ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY

Director of undergraduate studies: Richard Prum (richard.prum@yale.edu); eeb.yale.edu

The Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (E&EB) offers broad education in the biological sciences, covering subject matter that ranges from molecules, cells, and organs through organisms to communities and ecosystems, and the evolutionary processes that shape them. The department offers a B.A. and a B.S. degree. The B.A. program is intended for students who are interested in ecology, evolution, and organismal diversity as part of a liberal education but do not intend to pursue graduate work in the discipline. The B.S. program is designed for students planning to pursue graduate study in ecology and evolutionary biology, other biological disciplines, or the environmental sciences, or to attend medical or veterinary school. The two programs share the same prerequisites and core requirements but differ in their electives and senior requirements.

Students majoring in E&EB select one of two concentrations. The concentration in Biodiversity and the Environment (formerly Track 1) emphasizes courses appropriate for careers in ecology, evolutionary biology, and environmental science; the concentration in Organismal Biology (formerly Track 2) is appropriate for premedical and preveterinary students because it allows them to use as electives many courses required by medical schools. The E&EB major offers opportunities for independent research in both laboratory and field.

COURSES FOR NONMAJORS

Several E&EB courses have no college-level prerequisites and are suitable for nonmajors. These include all 100-level offerings as well as 200-level courses that deal with particular organism groups such as plants, fish, mammals, birds, and insects or other invertebrates.

PREREQUISITES

The prerequisites for the major are intended to provide core scientific literacy; they include courses in biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics. The introductory biology sequence BIOL 101, 102, 103, and 104 is required. Also required are a two-term lecture sequence in general chemistry, CHEM 161, 163, 167, taken with associated laboratories, CHEM 134L and 136L; and one term of organic chemistry, CHEM 174 or 175, or CHEM 220 or 221, with associated laboratories, CHEM 222L or 223L. Optionally, CHEM 174, 175, taken with CHEM 222L, 223L, satisfies both chemistry requirements. Two terms of lecture courses in physics are required, PHYS 170, 171 or higher, and one term of mathematics (MATH 115 or 116) or one term of statistics & data science (S&DS 100 or 230). A different statistics course approved by the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) may be substituted for the mathematics prerequisite.

A new online program, ONEXYS for Physics, will be offered in the summer by the Mathematics and Physics departments and by the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, to review math skills needed in preparation for introductory physics courses.

Acceleration credit awarded in chemistry, mathematics, and physics, or completion of advanced courses in those departments, may be accepted in place of the corresponding prerequisites for the E&EB major. Students who have mathematics preparation equivalent to MATH 115 or higher are encouraged to take a statistics course (usually S&DS 101–106) and/or additional mathematics or statistics courses such as MATH 120, 121, 222 or 225 or MATH 226 and S&DS 220 or 230. Because chemistry courses are prerequisite to several E&EB courses, students are strongly urged to take general and organic chemistry in the first and sophomore years. Students who place out of general chemistry should take organic chemistry during their first year. Finishing the prerequisites early allows for a more flexible program in later years.

PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

Students can place out of the introductory biology sequence (BIOL 101, 102, 103, 104) only by means of the biology placement examination administered jointly by the biological science departments, E&EB, MB&B, and MCDB.

Potential E&EB majors are expected to take the mathematics placement test. Those who place above the level of MATH 112 may proceed to prerequisite courses for the E&EB major; those who place into MATH 112 must take that course before other prerequisites.

For information about placement examinations, refer to the Calendar for the Opening Days of College and the Yale College Dean’s Office website. The Chemistry department arranges placement in chemistry courses.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

B.A. degree program Beyond the prerequisites, the B.A. requires three lecture courses and one laboratory, for three and one-half course credits, and the senior requirement. In Biodiversity and the Environment, the required courses are E&EB 220, 225, and a lecture course on organismal diversity usually chosen from E&EB 246–272, along with its associated laboratory, or E&EB 326 and 327L. Other lecture courses on organismal diversity, with laboratory, are permitted with approval of the DUS, including MCD 290 and 291L. Required courses in Organismal Biology include E&EB 290; E&EB 295 or BENG 350; MCD 300 or MB&B 300; and E&EB 291L.

