

Division of Life Science
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

LIFS 2010 Modern approaches to Biochemical and Cell Biological Research
Fall semester, 2020-2021

Instructors: Prof. David Banfield (E-mail: bodkb@ust.hk) (course coordinator)
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Time and Venue: Monday & Wednesday 12:00 - 13:20

Course Description

Credits: 3
Pre-requisite: LIFS 1902

Course description

This is the signature course for the Program in Biochemistry and Cell Biology (BCB). Our current understanding of biochemical reactions and internal organization of a cell was progressively enriched by technological and conceptual breakthroughs in the 20th century. This course will use personal and scientific stories of six prominent scientists to highlight research areas that are still being actively pursued today. Topics to include are DNA and protein biochemistry, physical and chemical methods for biological research, and the use of genetically tractable model organisms.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Understand how inter-disciplinary approaches contribute to the advancement of biological research.
2. Understand the historical and personal context in which landmark discoveries were made by prominent scientists.
3. Explain and differentiate the technologies used for modern biological research.
4. Apply the knowledge on biochemical and cellular processes to create posts on social media.
5. Create short biographies of prominent scientists by gathering and analyzing information on their discoveries.

Teaching approach

The primary delivery mode of the course will be interactive online lectures and tutorials. Students are expected to participate in live discussions. Short videos and written articles will be provided as supplementary background information for out-of-class review. The scientific validity of articles from the mass media will be evaluated during tutorials through instructor-led class discussions.

Assessment scheme

Assessment Task	Percentage	Intended Learning Outcomes assessed
Final written exam ^A	45%	1, 2, 3
Written assignment 1 ^B	30%	1, 2, 3, 5
Written assignment 2 ^C	25%	1, 2, 3, 4

A. 3 hours.

B. This individual written assignment is due on **26-Oct-2020**. Students will choose one from a list of scientists and write his/her biography focusing on one significant scientific discovery. The report should be 2 pages of text (12 pt font size, Times New Roman, single space, 1-inch page margins, excluding references).

C. This individual assignment is due on **07-Dec-2020**. Students are required to create an infographic to compare and contrast classical and recent techniques for tackling a biological question. Choose one from a list of questions. The template for the infographic will be provided.

Students are expected to maintain academic integrity for all assessments (<http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/student-1.html>).

Assessment rubrics

Written assignment: biography of a scientist

	Needs improvement	Good	Excellent
Summarizes the scientific training received by the scientist.	Inaccurate information on the doctoral and postdoctoral research of the scientist.	Correct information on the doctoral and postdoctoral research of the scientist.	Correct information on the doctoral and postdoctoral research of the scientist. Identification of potential links between his/her training and subsequent independent research.
Describes and explains the methods used in the seminal discovery of the scientist.	Lack of understanding of the methods and their potential shortcomings.	Understands the methods and their potential shortcomings.	Understands the methods and identifies alternative approaches that can be used to extend principles established by the discovery.
Assesses the influence of the seminal discovery to scientific research by others.	Incorrect interpretation on the scientific impact of the seminal discovery.	Correct interpretation on the scientific impact of the seminal discovery.	Correct interpretation on the scientific impact of the seminal discovery. Identification of potential societal impact of the discovery.

Student learning resources

Course material will be drawn from scientific and general news articles that are publicly available. Essential material will be deposited into the CANVAS system.

Course schedule

Week	Date	Topic		Instructor
1	07-09-2020	Module 1: Seymour Benzer	Lecture	Mak
	09-09-2020	Biological clocks	Lecture	Mak
2	14-09-2020		Lecture	Mak
	16-09-2020		Tutorial	Mak
3	21-09-2020	Module 2: John Sulston	Lecture	Mak
	23-09-2020	Animal development	Lecture	Mak
4	28-09-2020		Lecture	Mak
	30-09-2020		Tutorial	Mak
5	05-10-2020	Module 3: Eugene Kennedy	Lecture	Mak
	07-10-2020	Fat synthesis	Lecture	Mak
6	12-10-2020		Lecture	Mak
	14-10-2020		Tutorial	Mak
7	19-10-2020	Briefing session on written assignments		Mak
	21-10-2020	Module 4: George Palade	Lecture	Banfield
8	26-10-2020	Public holiday		
	28-10-2020	Secretion and membrane trafficking	Lecture	Banfield
9	02-11-2020		Lecture	Banfield
	04-11-2020		Tutorial	Banfield
10	09-11-2020	Module 5: Gunter Blobel	Lecture	Banfield
	11-11-2020	Mechanisms of protein targeting	Lecture	Banfield
11	16-11-2020		Lecture	Banfield
	18-11-2020		Tutorial	Banfield
12	23-11-2020	Module 6: Paul Nurse	Lecture	Banfield
	25-11-2020	The mechanics of the cell cycle	Lecture	Banfield
13	30-11-2020		Lecture	Banfield
	02-12-2020		Tutorial	Banfield