

**IB/MCB 199: Engagement in Biology at Illinois**  
**Fall 2024**

**Instructor:**

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**Office Hours: By Appointment – in person or via zoom**

**Course Overview and Description**

This course will familiarize students with the vast array of opportunities and resources in Biology at Illinois. Students will build the skills needed to enhance and enrich their experiences as a biology student. The goal is to encourage students to take advantage of available opportunities, form an interactive community with similar interests, curate individual experiences, and enable them to set and achieve realistic goals for their academic success at Illinois and beyond.

**Course Information**

*Prerequisite:* First-year students in Biology

*Credit:* 1 hour

*Grading method:* Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U)

*Required textbook:* No textbook required. Assigned readings will be provided.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Navigate and engage with campus resources to enhance their educational experience.
- Enhance their academic performance by gaining time management skills and other learning techniques practiced in the course.
- Develop an individualized course plan for graduation through a clearer understanding of curricular options.
- Understand the importance of involvement in experiential activities such as research, volunteering, study abroad, and other extracurricular opportunities and how they complement course-based learning.
- Identify and engage with key services offered in biology, the College of LAS and the University.
- Identify and connect with peers in Biology and the community that develops.
- Describe the basic elements of what is expected of Biology students at Illinois.
- Explain the differences between, and the similarities among, the IB and MCB curricula and the other basic science options available.
- Articulate the rationale behind the goals for their major(s), minor(s), and post-graduate goals.

- Describe future career and post-graduate options that are available to those who earn IB and MCB degrees.
- Independently research, compile, and present information about career options.

### Course Schedule

**August 27<sup>th</sup>**: Week 1: Engaging with the Biology Curriculum, College of LAS and Campus

- Introductions
- Course Overview – Pre-Course Survey (getting to know you)
- IB and MCB Curriculum Overview (majors, minors, certificates, etc.)
  - Honors concentrations
  - Teaching licensure
  - Double major/Dual degree
  - Discipline- and Vocation-based Study Abroad Experiences
- Academic Dates and Deadlines
- Make advising appointment.
- Plan for meeting with peer mentor, instructor, or alumni mentor

**September 3<sup>rd</sup>**, Week 2: Engaging with the Academic Community

- Attending Office hours
- Study Skills/Strategies
- Time Management
- Tutoring Resources and Getting Help
  - Learning Centers
- Peer Mentors and Peer Tutors
- Student Code
- Academic Integrity (The use of AI tools)

**September 10<sup>th</sup>**, Week 3: Elevating Mental Health

- Catch up from weeks 1 and 2
- Self-Advocacy
- Counseling Center
- Managing Stressors
- Mentorship
- Campus Resources
- Community Resources

**September 17<sup>th</sup>**, Week 4: Experiential Learning: Beyond the Classroom

- Finding Your Why
  - EPICS/ONET
- Registered Student Organizations
- Leadership Opportunities
- Campus Job Opportunities
- Volunteering, Community Outreach
- Study Abroad

- Alumni/Career Mentorship for MCB – deadline to apply is October 23

#### September 24<sup>th</sup>, Week 5: Undergraduate Research

- What is research?
- Why engage in research?
- How to find a research position
- Presenting your research
- Publishing your research
- Sign up for Lab tours

#### October 1<sup>st</sup>, Week 6: Lab tours via sign up with peer volunteers

#### October 8<sup>th</sup>, Week 7: Planning ahead

- Make an Advising Appointment
- Degree Audit Reporting System
- General Education Requirements
- Course Schedule and Planning
- Minors and Certificates to enhance your degree
- Consider Your Why

#### October 15<sup>th</sup>, Week 8: Engaging with Your Career Path: Career Planning and Career Options

- What Can You Do with a Biology Degree?
- Career Planning
- Handshake and LinkedIn
- Job Shadowing, Informational Interviews, and Internships
- Alumni/Career Mentorship
- Career Center and Other Campus Resources

#### October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Week 9: Engaging with Your Career Path: Furthering your Education

- Pre-Health
  - Typical course requirements
  - Recommended competencies
  - Required experiences
- Graduate School
  - What is graduate school?
  - Diversity of grad school options
  - How to prepare for graduate school
- Financial Considerations
  - <https://ipromise.illinois.edu/professional>

#### October 29<sup>th</sup>, Week 10: Wrap Up/Check-in before Thanksgiving break

- Revisit Mental Health
- Revisit Academic Strategies

- Reflections

### Assignments & Grading

- **Unsatisfactory (< 70%):** Incomplete (under the given word limit or missing critical components) and/or exhibits minimal effort and/or is incoherent.
- **Satisfactory (71-90%):** All parts complete (meets minimum word limit and contains a majority of required information) with average level of detail and makes sense.
- **Outstanding (91-100%):** All parts complete with extreme attention to detail.
- Attendance/Participation (5pts x 10) = 50 points
- Intro-Course Survey = 10 points
- Essay Reflections (10 points x 4) – 40 points
- Time Management Assignment– 10 points
- Interaction with Instructor, or Faculty – 20 points
- Experiential Learning OR Career infographic/essay – 20 points
- Meeting with Advisor/Course Planning Form – 20 points
- Total = 170 points (Unsatisfactory < 119 point. Satisfactory > 119 points. Outstanding > 153 points)

### Assignment Descriptions

- Weekly Reflections: Essay reflections (300 word minimum) focusing on the previous week's topics. Each reflection should discuss how relevant information relates to you personally and how this information informs your current plans and future goals. One way to approach this assignment is to use a framework of "My prior knowledge was...what transformed my thinking is...what I want to learn more..."
- Time Management Assignment: online worksheets and questionnaire to help understand and organize how you are spending your time.
- Meeting with Advisor/Course Planning Form: You will be required to schedule a meeting with an MCB or IB advisor to discuss your progress toward your degree completion. In consultation with the advisor, construct a course planning form which details your remaining requirements and how/when you plan to complete them.
- Experiential Learning Plan: Based on our in-class discussions, choose a learning experience beyond the classroom that interests you to profile for this assignment. You may choose to complete this as a written essay (500-700 words) or create a one-page infographic. Either option should include information about the experience, what it entails, learning outcomes, required education and work experience, necessary skills, and why might an MCB or IB student want to choose this experience. Examples will be provided.
- Career Infographic/Essay: Based on our in-class career discussions, choose a career/profession that interests you to profile for this assignment. You may choose to complete this as a written essay (500-700 words) or create a one-page infographic. Either option should include information about job prospects, projected growth, typical

salary/earning potential, required education and work experience, necessary skills, and how an MCB or IB student can gain these skills/experiences. Examples will be provided.

- Interaction with alumni, instructor, or faculty: Choose a faculty member or an alumnus to interact with through office hours or a phone/Zoom interview. Ask them about their pathway to their current career. A variety of sample questions will be available to help drive your discussion. Then write an essay summary (500-700 words) detailing your discussion and outcomes, what you learned, and how this information is relevant and important to you.

All assignments will be graded as follows:

- o **Unsatisfactory:** Incomplete (under the given word limit or missing critical components) and/or exhibits minimal effort and/or incoherent
- o **Satisfactory:** All parts complete (meets minimum word limit and contains a majority of required components) with average level of detail and makes sense
- o **Outstanding:** All parts complete with extreme attention to detail.

### Course Calendar with Assignment Due Dates

\*\*\*All assignments are due at the beginning of class in Moodle.\*\*\*

Week Of	Topic	Assignments Due
August 27	Engaging with the Biology Curriculum, College of LAS and Campus	
September 3	Engaging with the Academic Community	Intro-Course Survey
September 10	Elevating Mental Health	Reflection #1
September 17	Experiential Learning: Beyond the Classroom	Time Management Assignment
September 24	Undergraduate research	Reflection #2
October 1	Lab tours during this week (no class T 3-4PM)	
October 8	Planning Ahead	Reflection #3
October 15	Engaging with Your Career Path: Career Planning and Career Options	
October 22	Engaging with Your Career Path: Furthering your Education	Reflection #4

		Meeting with Instructor/Faculty Assignment
October 29	Wrap Up	Course Planning Form (requires meeting with Advisor) Experiential Learning/Career Assignment

\*long-term assignments – start planning for these ASAP.