B.S. degree program The B.S. requirements are the same as those for the B.A., with the addition of at least two electives, for two course credits, in both concentrations. At least one of the electives must be a lecture or a seminar. Most E&EB, MCD 290 or above qualify as electives, as do most research courses and laboratories in a biological sciences department or in the Yale School of Medicine. Courses from other science departments as well as Mathematics, Statistics and Data Science, and Computer Science may qualify with permission of the DUS.
Substitutions permitted Two upper-level courses in Earth and Planetary Sciences (excluding paleobiology courses), Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Applied Physics, Computer Science, Statistics and Data Science, or Engineering and Applied Science can be substituted for the required term of organic chemistry and laboratory, and courses from different majors can be combined to meet this requirement. A second term of organic chemistry and laboratory and up to two terms of physics laboratories are allowed as electives. Courses from other departments may also be suitable as electives. All substitutions require the permission of the DUS. Residential College Seminars may not be counted toward the requirements of the major.

Limit on research courses While independent research courses may be taken multiple times for credit, there are restrictions on the number of such courses that can be included in a student’s curriculum. See Academic Regulations, section C, Course Credits and Course Loads. Interested sophomores and juniors can take E&EB 469 and E&EB 474. For information on how to become involved in research, see the E&EB Guide to Research and Research Opportunities. For information on fellowships and summer experiences, see the E&EB Guide to Fellowships and Summer Experiences.

Limit on courses taken in the professional schools Undergraduates may apply up to 4 courses taken in the professional schools for credit towards graduation. See Academic Regulations, section K, Special Arrangements for more information.

Graduate courses of interest to undergraduates Graduate courses in the biological and biomedical sciences that may be of interest to undergraduates are listed in the Graduate School online bulletin, and many are posted on the Biological and Biomedical Sciences website. There is no limit on the number of courses students may take in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Additional information is available from the DUS and the director of graduate studies. Undergraduates with an appropriate background may enroll with the permission of the director of graduate studies and the instructor.

Credit/D/Fail No course, including prerequisites, taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the E&EB major.

Roadmap See visual roadmap of the requirements.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

B.A. degree program Students in the B.A. degree program fulfill the senior requirement either by completing one term of independent study in E&EB 470 or by writing a senior essay. The senior essay may be related to the subject matter of a course, but the senior essay is a separate departmental requirement in addition to any work done in a course and does not count toward the grade in any course. Students intending to write a senior essay must obtain an approval form from the office of the DUS and have it signed by the senior essay adviser before the end of the course selection period. Senior essays must be submitted to the DUS by the last day of classes.

B.S. degree program Students in the B.S. degree program fulfill the senior requirement by completing two terms of original research in E&EB 475 and 476, or in 495 and 496.

ADVISING

First-year students considering a major in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology are invited to consult with the DUS. After the first year, students should choose an adviser from the department faculty who has interests comparable to their own and/or is a fellow of their residential college. For additional information, visit the E&EB website. Students in E&EB should consult one of the advisers assigned to their class (see below). The course schedules of all E&EB majors (including sophomores intending to major in E&EB) must be signed by a faculty member in E&EB; the signature of the DUS is not required, but is valid for any student. Students whose regular adviser is on leave can consult the DUS to arrange for an alternate.

Class of 2021: David Post
Class of 2022: Gisella Caccone and Richard Prum
Class of 2023: Martha Munoz and Marta Wells
Class of 2024: Richard Prum

Peer Mentors provide a helpful student perspective to navigating the major and the department. You are encouraged to contact them.

YEEBUG is an undergraduate group of Yale’s Ecology and Evolutionary Biology majors. The student members organize social events and panels, lead field trips, and represent the group at bazaars and academic fairs.

STUDY ABROAD

Participation in study abroad field programs is encouraged. Credit for such programs may apply toward the major; interested students should consult the DUS prior to going abroad.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites Introductory biology sequence (BIOL 101, 102, 103, 104); 2-term general chemistry lecture sequence (CHEM 161, 165 or CHEM 163, 167) with labs (CHEM 134L, 136L); 1 term of organic chemistry (CHEM 174 or 175, or CHEM 220 or 221) with labs (CHEM 222L or 223L); alternatively, CHEM 174, 175 taken with CHEM 222L, 223L satisfies both chemistry requirements; 2 terms of lecture courses in physics (PHYS 170, 171 or higher); 1 term of MATH 115, MATH 116, S&DS 100 or S&DS 230
Number of courses  
B.A. – 3½ course credits beyond prereqs (not incl senior req); B.S. – 5½ course credits beyond prereqs (not incl senior req)

Specific courses required  
For both the B.A. and the B.S. degrees in Biodiversity and the Environment – E&EB 220, 225; 1 from E&EB 246–272 with lab, or E&EB 326 and 327L; Organismal Biology – E&EB 290; E&EB 295 or BENG 350; MCDB 300 or MB&B 300; and E&EB 291L

Distribution of courses  
additionally for the B.S. – 2 electives as specified

Substitutions permitted  
With DUS permission, other math or stat course for math or stat prereq; two upper-level courses in EPS, MATH, AMTH, APHY, CPSC, S&DS, or ENAS for organic chemistry and lab; a second term of organic chemistry and lab and two physics labs may count as electives

Senior requirement  
B.A. – E&EB 470 or senior essay; B.S. – two terms of E&EB 475 and 476, or 495 and 496

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The department offers courses with no college-level prerequisites that are suitable for nonmajors. These include all 100-level offerings, as well as 200-level courses that deal with particular organism groups such as fish, mammals, birds, or insects. Some examples include:

• E&EB 115, Conservation Biology
• E&EB 125, History of Life
• E&EB 145, Plants and People
• E&EB 246, Plant Diversity and Evolution
• E&EB 250, Biology of Terrestrial Arthropods
• E&EB 255, Invertebrates
• E&EB 264, Ichthyology
• E&EB 272, Ornithology

Prospective majors and other students who would like a thorough introduction to biology should take the introductory sequence BIOL 101–104, which provides a solid foundation in modern biological science. These courses are prerequisite to all majors in the biological sciences; students who take them along with chemistry courses during their first year will have more flexible programs in later years. The sequence consists of the following half-term, half-credit courses:

• BIOL 101, Biochemistry and Biophysics
• BIOL 102, Principles of Cell Biology
• BIOL 103, Genetics and Development
• BIOL 104, Principles of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

See the Yale College Dean’s Office website for Biology placement information.

Additional prerequisites for the E&EB major include courses in mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Acceleration credit awarded in any of these subjects, or completion of advanced courses in the corresponding departments, may be accepted in place of the prerequisites. Students who already have mathematics preparation equivalent to MATH 115 or higher are encouraged to take a statistics course from S&DS 101–106, 220, or 230 and/or additional mathematics courses such as MATH 120, MATH 222, MATH 225 and MATH 226.

An online program, ONEXYS for Physics, will be offered in the summer by the Mathematics and Physics departments and by the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, to review math skills needed in preparation for introductory physics courses.

Because the required chemistry courses are prerequisite to several E&EB courses, students are strongly urged to take general and organic chemistry in the first and second years. Students who place out of general chemistry should take organic chemistry as first-year students.

Beyond the prerequisites, requirements of the E&EB major may be satisfied through either of two concentrations. Biodiversity and the Environment emphasizes courses appropriate for ecology, evolutionary biology, and environmental science careers; Organismal Biology is appropriate for premedical and preveterinary students because it allows them to use as electives many courses required by medical schools.

First-year students considering a major in E&EB are invited to consult with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS). After the first year, prospective majors should choose an adviser from the department faculty who has interests comparable to their own and/or is a fellow of their residential college. For additional information, visit the department website.
FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY

Professors  †Richard Bribiescas, †Nicholas Christakis, Michael Donoghue, Casey Dunn, Erika Edwards, †Vivian Irish, Walter Jetz, Thomas Near (Chair), David Post, Jeffrey Powell, Richard Prum, †Eric Sargis, †Oswald Schmitz, †David Skelly, Stephen Stearns, †Jeffrey Townsend, Paul Turner, †J. Rimas Vaišnys, Günter Wagner

Associate Professors  †Craig Brodersen, †Liza Comita, †Forrest Crawford, †James Noonan, Carla Starver, †Alison Sweeney, David Vasseur

Assistant Professors Martha Munoz, Alvaro Sanchez

Senior Lecturer Marta Martinez Wells

Lecturers Adalgisa Caccone, Linda Puth

†A joint appointment with primary affiliation in another department or school.

Introductory Courses Intermediate and Advanced Courses Organismal Lectures and Labs