



Syllabus for Bio 105 – Molecular Biology Spring, 2008



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Class Meetings: **Tuesdays, Thursdays 10:30-11:45** (block D+) in **Barnum 114**
Optional recitation on **Mondays (9:30-10:20)** in **Barnum 114**

Office Hours: **Monday 10:30-11:30 AM, Tuesday 1:30-2:30 PM**
To arrange a different time, please send me an e-mail.

Textbook: Molecular Biology of the Gene, 6th edition, by Watson *et al.*
A copy of the textbook will be on reserve in Tisch library.
Additional handouts and papers will be posted on the Bio105 Blackboard site.

Course Prerequisite: Bio 41 (Genetics) or the equivalent. This class assumes that you have a working knowledge of basic molecular genetics. If your background in this is shaky, you may want to find a copy of a good genetics textbook for reference.

Course Description: Molecular biology deals with nucleic acids and proteins and how these molecules interact within the cell to promote proper growth, division, and development. It is a large and ever-changing discipline. This course will emphasize the molecular mechanisms of DNA replication, repair, transcription, protein synthesis, and gene regulation in different organisms. We will study the techniques and experiments used to discern these mechanisms, often referring to the original scientific literature. In addition, we will take an in-depth look at some rapidly evolving fields, including regulation of gene expression by chromatin structure and by small RNAs.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following:

1. Explain and give examples of how ionic, hydrogen, and hydrophobic interactions determine the structure of nucleic acids and proteins and modulate the specificity of binding between them.
2. Distinguish between different techniques that are used to isolate, separate, and probe for specific proteins, nucleic acids, and their interactions. Identify experimental questions for which specific techniques are appropriate and give examples of their limitations.
3. Compare and contrast the mechanisms of bacterial and eukaryotic DNA replication, DNA repair, transcription, and translation.
4. Explain how DNA topology and chromatin structure affects the processes of DNA replication, repair, and transcription.
5. Give examples of DNA and histone modifications and predict how they will affect gene expression.
6. Describe mechanisms by which DNA can be damaged and describe the molecular mechanisms by which protein complexes repair different forms of DNA damage.
7. Provide examples of how homologous recombination, site-specific recombination, and transposition can promote both genome stability and genetic diversity.
8. Describe how RNA splicing occurs and explain how alternative splicing generates protein diversity.
9. Contrast different modes of gene regulation in bacteria and eukaryotes at both pre- and post-transcriptional levels.
10. Explain the molecular mechanisms of gene regulation by small RNAs.
11. Analyze which of various molecular biology experimental techniques is best to answer a particular biological question.
12. Interpret and critique data from primary research articles.
13. Write both an individual and a group review about a primary research article.

GRADING POLICIES

Hour exam, lowest score	20%
Hour exams, two highest scores (25% each)	50%
Journal club paper reviews (5% each)	20%
Class participation	10%

Exams: There will be three exams comprised of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. The questions will largely be drawn from annotated lecture slides, in-class activities, and journal club discussions. Your lowest exam grade will count as 20% of your final grade, and the other two exams will each count 25%. **No make-up exams will be given.** If you know in advance that you will miss an exam, please notify me at least one week ahead of time so that we can make alternate arrangements. If you miss an exam due to a documented health or family-related emergency, your other two exams will each count 35% of your total grade. Requests for re-grades must be made in writing within one week after the day the exam is returned.

Exam #1	Tuesday, February 12
Exam #2	Thursday, March 13
Exam #3	Tuesday, April 22

Journal club paper reviews: Four of the class meetings are reserved for in-class discussion of primary research papers. During these journal clubs, we will focus on the data presented in the figures and tables, and small groups will be asked to present figures from the paper. In addition, for each paper, you will be asked to write a short (**1-2 page**) review describing the main findings of the paper and the implications of the research. Instructions for these reviews will be posted on Blackboard and distributed in class. Your reviews should be submitted using the Digital Dropbox feature of Blackboard prior to the discussion. For journal clubs 1 & 3, you will turn in an individual review. For journal clubs 2 & 4, you will submit a group review. The groups will be determined in class.

Class participation: Your class participation grade will be determined by your attendance record, level of involvement during in-class activities, and by the quantity and quality of your contributions during journal club presentations and discussions.

Academic honesty: You are encouraged to work with each other to do the problem sets and to discuss the journal articles—science is a collaborative affair. However, your journal club paper reviews and exams should be your intellectual property only. If you use information from review papers or other articles, be sure to properly cite your sources. Any type of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with harshly, including a grade of ‘zero’ on the assignment and possible other penalties as detailed in Tufts’ written policies.

RESOURCES

Bio105 Blackboard web site: Problem sets, journal club articles, handouts for class, and additional resources will be posted on the course web site <http://blackboard.tufts.edu/>.

