

FIRST YEAR FAQ

BIOL 1211

Molecular and
Cell Biology

Welcome to first-year Biology, BIOL 1211: Molecular & Cell Biology! This course focuses on essential concepts in cell biology, molecular biology, and genetics. We'll study molecules, genes, and cells, and consider how these building blocks assemble into complex organisms.

This is a lecture-only course and there is no lab component. Please note that if you plan to take any second-year Biology course, you must complete the first-year BIOL courses: BIOL1211 (Molecular and Cell Biology), BIO1212 (Organismal and Ecological Biology) and BIOL1213 (Applications in Biology).

Many students have questions before the start of the course. We will go over all of the course requirements on the first day of class, but if you would like some answers before then, please see below for some general information.

Course website

Saint Mary's University uses Brightspace for course websites. The BIOL 1211 Brightspace site will be opened in the first week of September. Plan to check Brightspace regularly throughout the term for essential information, lecture slides, and important announcements.

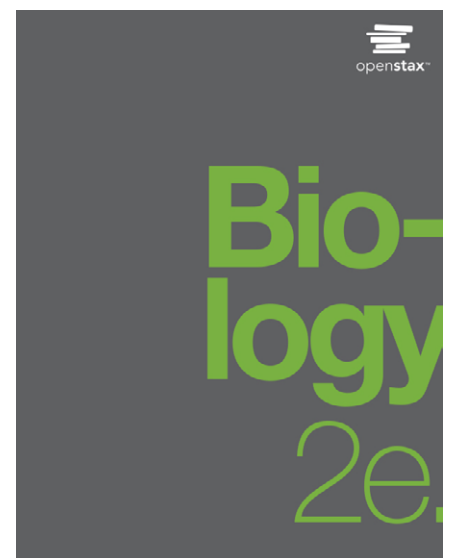
For help with Brightspace, please contact the **EIT help desk** at hdesk@smu.ca.

Textbook (required)

Biology, 2nd Edition by OpenStax. This book will be used for both BIOL 1211 and 1212. It is freely available. [Click to view.](#)

Do I need to access the textbook?

Yes! Reading is very important to your learning, vocabulary, and overall success in Biology courses. At times lectures won't cover all material you'll need to know, and the textbook will be your primary source of information on these topics.



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Attending class

The course begins on Wednesday, September 9, 2026. Please plan to attend every class and participate fully in all of the course's learning activities. The textbook and course website will not be a substitute for regular attendance and participation. Likewise, lectures will not be a substitute for textbook reading or material available on Brightspace.

During the term, you'll want to set aside some time for reading and to review your notes from class. Plan to do this regularly, at least a couple times a week, and you should have a very successful and positive experience in the course. Strategies for effective reading and studying will be covered in class. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and we look forward to seeing you in September!

