

FALL 2026 SUGGESTED COURSES

Marine Sciences (MSCI)

Course Load

As you adjust to Cal Poly and/or a new environment, we recommend enrolling in **12-14 units, with no more than 3 labs**. You can determine if your course has a lab by reading the course description. All course descriptions, including prerequisites, can be found in the [Cal Poly Catalog](#).

Course Suggestions

MAJOR

- **MSCI 1100:** Orientation to Marine Sciences (1 unit) (only offered fall term)
- **MSCI 1111:** The Oceans (3 units)
- **MSCI 1112:** The Oceans Laboratory (1 unit)
- **PSC 2201:** Physical Oceanography (3 units)
- If the prerequisite is satisfied, consider taking **MSCI 3300:** Marine Ecology (4 units)

SUPPORT

If needed, complete any of the remaining support courses, particularly:

- **STAT 1110:** Applied Statistical Concepts and Methods (3 units)
- Organic Chemistry Chem **CHEM 2240** (4 units) or **CHEM 2242** (5 units)

MARINE SCIENCE (SPECIFIC) ELECTIVES

Consult the MSCI curriculum sheet. You are required to take at least four of these courses (make sure you have the required 14 units as well)

- **BIO 3326:** Invertebrate Zoology (4 units)
- **MSCI 4437:** Marine Botany (4 units)
- **MSCI 4438:** Aquaculture (4 units)

OTHER ELECTIVES

It's a good idea to consult advisors about your elective choices, especially if you plan to pursue graduate studies. Pay special attention to course descriptions and the footnotes on your curriculum sheet. Courses used in the core of a major cannot also be used toward a concentration/elective. However, if a major/support/concentration/elective course is also a GE, it can be used to fulfill both requirements.

Selected options:

- **BIO 3343:** Principles of Conservation Biology (3 units)
- **Many other BIO courses**
- **GEOL 2240:** Physical Geology (3 units)
- **GEOL 2241:** Physical Geology Laboratory (1 unit)
- **MSCI 4401-**Marine Science Outreach (1-2 units)

GENERAL EDUCATION

If needed, complete any remaining lower-division GE courses. Otherwise, select an upper-division GE course.

Other Graduation Requirements

GWR

The [Graduation Writing Requirement \(GWR\)](#) must be fulfilled by enrolling in a [GWR-certified course](#) or by completing a [GWR Portfolio](#). Please note that completion of **BIO 4461: Senior Project – Research Proposal** or **BIO 4463: Senior Project – Meta-analysis in Biology** will the GWR.

USCP

Students must satisfy the [United States Cultural Pluralism \(USCP\)](#) requirement. Please [click here](#) for a list of USCP courses in the Cal Poly catalog.

Additional Information

PERMISSION NUMBERS

If you need a permission number for a class, please contact the instructor for that class section or the BIO department office.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFO

- [Building 33 \(Fisher Science\), Room 281](#)
- bio.calpoly.edu
- biosci@calpoly.edu
- 805-756-2788

BAILEY COLLEGE STUDENT SERVICES CONTACT INFO

- [Building 53 \(Science North\), Room 211](#)
- csmadvising.calpoly.edu and prehealth.calpoly.edu
- csmadvising@calpoly.edu and prehealth@calpoly.edu
- 805-756-2615