Lectures: Lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard 2-3 days prior to the lecture. These will serve as a guide to what you should focus on in the assigned readings. I will annotate these slides during lecture. Because I frequently provide outlines, additional notes, and in-class activities during lectures, the on-line slides by themselves will not adequately prepare you for exams.

Recitations: Yes, Monday morning at 9:30 is early, but recitations provide an opportunity for you to clarify questions from the previous week’s lectures, try your hand at sample exam questions, and get key insights into the next journal club paper. I make it worthwhile for anyone who attends.

Problem sets: Problem sets containing practice problems and questions representative of exam material will be posted on the Blackboard web site. They are designed to highlight the important concepts from lecture and to give you practice with the types of questions found on exams. Some of these problems will be the focus of the recitations, but I recommend that you first attempt these problems on your own as the topics are addressed in lecture, and then discuss your answers in the context of a study group.

“Brain thaw” papers: Several times during the semester, I will hand out a “brain thaw” question in class. These questions pertain to difficult concepts and are intended to mitigate the “brain freeze” that often accompanies these types of questions. They also help you to prepare for the exams. For each question, I will ask for a typed, **one-page** (no more!) answer. These papers are entirely optional, but for each answer that you submit, you may earn 1 percentage point of extra credit towards your final grade.

Disclaimer: The instructor retains the right to modify this syllabus based on extenuating circumstances including but not limited to fluctuating oil prices, influenza pandemics, rising sea levels, or the instructor winning the lottery.

Tentative Schedule of Bio 105 Topics

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment before class</u>
<u>Unit 1</u>	Nucleic acids, proteins, and chromatin structure	
Th Jan 17	Introduction to course	Handouts
M Jan 21	<i>No recitation – Tufts Holiday</i>	
T Jan 22	Nucleic acid & protein structure	MBG 71-116, 127-133
W Jan 23	Recitation (Tufts Monday) – how to read a paper	Handouts
Th Jan 24	Techniques for analysis of nucleic acids & proteins	MBG 739-751, 764-782
M Jan 28	Recitation	Problem set 1, #1-4
T Jan 29	Cloning genes, sequencing genomes, genomics	MBG 753-764, 703-715, 135-144
Th Jan 31	DNA topology and chromatin	MBG 117-126, 157-174
M Feb 4	Recitation – how to write a paper review	Problem set 1, #5-13
T Feb 5	Chromatin structure, modification, and gene expression	MBG 174-187, 620-626
Th Feb 7	Journal Club #1, Paper review # 1 due	Makedonski <i>et al.</i> paper
M Feb 11	<i>No recitation</i>	
T Feb 12	Exam 1	Material through 2/7
Th Feb 14	Career opportunities using molecular biology	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment before class</u>
Unit 2		
M Feb 18	<i>No recitation - Tufts holiday</i>	
T Feb 19	DNA replication	MBG 144-154,187-191,195-230
W Feb 20	Last day to drop without record of enrollment	
Th Feb 21	Guest lecture (Tufts Monday schedule)	
M Feb 25	Recitation	Problem set 2, #1-4
T Feb 26	Initiation, termination, and regulation of replication	MBG 230-254
Th Feb 28	DNA damage and repair	MBG 257-281
M Mar 3	Recitation	Problem set 2, #5-11
T Mar 4	Journal club # 2, Group paper review # 2 due	Parker <i>et al.</i> paper 1
Th Mar 6	Homologous vs. site-specific recombination	MBG 283-334
M Mar 10	Recitation	Problem set 2, #12-15
T Mar 11	Transposition	MBG 334-364 (not Mu section)
Th Mar 13	Exam 2	Material through 3/11
March 17-21	Spring Break	
Unit 3		
Regulation of gene expression		
M Mar 24	Recitation (go over exam 2)	
T Mar 25	Transcription in prokaryotes	MBG 377-396
Th Mar 27	Transcription in eukaryotes & RNA processing	MBG 396-412, 452-453
M Mar 31	Recitation	Problem set 3, #1-4
T Apr 1	RNA splicing and alternative splicing	MBG 415-448
Th Apr 3	Journal Club #3, Paper review # 3 due	Colot <i>et al.</i> paper
M Apr 7	Recitation	Problem set 3, #5-8
T Apr 8	Translation and its regulation	MBG 457-503, 514-517
Th Apr 10	Regulation of gene expression I	MBG 547-568, 633-640
M Apr 14	Recitation	Problem set 3, #9-12
T Apr 15	Regulation of gene expression II	MBG 503-514, 589-619
Th Apr 17	Regulation of gene expression by RNA interference	MBG 641-657
M Apr 21	<i>No recitation – Tufts holiday</i>	
T Apr 22	Exam 3	Material through 4/17
Th Apr 24	MicroRNAs and their relatives	Handouts
M Apr 28	Recitation – group time	
M Apr 28	Last day to withdraw with grade of ‘W’	
TBD	Journal Club # 4, Group paper review # 4 due	Zorrilla <i>et al.</i> paper