Bio 11.07: Major Events in the History of Life & The Human Genome

Instructor: Prof. Kevin J. Peterson, 321 LSC

Meeting time: 10A TTH 10:10 AM-12:00 PM; X hour Wednesday 3:30-4:20, Room 201 LSC

Office Hours: Monday & Friday 3-5 PM Rm 200 LSC; Tuesday 2-4 PM Rm 321 LSC, Wednesday 10:30 AM-12:30 PM 321 LSC, or by appointment

Readings: Journal articles are uploaded on Canvas.

Over the course of the last 4.5 billion years, Life has faced a number of challenges, and in response has evolved a number of remarkable innovations. These innovations are written in DNA, and thus molecular fossils for many of the major events in the history of life can be found within our very own genomes. This course will survey the human genome, and each week we will take one gene and pursue the contextual geologic and genetic fossil records of this gene to explore a major theme in Biology, whether Evolution, Information, Communication, or Extinction. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I will lecture on that week’s topic, and the X-hrs will be used to either go over homework, catch up on lecture material, or for quizzes (see below). Homework will not be collected or graded – it is simply a chance for you to explore different kinds of topics and problems that might be asked on a quiz and/or on an exam.

There is no required textbook. Instead readings for each week are posted in Canvas, as is the weekly PowerPoint presentation. Nonetheless, feel free to purchase any text book that you like or have easy access to – going over certain topics (e.g., protein synthesis, mitosis etc.) will certainly help you better understand the topic, but it should not be necessary in order to understand the intent of or the material presented within the lecture. At the end of this syllabus I also provide a recommended list of books organized by each weekly topic for you to purse at your leisure.

Schedule

Week 1. “Evolution: 18S rDNA and the Genealogy of Life”
   Xhr (9/13): Cladistics and phylogenetic trees.

Week 2. “Information: RPS3 and Molecular Fossils of an Ancient RNA World”
   Xhr (9/20): Northern analyses.

Week 3. “Individualization: ERVW-1 (Syncytin-2) and The Origin of Cells, Selfish Genes, and Higher Selectable Units”
   **Xhr: First Quiz on Event 1 (Evolution)**

Week 4. “Metabolism: SOD1, Photosynthesis, the Rise of Atmospheric Oxygen, and the Origin of Eukaryotes”
   **Xhr: Second Quiz on Event 2 (Information)**

Week 5. “Reproduction: BRCA2, Mitosis, and the (Convergent?) Evolution of DNA”
Xhr: Review Session for Midterm

**TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAMINATION OVER EVENTS 1-4.**


Xhr: Southern analyses.

Week 7. “Interaction: HOXB6 and the Cambrian Explosion of Life”

Xhr: Gene trees and species trees.

Week 8. “Regulation: DLX5, the Origin of Limbs, and the Terrestrialization of Planet Earth”

**Xhr: Third Quiz on Events 5 (Reproduction), 6 (Speciation) & 7 (Interaction)**


Xhr: What does “race” mean to you? (Discussion)

Week 10. “Extinction: KERATIN5 and the Genetic Legacies of Extinct Lineages”

Xhr: Review for Final

**FINAL EXAMINATION TBA OVER EVENTS 5-10.**

**Grading**

Assessment in this course is divided into exams and quizzes. First, there are two examinations, each worth 35% of your final grade. The first exam (the midterm) is an open-note open-reading take home examination that covers Events 1-4. Although open note, this exam is not to be done in collaboration with any other student(s), and you are not allowed to discuss the exam in any manner with other students (past or present). The final exam, which covers Events 5-10, is an in-class exam, but like the midterm is open note, open reading, and again not done in collaboration with any other student. During both exams access to Canvas is allowed, but you are prohibited for searching for items of information on the internet (this is actually for your own benefit!).

Second, there are three quizzes each worth 10% of your grade. These are closed note, closed reading assessments that take place during specified X hours. Each quiz covers slightly more material than the preceding quiz (see the syllabus for details).

Homework is not graded, but instead is intended to help you with particular subject matters, especially as it relates to specific biological techniques relevant to that's week’s lecture/material. Feel free to work with friends, dorm buddies etc. on the homework.

If you have any questions at any time please ask!

**Weekly Schedule**
Each week we will have lecture on Tuesday and Thursday in the 10A time slot. During X-hr at 3:30 PM on Wednesdays we will either lecture over information required for your homework, go over homework, review for the midterm, or have a quiz. On Mondays from 3-5 PM I will hold group office hours in Room 205 of the LSC. On Tuesday afternoon from 2-4 and Wednesday morning from 10-12 I will hold individual office hours in my office (Room 321 LSC). I am happy to meet with students individually at other times - email to make an appointment.

Each week's materials except the powerpoint files (for example the homework, readings etc) will be made available on Sunday of that week. I will post the lecture .pptx file by Monday night at the latest and the Wednesday X-hr file (assuming there is one) by noon of that day. If there are any problems with any of the files PLEASE EMAIL ME. Sometimes things look fine on my end but don't on yours and the only way for me to know that there is a problem is for you to let me know.

Finally, note that on Sunday October 15th I will hold office hours in my office (321 LSC) to address any questions you might have about your midterm examination. I will upload a sign-up sheet as we approach that day for you to grab a 15-minute window to meet with me.

**Laptop Policy**

The use of laptops in class is perfectly fine; all I ask is that you be respectful of those around you and stay off sites that might distract not only you, but (and more importantly) those around you (e.g., Facebook, ESPN, email etc).

**Student Needs**

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~accessibility/facstaff/) may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

I recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including: your undergraduate dean (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/), Counseling and Human Development (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~chd/), and the Student Wellness Center (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/). Please do not hesitate to utilize these resources, and if there is anything I can do as well, come speak with me at your convenience.

**Study Groups**

The Tutor Clearinghouse offers study groups to students enrolled in Bio11. Study Groups offer enrolled students the opportunity to engage, in a group environment, with former students who have taken this course and done well. Study Groups meet once/week for 1.5 hours to review questions/concerns about material currently being studied. This format also allows students to develop a deeper understanding/wider perspective of the course material by engaging with others and hearing questions about the material that they, themselves, might not have considered. To
learn more about the Study Group program, go to: www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/tutors/index.html and click on the link for STUDY GROUPS. To register for a study group, go to: www.studygroups.dartmouth.edu and authenticate with your NetTid and password. Then choose which study group is of interest and register. For additional support for your leaning see the Academic Skills Center at: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/

Bio11 Spaces

It is important for me to emphasize that ALL Bio11 spaces, whether the classroom, study group rooms, group study sessions, or my office, respects all people including race, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, body shape, size, and ability. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated.