HEB 10

Premed: Biology w/ lab

Harvard FAS
Fall 2026
4.9.26

Biology of Human Health

A multidisciplinary introduction to fundamental aspects of human biology relevant to health. Why do we age, get sick, and die? How do we stay healthy? Why are some individuals and populations more vulnerable to disease and premature death than others? And, importantly, how can each of us evaluate confusing, conflicting, and constantly changing information about health?

To address these questions without being prescriptive, this class will review how the human body evolved, explore how interactions between our inherited physiology and the environment can keep us healthy or lead to disease, and consider the powerful roles of behavior, experience and social forces as drivers of disease risk as well as our understanding of those risks.

WHEN DO WE MEET?

Monday 12:00-1:15pm
Wednesday 12:00-1:15pm
75-min lab section

Sectioning will happen after registration; register for the placeholder

HOW AM I GRADED?

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	40%
Lab assignments	35%
Class participation	5%

	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	LAB
	Part 1: How to think about human health		
W1	**<none>**	Introduction	***<none>***
W2	**<holiday>**	Medical and evoltionary perspectives on health	***<none>***
W3	Human evolution, human variation, and the myth of biological race	The big picture: major transitions in human health	*Lab 1: Evolution and Natural selection*
	Part 2: The human life cycle, reproduction, and aging		
W4	Evolution of human life history	Reproduction, sex differences, sexuality	*Lab 2: Meet the Ancestors*
W5	Maternal-fetal effects, epigenetic inheritance	Stress, hierarchy, inequality, health	*Lab 3: Human Life History*
W6	Sleep, co-sleeping, sleep deprivation as stress	Theories for evolution of aging, menopause	*Lab 4: Sleep and Aging*
	Part 3: Us v. Them v. Self		
W7	**<holiday>**	Intro to immunity and autoimmune diseases	**<none>**
W8	Cultural drivers of infectious disease evolution	Evolution of multicellularity and cancer	*Lab 5: Immunity and Infectious Disease*
W9	The microbiome	**Midterm Exam**	**<none>**
	Part 4: Eating and moving		
W10	Nutrition and digestion	Overweight and obesity	*Lab 6: Nutrition*
W11	Physical activity	Musculoskeletal health	*Lab 7: Physical Activity*
W12	Cardiovascular diseases	Diabetes, metabolic syndrome	*Lab 8: Exercise and Metabolism*
	Part 5: Cognitive and mental health		
W13	The brain and nervous system	**<holiday>**	**<none>**
W14	Mental health, including social media	The future of health	*Lab 9: Wrapping Up*



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Human Biology, Behavior, & Evolution

HBBE req.: foundation