

The University of Pennsylvania
Biology Undergraduate Newsletter

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September 10, 2004

Fall Events for Biology Students

Study Skills for Success in Introductory Biology
will be held
Tuesday, September 14, 4:00 pm
Goddard Lab, Room 101

Dr. Brenda Casper, Undergraduate Chair and Professor of Biology, and **Dr. Myrna Cohen**, Associate Director of Learning Resources, will give suggestions for learning biology, with particular relevance for BIOL 101, 102, and 121.

Getting a Biology Degree from Penn?
What one insect-plant ecologist did with his!

Monday, September 27, 6:30 - 8 pm
Leidy Lab, Room 10

Anurag Agrawal (C '94), faculty member in the Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University will talk about his research and answer questions about his experiences as a Biology undergrad at Penn and how his degree helped him to where he is now.

Career Night for Biology Majors
will be held
Tuesday, October 5, 7-8:30 pm
Goddard Lab, Room 101

Come and learn about graduate training, scientific careers, job opportunities, and internships in biology! **Dr. Scott Poethig** will speak on careers in genetics and cell and molecular biology. **Dr. Peter Petraitis** will discuss careers in ecology and evolution. **Dr. Warren Ewens** will talk about careers in computational biology. **Ms. Peggy Curchack** of Career Services will discuss job opportunities and internships for Biology Majors.

Career Night for Biology Majors will **not** deal with medical careers. See reverse side for Career Services workshops dealing specifically with medical careers.

Watch for:
Info Night for Undergrads
Interested in the Biology Major
coming in October

(date will be announced in the next Newsletter)

Dr. Brenda Casper, Undergraduate Chair, **Dr. Sally Zigmund** and **Dr. Greg Guild** will briefly describe the requirements and opportunities of the **Biology Major** and answer any questions about the major.

Looking for a small course for Fall 2004?

BIOL 240: Ecology and Population Biology

Taught by visiting lecturer Dr. Beekey on MWF, 11:00-noon. Life on earth is hard; nothing gets a free ride. So how do organisms cope with everyday life? Should I go out and find something to eat or should I avoid getting eaten today? Should I keep on growing or put all of my energy into reproducing? In ecology, it all comes down to trade-offs. This course will focus on the strategies and adaptations organisms require to get through life. Sex, foraging, social behaviors, predation, parental care, mimicry, competition, growth, death, and many more topics will be covered throughout the semester.

BIOL 436: Molecular Physiology

Taught by Dr. D. Ren on Tuesdays, 9:00 – 10:30am. This course is designed for advanced undergraduate and graduate students interested in molecular physiology of sensory signal transduction. The major topics this year will be signal transduction mechanisms used by membrane ion channels and receptors that detect the sensory stimuli and transmit the signals to the nervous system. Modern molecular/structural techniques (patch clamp, protein crystallization, molecular genetics, expression cloning and protein purification) will be introduced along with each topic. References will be articles from the primary literature. There is no exam but each student is required to write a 10-page research proposal and to critique proposals written by fellow students.

Updates on Fall 2004 Biology Courses

Cancelled Courses:

BIOL 330: Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy and Evolution
This course has been rescheduled for the Spring 2005 semester.

BIOL 464: Introduction to Field Ecology

Look for this field course to be offered in the Fall 2005 semester.

Course Changes:

BIOL 419: Evolutionary Genetics

Change in meeting time. Interested students should attend an organizational meeting on **Friday, Sept. 10 at 2:00** in Goddard Lab 102.

Other Course of Interest

GEOL 415: Paleobotany

Taught by Dr. Hermann Pfefferkorn (hpfeffer@sas.upenn.edu)
Explore the evolution of plant life by studying the morphology, anatomy, phylogeny, taphonomy and paleoecology of fossil plants. Course includes lectures, labs and 3 field trips. Come to the organizational meeting, **Friday Sept. 10 3:00** in 251 Hayden Hall.

