Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter for those thinking of studying Life Sciences at Warwick. We hope you enjoy finding out a little more about our School and its students and staff.

Full course details are on our web pages (warwick.ac.uk/uglifesci) and if you would like to visit the School then come along to an Open Day (warwick.ac.uk/uglifesci/events) or why not attend one of our Public Science Evenings (warwick.ac.uk/publicscience). If you have any questions about studying with us then please do get in touch via ug.lifesciences@warwick.ac.uk.

Genetics: Science & Society

Are you interested in looking at biology from a different angle? Then take a look at a module offered by our Institute of Advanced Teaching & Learning (IATL) - Genetics: Science & Society. This year three optional module focuses on the interactions between science, society, politics and culture utilising popular art, particularly films. What are your opinions on the ownership of genetic material or the relationship between science fiction movies and biotechnologies? This module is truly unique for its holistic approach, transdisciplinary nature and type of learning activities. Part of the assessment involves creating a piece of work, such as an article, a short film, a talk, a play, a painting, or a podcast, that offers a solution to a controversial topic or a question that has arisen during the module. Lindo took the module last year and here's what she thought.

"I chose Genetics: Science and Society because I wanted to explore in depth the views and opinions of novel discoveries in the medical field and/or how those discoveries can impact people. Also, what captivated me about the course is that I was given a chance to 'be my own boss' when it came to my student devised assessment. I liked the fact that I could approach it in any style of writing which in essence, allowed me to freely express myself without limits.

This is not a course where there's a definite answer. All opinions matter and broaden the subject topics discussed. Topics covered include designer babies, genetic screening, infertility and incurable disease. I enjoyed learning with people from different disciplines and having interesting debates on different issues associated with genetics.

The course was well designed and interactive. We went from extracting DNA from strawberries, having group discussions to listening to guest speakers. I learned that there are many factors that affect society when it comes to science and genetics. One particular topic I enjoyed the most, and it became the inspiration for my student devised assessment, was 'Saviour siblings'. Through this, I developed critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence in what I felt about particular issues vs how people feel when they have no choice if there are no cures for diseases/disorders."

Lindo Nyathi
4th year MBio Biomedical Science
Wellbeing

Wellbeing and respect are institutional and School priorities. As well as February’s Wellbeing Week, Wellbeing Workshops will run weekly throughout this term including topics such as Managing Stress and Anxiety, Work Life Balance, Emotional Resilience and Understanding Perfectionism. Our School’s Director of Student Wellbeing, Dr Leanne Williams, provides personal, emotional and health issue support for all our students.

Better science through better data (#scidata18) winner

Naomi Clapp, a Biomedical Science student, recently won the Springer Nature #scidata18 writing competition. As a winner, Naomi spent the day with a Nature Editor working as a reporter at the #scidata2018 conference. The conference is aimed at everyone from early career researchers to those more experienced, as well as the public. It covers the benefits and challenges of managing and publishing research data.

British Science Festival heads to Coventry

The British Science Festival is one of Europe’s largest science festivals and regularly attracts hundreds of the UK’s top scientists and speakers to discuss the latest developments in science with the public. This year the University of Warwick will host the four day event and over 15,000 visitors are expected to attend the diverse array of talks, performances and debates taking place across our campus and the city.

Ivvet Modinou, Director of the British Science Festival, said: “We are delighted to be bringing the Festival to Coventry and Warwickshire in 2019. The University of Warwick has a fantastic reputation for its research and scientific excellence, and we’re very excited to be working with the University to create a flagship event. It seems especially fitting that we will be heading to Coventry given that the area will be the UK City of Culture in three years’ time.”

Megan succeeding at Medimmune

Megan Cole is one of three Life Sciences MBio students completing a 12 month industrial placement at Medimmune, a leading global biologics R&D company. She is working in both the bioinformatics and oncology departments where her project involves creating a database to analyse and collate oncology human tissue data.

Megan has recently been awarded a gold award for helping develop bioinformatic solutions to support oncology scientists. She was also recognised for the positive feedback of the many presentations she gave to colleagues, both in the UK and USA.

“...I would highly recommend an industrial placement year as it is giving me an insight into what a role in research is like, opening my eyes to all the careers available related to research and really helping me decide on my future ambitions. Working in industry also demonstrates the applications of what I learnt at university and helps me build technical skills to complement my biological knowledge.”

Megan Cole
MBio Biochemistry with Industrial Placement

Research with Impact

Bacterial resistance to antibiotics happens when bacteria mutate and are no longer killed by the drugs used to treat the infections they cause. This has the potential to cripple our ability to treat, even mild, infectious disease and is currently high on the scientific and political agenda. Life Sciences researchers are part of the large team that makes up the Warwick Antimicrobial Interdisciplinary Centre. Their research includes developing new antimicrobials, identifying new microbial targets and investigating alternative therapies.

Silver Athena SWAN award for SLS

We are delighted to have been awarded a silver charter mark. Athena SWAN encourages and recognises commitment to advancing opportunities for women in higher education, including students, support and research staff.

“Athena SWAN is a central component of our culture and working practice and we continue to champion the development of a science department that provides collegiality and transparency to ensure equal opportunities for all” Head of School, Professor Lorenzo Frigerio