DNS ADVISING NOTES:

Substituting Courses Taken at Other Colleges for Courses Required for NS-CHE, NS-CALS, or HBHS

WHY TAKE A COURSE AT ANOTHER UNIVERSITY IN THE SUMMER?
Sometimes students want or need to take a course in the summer to facilitate their progress toward their Cornell degrees. Students involved in athletics, students planning to study abroad, and students who have entered the NS-CHE, HBHS, or NS-CALS majors late often take a course in the summer. Many courses are offered at Cornell, but studying at another college or university may be the best plan for you. Tuition charges, lack of financial aid, housing arrangements, or the need to be at home or someplace else are reasons students choose to take a course at another university in the summer.

What Courses to Take in the Summer:
Before you pick a summer course at another university be sure that you understand how the course will fit into your Cornell graduation plan. Meet with your faculty advisor to be sure that you understand college and major requirements as well as recommended course sequences for your program.

Students in HBHS, NS-CHE, and NS-CALS often find that it is wisest to take an elective course or course that meets a distribution requirement at another university. Introductory courses in humanities, social sciences, and statistics are often good choices. Many universities do not have the specialized courses in nutrition, health, agriculture, policy, or human development and other subjects that are required for these majors.

Taking biology and chemistry courses away from Cornell is not generally recommended, however, some students in NS-CHE, HBHS, and NS-CALS must do this to keep up with important course sequences. Students must pay careful attention to evaluating potential summer courses in introductory biology, introductory chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, or physiology. Detailed information about substitutions for these courses is summarized at the end of this information sheet.

Pre-Med Considerations:
It is generally recommended that pre-med students complete courses in introductory biology, introductory chemistry, organic chemistry, and introductory physics at Cornell and during the regular academic year. Taking these courses at Cornell helps medical admissions committees evaluate your credentials. However, pre-med students may have important reasons for taking summer courses at other colleges. For more information, check the Guide for Pre-Medical Students published by the Health Careers Program, your college pre-med advisor, and your faculty advisor.

Finding the Right Course:
You are responsible for finding the college and the course(s) that meet your needs. Courses at 4-year and community colleges may be accepted for credit. Compare the course descriptions and syllabi you find with those of the Cornell courses you are trying to match. In evaluating potential courses, look at how a particular course fits in comparison with the
other courses offered by the department. You may have to look at all the descriptions from
the department to determine if a given course is for majors or non-majors, if the course has
prerequisites that you meet, and if the course is preparation for advanced study in the
subject or not.

GETTING APPROVAL FOR COURSES AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES
The procedures for obtaining approval for using courses at another school toward your
Cornell degree vary according to the college you are enrolled in at Cornell. Read below for
the procedures those apply to you. (No approval is required for studying at Cornell in the
summer.)

NS and HBHS majors in the College of Human Ecology
The College of Human Ecology requires prior approval for courses you plan to take in the
summer away from Cornell. Take steps to obtain prior approval before you register in a
course at another school! With prior approval, you will be sure that the credit will be
accepted by your college and major when you complete the course. Start early because
some summer courses fill up quickly, and the approval process may take a few weeks. TIP:
If you are undecided about the course or college at which you will study, get all potential
courses approved in advance. Then you can decide which course to take. Getting approval
to study in absentia does not commit you to taking the course.

To obtain approval in Human Ecology, get a "Study in Absentia Form" from the HE
registrar's office in 145 MVR. Complete the form and attach a description of the course from
the college's catalog or web pages and a syllabus (i.e., a list of the topics taught at each
lecture). All courses in biology, chemistry, physics and courses used to meet NS and HBHS
major requirements must be approved by the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies,
B17 Savage. See the information below for criteria for applying biology and chemistry
courses at other schools to your major. If you are unsure about which course meets your
needs, speak with the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies. The Human Ecology
Registrar makes the final approval and is the person who approves all courses that are
taken to fulfill college distribution requirements. After you take the course, have the college
send an official transcript to the Human Ecology Registrar.

NS-CALS majors in College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
The CALS also does require prior approval of summer courses at other universities.
Students should discuss their summer plans with their faculty advisor to be sure that the
intended courses will meet their college and major requirements.

CALS Registrar’s Office requires students to receive pre-approval for transfer credit taken
after matriculation into CALS. Students must complete a “Pre-Approval Form for Non-
Cornell Credit” prior to completing transfer credits. The Pre-Approval Form will specify how
many transfer credits will be accepted and which graduation requirements they will be
applied to. Guidelines for using courses at other universities toward biology and chemistry
requirements are summarized below. Please consult with the CALS Registrar’s Office if you
are considering taking classes away form Cornell.

After you take the course, have the college send the transcript to the CALS Registrar. You
may meet with the CALS Registrar to discuss substitutions.
SUBSTITUTING SPECIFIC COURSES

Substitute Introductory Chemistry Courses: Substitute courses must be at least equivalent to CHEM 2070-2080. When selecting courses at other institutions, choose the introductory chemistry sequence approved for science majors, biology majors, or pre-med majors. Chemistry courses for non-science majors will not provide sufficient preparation for advanced courses at Cornell.

Substitute Introductory Biology Courses: Courses at other colleges must be at least equivalent to the BLOG 1105-1106 sequence and include a year of lab. When selecting courses at other institutions, choose the introductory biology sequence approved for science majors, biology majors, or pre-med majors. Biology courses for non-science majors at other institutions may not provide adequate preparation for advanced courses at Cornell. A key issue in selecting biology courses at other institutions is that whereas all introductory sequences generally cover the same material, they cover the material in different order. Therefore, to get exposure to the breadth of introductory biology, it is often better to complete a two-course sequence at one place than try to match a term elsewhere with a term at Cornell.

Substitute Organic Chemistry Courses: Pre-med students who choose to take organic chemistry at another university (generally not recommended) should take the course for premed students. At least eight credits of organic chemistry lecture and lab equivalent to CHEM 3570-3580 and CHEM 2510 are required. Such courses are often called “Organic I and II”, and the lecture and lab may be combined in the same course. Students who are not pre-med may take a one-semester course equivalent to CHEM 1570 and CHEM 2510. Some students choose only to take the lecture elsewhere and take the lab course at Cornell.

Substitute Physiology Courses: Physiology courses at other colleges must have a full year of introductory chemistry and biology as prerequisites in order for these courses to substitute for NS 3410 or BIOAP 3110. Many colleges offer two-semester anatomy and physiology courses that do not have these prerequisites. These courses are usually taught at the level of introductory biology and will not be satisfactory to meet the physiology requirement for NS and HBHS majors. Medical schools and biology departments in four-year colleges will be the best places to find the types of courses needed to substitute for NS 3410 or BIOAP 3110.

Substitute Biochemistry Courses: Students who need to take biochemistry at another university must be sure that the course is equivalent to the courses required at Cornell. The course must have organic chemistry as a prerequisite, cover all three required topical areas (i.e., proteins, metabolism, and molecular biology) and involve 4 semester credit hours. The course must be equivalent to NS 3200 (4 cr), BIOMG 3300 (4 cr), BIOMG 3350 (4 cr), or (BIOBM 3310 and 3320 (5 cr)). The best sources of suitable courses are medical schools and the biology and chemistry departments in four-year colleges and universities.