

Biology

Biologists work in countless fields and industries, from research and health care, to the environment and education. Frequently, graduates combine biology with other professional interests, such as science journalism, environmental law and biotechnology. Majoring in Biology at St. Ambrose provides you with the option to concentrate in such areas as environmental biology, pre-health professions or molecular biology.

Contact us

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 Visit the Biology Department
 Web site at www.sau.edu/biology
 For general information about
 St. Ambrose or how to apply:
 Admissions Office
 563/333-6300 or 800/383-2627
 email: admit@sau.edu
www.sau.edu

Degrees offered and required credit hours

St. Ambrose offers a Bachelor of Science in Biology. A teaching minor and non-teaching minor in Biology also are offered.

The major requires 31 credit hours in biology courses, plus additional classes in chemistry, math, statistics, and philosophy. A teaching minor requires 24 credit hours of biology, plus courses in chemistry, mathematics and education. A non-teaching minor requires 15 credit hours in biology.

Program highlights and courses

St. Ambrose Biology students are broadly educated in chemistry and mathematics while developing an excellent foundation in biology from the introductory biology courses and more advanced courses in evolution, genetics, ecology, and cell and molecular biology. For students interested in supplementing their education in biology, you can enhance the core major with one or more of the following optional concentrations: environmental biology, pre-health professions or molecular biology.

Core courses for the major are: General Biology I and II, Invertebrate or Vertebrate Zoology, Cell and Molecular Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry and Biomedical Ethics. Biology minors may also take courses such as Human Genetics, Plants and Civilization, and Environmental Science.

See our course catalog at www.sau.edu/catalog for a full description of required and elective courses.

Co-curricular activities and resources

The Biology Department occupies laboratories dedicated to instruction in human anatomy and physiology, microbiology, genetics and developmental biology, cell and molecular biology, vertebrate biology, entomology, and botany. A cadaver lab also is available to undergraduates.

The Biology Department sponsors the Biology Club, an organization that maintains a community of students interested in the life sciences through social and educational activities. The club supports field trips, guest speakers and informal discussions on topics of interest.

Biology students also are eligible for election into Tri-Beta, the national honorary fraternity for Biology majors.

Alumni

Many St. Ambrose Biology graduates have been accepted at schools such as the University of Iowa and Yale for professional studies in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, podiatry and optometry. Still others have gone on to find rewarding careers as:

- Naturalist for a county conservation commission. Graduated in 1994.
- Environmental health practitioner for a county health department. Graduated in 1993.
- Phlebotomist for a medical health center. Graduated in 1994.

About the faculty

Barry Ferm PhD, Assistant Professor and Laboratory Coordinator

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Prof. Ferm is a Quad Cities native and received his doctorate from the University of Iowa. He coordinates laboratory functions and preparations in the Biology and Chemistry Departments, as well as supervises student employees in these departments. Prof. Ferm monitors chemical handling and compliance for the University, and teaches a Laboratory Safety course. He joined St. Ambrose in 2006.

Matthew Halfhill PhD, Assistant Professor

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Prof. Halfhill teaches Genetics and Human Genetics. He holds a PhD in crop science from North Carolina State University. Determining the consequences of the implementation of genetically modified crops into agriculture has been the focus of his research. He joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 2005.

William Hixon PhD, Professor

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Prof. Hixon joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 1990. His research and teaching interests are in cell and molecular biology. He received his doctoral degree in cell biology from the University of Massachusetts.

John C. Horn PhD, Professor

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Prof. Horn has taught botany and ecology at St. Ambrose since 1982, after earning a PhD in botany from Duke University. He enjoys the challenge of teaching students of all ages at St. Ambrose, and discovering with them the endless joys of the natural world.

Kirk Kelley PhD, Professor

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Prof. Kelley received his PhD in anatomy from the University of Kansas Medical Center in 1991. Prof. Kelley mainly teaches courses on human anatomy and physiology, as well as a special course on the biology of the Rocky Mountains. He joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 1990.

Richard Legg PhD, Professor

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Prof. Legg joined the faculty of SAU in 1978 after receiving his doctoral degree from Texas A&M University. His academic interests all relate to the process of evolutionary change with a particular emphasis on the evolution of vertebrates, most notably that of mammals and birds. He also is interested in the evolution of human behavior.

Brenda Peters PhD, Professor and Department Chair

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Prof. Peters received her PhD in Physiology from Wayne State University in Detroit. Her research is concentrated on using case studies and qualitative problems to enhance student learning in physiology courses. She joined the faculty at St. Ambrose in 1993.

Sarah Vordtriede PhD, Associate Professor

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Prof. Vordtriede joined the St. Ambrose Biology Department in 2001. She received her PhD in biology from St. Louis University and has a special interest in arthropod-borne diseases, the environment and forensic science. On weekends, Prof. Vordtriede is an entomologist in the U.S. Army Reserve.