

## BIOL 266: Computational Biology

### Final Exam Review

#### *Unit 0: Introduction*

- **What is Computational Biology**
  - The application of computational tools to solve biological problems
  - Under computational biology: **Bioinformatics** - More emphasis on analysis of high-throughput data
- **Tasks of Computational Biology**
  - Pattern discovery -- Learn patterns from biological data
  - Prediction -- Use patterns to predict biological function
  - Integration -- Develop models that connect levels of information
  - Simulation -- Model behavior of biological systems on a computer
  - Engineering -- Design novel biological systems for specific purposes
  - Therapy -- Design molecular therapeutics to combat disease

## ***Unit 1: Molecular Biology and Evolution***

### **- The genetic material -- DNA**

- DNA polymers are specific sequences of nucleotides
  - Each nucleotide differs by the nitrogenous base it contains
- All of the organism's DNA-based genetic instructions make up the **genome**
- Genome is composed of **genes**, which are DNA instructions for making **proteins**

### **- Central Dogma of Molecular Biology**

- DNA is transcribed into RNA via RNA polymerase
- RNA is translated into proteins by ribosomes

### **- RNA**

- 3 Types:
  - mRNA - messenger RNA
  - tRNA - transfer RNA
  - rRNA - ribosomal RNA
- RNA, like DNA, can be single or double stranded, linear or circular
- Unlike DNA, RNA can exhibit **different conformations**
  - Different conformations permit the RNAs to carry out specific functions in the cell
- Contains uracil (U) instead of thymine (T)

### **- Gene Expression**

- Use DNA to make mRNA and proteins
- RNA polymerases look for **promoter sequences** to recognize beginning of genes
- Prokaryotes use positive and negative regulation for transcription
- Eukaryotes are much more complex – promoters and enhancers

### **- Open Reading Frames (ORF)**

- Long stretches of DNA that are **un-interrupted by stop-codons** therefore encode protein
- Gene = ORF + additional regulatory information
- Start at AUG start codon, run until stop codon (UAG, UAA, UGA)

- Stop codons are 3/64, or expected about one every 20th codon
- **Protein Structure**
  - **Primary structure:** from sequence and chemical properties of the amino acids
    - **Hydrophobic:** A I L M P V F W
    - **Hydrophilic (polar):** C N Q S T Y G
    - **Charged:** (-) D E, (+) K R H
- **Sequencing**
  - Determining the exact nucleotide sequence of DNA
  - Methods
    - Maxam-Gilbert Method – chemical degradation
    - Dideoxy (Sanger) Method – chain termination
    - Next-generation (high-throughput) – many types
      - Next-generation (high-throughput) – many types
- **Evolution**
  - Changes in inherited characteristics of biological populations over successive generations, caused by mutations
  - Generates diversity of **genotype & phenotype**
  - Types of mutations
    - Point mutation
    - Duplication
    - Insertion
    - Deletion
- **Homology**
  - similarity due to common ancestry
  - The genes and genomes of different species share significant similarity due to homology (common ancestry)
  - Evolutionarily related implies homologous

## Unit 2: Sequence and Database

### - History of Sequencing

- First complete **protein sequence**: in 1955, insulin
- **Nucleotide sequence**: Development of cloning and then later PCR greatly increased sequencing of DNA
- **Genome sequence**:
  - Bacteriophage  $\Phi$  X174 (5386 bp) Sanger et al. 1977
  - First Bacterial genome was sequenced in 1995 (*Haemophilus influenzae*) at TIGR (1.8 Mb)
  - First Eukaryotic genome: *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*
  - Draft of Human Genome (2001)

