fluorescent probes for biological analysis and imaging; and unnatural amino acid mutagenesis. The class will also discuss the logic of dynamic post-translational modification reactions with an emphasis on chemical biology approaches for studying complex processes including glycosylation, phosphorylation, and lipidation. Students taking the graduate version are expected to explore the subject in greater depth.

B. Imperiali, M. Shoulders

7.81[J] Systems Biology

Same subject as 8.591[J]

Subject meets with 7.32

Prereq: (18.03 and 18.05) or permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 8.591[J].

J. Gore

7.82 Development, Disease and Therapeutics

Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Seminar covering the key concepts and technological approaches that are used to study and treat human disease. Topics include human genome variation, germline editing, gene therapy, stem cell derived organoids, human-animal chimeras and the application of these approaches to the study and treatment of major diseases.

R. Jaenisch, R. Young

7.83 Design Principles of Biological Systems

Subject meets with 7.38
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Introduces students to biological control mechanisms governing decision-making and tools to decipher, model, and perturb these mechanisms. Systems presented include signal transduction, cell cycle control, developmental biology, and the immune system. These systems provide examples of feedback and feedforward control, oscillators, kinetic proofreading, spatial and temporal averaging, and pattern formation. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

D. Lew, H. Wong

7.84 Advanced Concepts in Immunology

Subject meets with 7.24
Prereq: None. *Coreq:* 7.63[*J*]; or permission of instructor
G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Provides a comprehensive and intensified understanding of the relevance of the immune system beyond immunity. Focuses on how the immune system intersects with all aspects of body homeostasis/physiology or disease and how the immune system can be manipulated therapeutically. New advances in the intersection of immunology with cancer biology, neurosciences, metabolism, aging, and maternal-fetal immunology or similar explored. Presents new modern methods and techniques applicable beyond immunology. Includes critical analysis and discussion of assigned readings. Students apply principles learned in class to generate a potential research project, presented in a written form. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

H. Moura Silva, E. Chen

7.85 The Hallmarks of Cancer

Subject meets with 7.45
Prereq: None. *Coreq:* 7.06; permission of instructor
G (Fall)
4-0-8 units

Provides a comprehensive introduction to the fundamentals of cancer biology and cancer treatment. Topics include cancer genetics, genomics, and epigenetics; familial cancer syndromes; signal transduction, cell cycle control, and apoptosis; cancer metabolism; stem cells and cancer; metastasis; cancer immunology and immunotherapy; conventional and molecularly-targeted therapies; and early detection and prevention. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

M. Hemann, T. Jacks

7.86 Building with Cells

Subject meets with 7.46
Prereq: 7.03 and 7.05
G (Fall)
4-0-8 units

Focuses on fundamental principles of developmental biology by which cells build organs and organisms. Analyzes the pivotal role of stem cells in tissue maintenance or repair, and in treatment of disease. Explores how to integrate this knowledge with engineering tools to construct functional tissue structures. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

L. Boyer, P. Li

7.88[*J*] Protein Folding in Health and Disease

Same subject as 5.48[*J*]
Prereq: (5.07[*J*] or 7.05) and permission of instructor
Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Spring; first half of term)
3-0-3 units

See description under subject 5.48[*J*].

M. Shoulders

7.89[*J*] Topics in Computational and Systems Biology

Same subject as CSB.100[*J*]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
2-0-10 units

See description under subject CSB.100[*J*]. Preference to first-year CSB PhD students.

C. Burge

7.91 The CRISPR Revolution: Engineering the Genome for Basic Science and Clinical Medicine

Subject meets with 7.36

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Provides a conceptual and technical understanding of genome editing systems and their research and clinical applications. Focuses on fundamental CRISPR biology in bacteria, methodologies for manipulating the genome with CRISPR, and the application of genome engineering in research and medicine. Combines lectures and literature discussions with critical analysis and assigned readings, with the goal of better understanding how key discoveries were made and how these are applied in the real work. Class work includes brief writing assignments as well as a final research proposal and scientific presentation. Students taking the graduate version explore the subject in greater depth, in part through additional assignments.

F. Sánchez-Rivera, J. Weissman

7.930[J] Research Experience in Biopharma

Same subject as 20.930[J], CSB.930[J]

Prereq: None

G (Fall)

2-10-0 units

See description under subject 20.930[J]. Enrollment may be limited based on availability of internship opportunities.

C. Burge, B. Engelward

7.931 Independent Study in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

Staff

7.932 Independent Study in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Acad Year 2026-2027: G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of study or research to be arranged with a department faculty member.

Staff

7.933 Research Rotations in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Introduces students to faculty participating in the Biology graduate program through a series of lab rotations, which provide broad exposure to biology research at MIT. Students select a lab for thesis research by the end of their first year. Limited to students in the Biology graduate program.

Staff

7.934 Teaching Experience in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For qualified graduate students in the Biology graduate program interested in teaching. Classroom or laboratory teaching under the supervision of a faculty member.

Staff

7.935 Responsible Conduct in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (IAP)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Sessions focus on the responsible conduct of science. Considers recordkeeping and reporting; roles of mentor and mentee; authorship, review, and confidentiality; resolving conflicts; misfeasance and malfeasance; collaborations, competing interests, and intellectual property; and proper practices in the use of animal and human subjects. Limited to second-year graduate students in Biology.

S. Hrvatin, Y. Yamashita

7.936 Professional Development in Biology

Prereq: None

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

0-2-0 units

Can be repeated for credit.

Required for course 7 doctoral students to gain professional perspective in career development activities such as internships, scientific meetings, and career and networking events. Written report required upon completion of activities.

Staff

7.941 Research Problems

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Directed research in a field of biological science, but not contributory to graduate thesis.

Consult Biology Education Office

7.942 Research Problems

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Directed research in a field of biological science, but not contributory to graduate thesis.

Consult Biology Education Office

7.95 Cancer Biology

Prereq: 7.85 and permission of instructor

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Advanced seminar involving intensive analysis of historical and current developments in cancer biology. Topics address principles of apoptosis, principles of cancer biology, cancer genetics, cancer cell metabolism, tumor immunology, and therapy. Detailed analysis of research literature, including important reports published in recent years. Enrollment limited.

R. Weinberg, O. Yilmaz

7.98[J] Neural Plasticity in Learning and Memory

Same subject as 9.301[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 9.301[J]. Juniors and seniors require instructor's permission.

S. Tonegawa

7.C51 Machine Learning in Molecular and Cellular Biology

Subject meets with 3.Co1[J], 3.C51[J], 7.Co1, 10.Co1[J], 10.C51[J], 20.Co1[J], 20.C51[J]

Prereq: Biology (GIR), 6.100A, 6.C51, and 7.05

G (Spring)

2-0-4 units

Introduces machine learning as a tool to understand natural biological systems, with an evolving emphasis on problems in molecular and cellular biology that are being actively advanced using machine learning. Students design, implement, and interpret machine learning approaches to aid in predicting protein structure, probing protein structure/function relationships, and imaging biological systems at scales ranging from the atomic to cellular. Students taking graduate version complete an additional project-based assignment. Students cannot receive credit without completion of the core subject 6.C51.

J. Davis

7.S930 Special Subject in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

Staff

7.S931 Special Subject in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

Staff

7.S932 Special Subject in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

Staff

7.S939 Special Subject in Biology

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Covers material in various fields of biology not offered by the regular subjects of instruction.

Staff

7.THG Graduate Biology Thesis

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of research leading to the writing of a Ph.D. thesis; to be arranged by the student and an appropriate MIT faculty member.

Staff