### Course Policies

Our classroom provides us a unique opportunity to get to know one another more fully, and to build on and explore ideas generated in class discussion. Building a positive, inclusive class environment requires respecting each other, your instructor, our guest speakers, and the learning process. We debate ideas in this classroom, not each other. Refrain from using any language that reflects bias against any individual, group, or culture.

Please do not hesitate to let me know of any problems that might arise or have arisen from our classroom discussions. Moreover, please let me know if I say something that makes you uncomfortable at any point in this class. You can tell me or leave an anonymous note addressed to me with the IB or MCB Advising offices.

### Contacting Biology Course Personnel:

- IB and MCB course personnel are more than happy to assist students.
- Emails to instructors will only be answered if they come from an @illinois.edu account. We will only use this account to protect your educational information and profile. As a student, please remember that when you email a staff member, it is important to include all pertinent information so that we can assist you in the most efficient and effective manner possible. This information includes:
  - The course rubric in the subject line
  - Your full first and last name
  - Your UIN (9-digit number that can be found on your iCard)
  - The course that you are concerned about (the course personnel often work with multiple courses)
  - Your section letter/number
  - The previous email "thread" or previous communicated information pertinent to the situation
- Your cooperation will help us respond much more quickly to your concerns.

### For non-academic campus assistance and support:

- See Office of Diversity, Equity and Access (ODEA), [diversity.illinois.edu](http://diversity.illinois.edu)
- Discrimination & Harassment Prevention
- Title IX
- Accessibility & Accommodations
- Inclusive Illinois

### Religious Observances and Practices:

- Students are required to submit the Request for Accommodation for Religious Observances Form (which can be found at [www.odos.illinois.edu](http://www.odos.illinois.edu)) to their instructors and the Office of the

Dean of Students requesting accommodation by the end of the second week of the course. Requests that are not submitted within this time frame may not be granted. Information about accommodations can be found in the Student Code:

<http://studentcode.illinois.edu/>.

#### **Student Advocacy Resources:**

- For student-centered advocacy programs and services visit: [mcb.illinois.edu/undergrad/advising/resources](http://mcb.illinois.edu/undergrad/advising/resources).

#### **DRES Accommodations:**

- We are committed to providing a learning environment where our students can succeed. If you require special accommodations, please contact us and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, call 217.333.4603, or email [disability@illinois.edu](mailto:disability@illinois.edu). We will try to meet all accommodations once the process has started. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive to the beginning of the semester, but begin the day you contact your professor, instructor or coordinator with a current letter of accommodation from DRES.
- If a student believes that they need DRES accommodations, they should contact DRES at [disability@illinois.edu](mailto:disability@illinois.edu).

#### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance in all IB/MCB 199 classes is **required**. Information about excused absences is specified in the University of Illinois Student Code, Article I (Student Rights and Responsibilities), Part V: Class Attendance, § 501, available at: <http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/>.

- Students are expected to arrive to class on time, remain for the entire class session, and be prepared to actively participate. If you arrive 10+ minutes late, and/or leave 10+ minutes early, you will be marked absent for that class session.
- If you find yourself ill, quarantined, or in mandatory isolation, please contact your instructor by 12pm on the day of your scheduled class and arrangements will be made for virtual attendance.
- If you are absent, you cannot earn attendance/participation points for that week. Your weekly reflection assignment for that class session will not be accepted and will be given a grade of zero (0).
- If you have an absence for more than one week that prevents you from attending or completing your work, contact your instructor.
- The Office of the Dean of Students will only provide informative letters to instructors for protracted illness of 3 or more days, certain emergencies and to be present during the serious illness of immediate family members (parents, legal guardian, spouse/partner, siblings, children, or grandparents). These letters do not excuse you from class but merely provide information for the instructor to consider with regard to excusing the absence and permitting make-up work. Students must request absence letters from the Office of the Dean of Students after the student has returned to class but not more than 10 business days after the last date of absence.
- Absences that may be excused without a letter include circumstances beyond the student's control such as medical treatment, surgery related to prolonged illness or injury, pregnancy, legal matters, citizenship or naturalization processes, or acts of nature which cause destruction to a primary residence or disrupt air travel. All will require documentation.