MEAM 338: A second course in thermodynamics

Taught by Dr. Noam Lior (lior@seas.upenn.edu)
An advanced course in classical equilibrium and nonequilibrium thermodynamics. Applications include diffusion and transport in membranes. TR 12-1:30, 305 Towne.

New Biology Instructor

The Biology Department welcomes new lecturer, Dr. Mark Beekey for the 2004-05 academic year. Dr. Beekey received his degree from the University of Delaware in 2001 and recently completed a post-doc at the University of Vermont. His research interest spans the fields of marine and freshwater ecology and has included research on the evolution of brooding in a freshwater clam and on invasive species including zebra mussels. Dr. Beekey will be teaching BIOL 240 this fall and will participate in the introductory courses in the Spring semester.

Student Advisory Board

Biology Majors or potential majors are invited to join the Biology Department Student Advisory Board. Any undergraduate who is interested is welcome to join, provided you are willing to participate in at least two of the following Student Advisory Board activities:

- attend Student Advisory Board meetings
Note: first meeting is mandatory!
- provide suggestions to the Undergraduate Chair for improving the Biology Major and Biology courses
- provide peer advising for Biology students via Internet
- organize Student-to-Student Night, offered during pre-registration to provide advice to fellow Biology students
- represent the Biology Department during the Course Majors Fair
- participate in the selection committee for the winner of the Biology Department Faculty Teaching Award.

If interested, come to the Academic Office (Leidy Lab, Room 102) or email sherwood@sas.upenn.edu

Opportunities for Undergraduates

Keep an eye on the bulletin boards on the first floor of Leidy and Goddard Labs for announcements of work and research opportunities:

Work-study students wanted to explore the role of microRNAs in plant development. Contact Dr. Scott Poethig at spoethig@sas.upenn.edu or 215-898-8916.

Work-study positions available for students seeking low stress job with flexible hours. Contact Kieran Dilks at kdilks@sas.upenn.edu or 215-573-2278.

The Weight and Eating Disorders Program in Psychiatry is seeking research assistants and work-study students to recruit patients and help coordinate data. E-mail a resume and cover letter to Stephanie Sargent at sssargent@mail.med.upenn.edu

Advanced Placement Exams

AP exams for Biol 101, Biol 102, and Biol 121 will be given on **Wednesday, September 15 at 4 pm**, in Leidy Lab, Room 10. Passing an AP exam earns 1 cu credit for the lecture portion of the course. Come to the Academic Office to sign up by 3 pm Tuesday, September 14, if you want to take any of these exams. *Don't forget to bring your photo ID to the exam.*

Transfer Students

If you are a new transfer student planning to major in Biology, please see **Dr. Brenda Casper**, Undergraduate Chair, as soon as possible to avoid mistakes in course selection. For Dr. Casper's **office hours**, please visit <http://www.bio.upenn.edu/programs/undergraduate/>.

Reminder to Seniors

If you are intending to graduate this fall, please review your worksheet through Penn-in-Touch and then check your worksheet against the requirements, listed in the **Major Manual**, to make sure you have fulfilled all requirements. If you have questions, come to the Biology Academic Office in Leidy Lab, Room 102, or email Robin Sherwood at: sherwood@sas.upenn.edu

Career Services

Pre-Health

Freshman/Sophomore Pre-Health Orientation
Tuesday, September 14 12:00-1:00pm

“Early Bird” Pre-Health Applicant Workshop

For those who want to start the 2006 application process early.
Thursday, November 11 4:00-5:30pm

Other applicant workshops will be held in the Spring.

Pre-Health Interview Workshops (for 2005 Applicants)

Thursday, September 9 12:00-1:00pm
Monday, October 4 4:00-5:00pm

Pre-Health Course Pre-Registration Workshop

For guidance in planning your future academic schedules.
Thursday, November 4 4:00-5:00pm

For further information please see the website:

http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/gradprof/gradprof_programs.html