

Systems Biology

Systems biology is a rapidly emerging area of research activity at the interface of mathematics, engineering, and the biological sciences. It is becoming increasingly clear that research and teaching in biology requires the mastery of advanced quantitative skills. Rapid advances in our understanding of biological phenomena at the molecular level have clarified how much more we need to understand about complex networks of interconnected, nonlinear elements that characterize biological systems at multiple levels. The biochemical networks that control cell metabolism, the neural networks that control behavior, the hierarchical network of multiple levels of cells, tissues, and organs of an organism, and the networks of interactions between species in an ecosystem all share this general character. New quantitative methods are needed to find statistically significant patterns in biological data, to search larger databases of molecules for homology, to create and simulate complex models of biological systems, and to analyze and understand the dynamics of biological patterns that extend over space and time. The systems biology degree program is intended to provide the quantitative skills and multidisciplinary understanding necessary for work in this area.

Required Courses

Biology

BIOL 250: Intro. to Cell and Molecular Sys.
BIOL 251: Intro. to Org. and Pop. Sys.
BIOL 300: Dynamics of Biol. Sys. I
BIOL 306: Dynamics of Biol. Sys. II

Mathematics

MATH 121: Calculus I
MATH 122: Calculus II
MATH 223: Calculus III
MATH 224: Differential Eqs.

Chemistry

CHEM 105: Principles of Chem. I
CHEM 113: Principles of Chem. Lab
CHEM 106: Principles of Chem. II

Computer Science

ENGR 131: Elem. Computer Programming
EECS 233: Intro. to Data Structures
EECS 341: Intro. to Database Sys.

Physics

PHYS 121: General Physics I
PHYS 122: General Physics II

Statistics

STAT 312: Stats for Eng. & Science

Biology Electives (12 cr.)

Approved currently courses include

- BIOL 301: Biotechnology Laboratory: Genes and Genetic Engineering
- BIOL 325: Cell Biology
- BIOL 326: Genetics

- BIOL 328: Plant Genomics and Proteomics
- BIOL 362: Developmental Biology
- BIOL 388: Undergraduate Research
- BIOL 388S: Undergraduate Research — SAGES Capstone
- BIOL 390: Advanced Undergraduate Research

Subspecialty Electives (6 cr.)

Students will choose one of the approved subspecialization tracks. Approved tracks currently include

- **Neuroscience Track:** BIOL 373: Introduction to Neurobiology, plus one other neurobiology elective
- **Genetics Track:** two of BIOL 301: Biotechnology Lab: Genes and Genetic Engineering, BIOL 326: Genetics, BIOL 328: Plant Genomics and Proteomics
- **Evolutionary Biology Track:** BIOL 225: Evolution, plus one other evolution or ecology course

Systems electives (6 cr.)

Students will take two of the following six courses. (The courses need not come from the same sequence.)

- **Systems Sequence:** EECS 216: Fundamental Systems Concepts, EECS 324: Simulation Techniques in Engineering
- **Informatics Sequence:** MATH 304: Discrete Mathematics, EECS 340: Algorithms and Data Structures
- **Signal Sequence:** EECS 246: Signals and Systems, EECS 313: Signal Processing

Sample Schedule

Year 1

Fall

Open Elective (3)
MATH 121: Calculus I (4)
CHEM 105: Principles of Chem. I (3)
CHEM 113: Principles of Chem. Lab. (2)
SAGES: First Year Seminar (4)
PHED 101: Physical Education (0)

Spring

BIOL 250: Intro. to Cell. and Molec. Sys. (3)
MATH 122: Calculus II (4)
CHEM 106: Principles of Chem. II (3)
ENGR 131: Elem. Computer Programming (3)
SAGES: University Seminar (3)
PHED 102: Physical Education (0)

Year 2

Fall

BIOL 251: Intro. to Org. & Pop. Sys. (3)
PHYS 121: General Physics I (4)
MATH 223: Calculus III (3)
SAGES: University Seminar (3)
GER Course (3)

Spring

BIOL 300: Dyn. of Biol. Sys. I (3)
PHYS 122: General Physics II (4)
MATH 224: Calculus IV (3)
GER Course (3)
Open Elective (3)

Year 3

Fall

BIOL 306: Dyn. of Biol. Sys. II (3)
Open Elective (3)
GER Course (3)
EECS 233: Intro. Data Structures (3)
STAT 312: Basic Stats for Eng. & Science (3)

Spring

BIOL Elective (3)
BIOL Elective (3)
GER Course (3)
EECS 341: Intro. Database Sys. (3)
SAGES: Dept. Sem. (3)

Year 4

Fall

BIOL 388S: Senior Capstone (3)
Systems Elective (3)
BIOL Subspecialty Elective (3)
BIOL Elective (3)
Open Elective (3)

Spring

BIOL 390: Adv. Undergrad. Research (3)
Systems Elective (3)
BIOL Subspecialty Elective (3)
Open Elective (3)
Open Elective (3)