- Absences that may also be excused without a letter include a conference or job, graduate or professional school interviews, though a best effort should be made to schedule these events to minimize class attendance disruption. All will require documentation.
- Absences planned for the items listed in previous bullet point must be communicated to your instructor or course coordinator at least two weeks in advance of the absence. Failure to do so may result in the loss of opportunity to reschedule the missed class period and the portion of the grade associated with this class period.
- Absences that will not be excused include family events such as reunions or weddings, or presence during serious illness of extended family members (aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin).
- Unplanned absences may result in the loss of opportunity to reschedule the missed class period and, therefore, the portion of the grade associated with this class period.
- Absences will be handled according to individual course policy.

### **Classroom Participation**

- All students are expected to be active participants in our classroom environment, which includes listening, engaging in classroom discussions and activities, and fostering a positive classroom environment. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior is strictly prohibited. Cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. are not to be used in class, unless specifically instructed to do so.

### **University Information of Student Safety – Active Threats:**

- General Emergency Response Recommendations ([Emergency Response Guide](#)):
- Security Threat. The Department of Homeland Security and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office of Campus Emergency Planning recommend the following three responses to any emergency on campus: **RUN > HIDE > FIGHT**
- **Only follow these actions if safe to do so.** When in doubt, follow your instincts - you are your best advocate!
- **RUN** — Action taken to leave an area for personal safety.
  - Take the time to learn the different ways to leave your building **before** there is an emergency.
  - Evacuations are mandatory for fire alarms and when directed by authorities! No exceptions!
  - Evacuate immediately. Pull manual fire alarm to prompt a response for others to evacuate.
  - Take critical personal items only (keys, purse, and outerwear) and close doors behind you.
  - Assist those who need help, but carefully consider whether you may put yourself at risk.
  - Look for **Exit** signs indicating potential egress/escape routes.
  - If you are not able to evacuate, go to an Area of Rescue Assistance, as indicated on the front page of this plan.
  - Evacuate to Evacuation Assembly Area, as indicated on front page of this plan.
  - Remain at Evacuation Assembly Area until additional instructions are given.
  - Alert authorities to those who may need assistance.
  - Do not re-enter building until informed by emergency response personnel that it is safe to return.
  - Active Threat: IF it is safe to do so, run out of the building. Get as far away as possible. Do NOT go to the Evacuation Assembly Area.
- **HIDE** — Action taken to seek immediate shelter indoors when emergency conditions do not warrant or allow evacuation.



- o Severe Weather:
  - If you are outside, proceed to the nearest protective building.
  - If sheltering-in-place due to severe weather, proceed to the identified Storm Refuge Area or to the lowest, most interior area of the building away from windows or hazardous equipment or materials.
- o Active Threat:
  - Lock or barricade your area.
  - Get to a place where the threat cannot see you.
  - Place cell phones on silent.
  - Do not make any noise.
  - Do not come out until you receive an Illini-Alert advising you it is safe.
  - **FIGHT** — Action taken as a last resort to increase your odds of survival.
- o Active Threat: If you cannot run away safely or hide, be prepared to fight with anything available to increase your odds for survival.

### **Academic Integrity**

According to the Student Code, “It is the responsibility of each student to refrain from infractions of academic integrity, from conduct that may lead to suspicion of such infractions, and from conduct that aids others in such infractions.” It is my responsibility as an instructor to uphold the academic integrity policy of the University, which can be found at [http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1\\_part4\\_1-401.html](http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html).

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits me from emailing any grades, including final grades. Grades will be returned only in class or via the course website. Discussions of grades will occur only in my office. Any student who has suppressed their directory information pursuant to FERPA should self-identify to the instructor to ensure protection of the privacy of their attendance in this course. See <http://registrar.illinois.edu/ferpa> for more information on FERPA.