### - Flow of Information

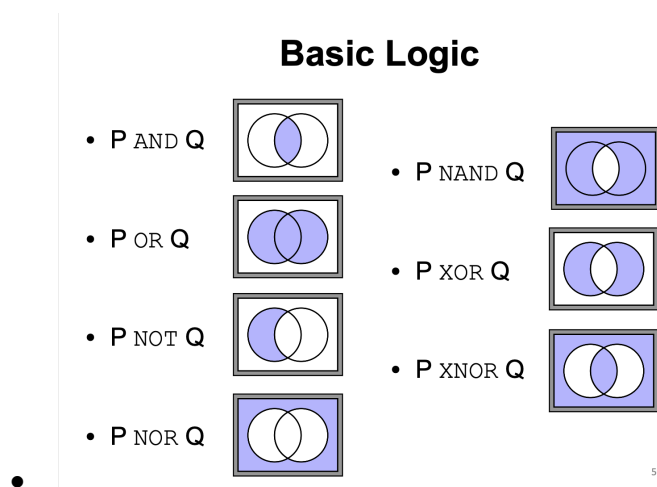
- The data is **curated**, **annotated** and **released** to the public
  - **Core data**: key information in the database entry and minimal information required to identify the data
  - **Annotations**: all additional information, secondary information, may change over time
- Data may be **re-organized** or **re-annotated** to make it more accessible to users

### - Storage of Data

- **Flat File**:
  - Data (e.g. sequences) are stored as a **text file** or a collection of text files
  - flat, as in a sheet of paper → Flat File
- **Relational File**:
  - Data stored within a number of tables linked together by a shared field, the **key**, to handle large amount of data
- **.fasta File**:
  - Contains header followed by raw data

### - NCBI/Genbank Nucleotide Database

- 3 parts: Header, features, sequence (each with **assertion number** and **version number**)
  - **Assertion Number:** Identifiers for specific DNA and protein sequence records
  - Features can be assigned to different regions. It can also include a **feature key** (a keyword indicating the functional group)
- **NCBI/UniPortKB Protein Database**
  - Almost all protein sequences are derived from translation of nucleotide information
- **Accessing the Database**
  - Databases composed of **entries**
  - Programs are designed to match your **query** with entries that are relevant
    - **Query:** name, features, identifier, etc.
    - Yet, using names may not be consistent due to different input
  - In many molecular biology databases you can impose **limits** on your searches
    - Use of **Logic Operators**



- **Controlled vocabularies** or **ontologies** can also narrow searches by clearly defining boundaries
- **Data Quality**
  - Databases are screened to **reduce redundancy** and improve search **efficiency**
  - Databases are under **automatic and manual quality control**

### ***Unit 3: Pairwise and Local Sequence Alignment***

#### **- Sequence Alignment**

- identification of character matches preserving character order → fundamental tool of bioinformatics
- A true alignment of nucleotide or amino acid sequences is one that reflects **evolutionary relationship** between two or more sequences that **share a common ancestor** → **homology**
- Two types of alignment:
  - **Global**: attempts to align the **entire sequence**
  - **Local**: stretches of sequence with **highest density of matches** are aligned
- Important for discovering functions, structural information, evolutionary information; the result reveals similarity, conservation, and evolutionary relationships

#### **- Scoring Alignments**

- Good alignment will have many matches, few mismatches, and few gaps
- The higher the score, the better the match
- We use a **scoring matrix** to assign alignment scores
  - Common nucleotide matrix: Identity matrix; BLAST matrix; Transition/transversion matrix
  - Common protein matrix: BLOSUM62
  - Gap may have **origin penalty** and **extension penalty**

#### **- Computing Alignments**

- We can look through all alignment possibilities → takes a very long time → **exhaustive approach**
- Instead, we use **dynamic programming** → solves the problem by breaking it down

#### **- The Needleman-Wunsch Algorithm for GLOBAL Alignments**

- <http://experiments.mostafa.io/public/needleman-wunsch/>
- Initialize first row and column by multiply gap penalty
- For a particular cell

- Take value in cell immediately above add this value to the gap penalty (vertical moves imply a gap)=score
  - Take value in cell immediately to the left add this value to the gap penalty (horizontal moves imply a gap) =score
  - Take value in cell at immediate diagonal and add a match bonus or a mismatch penalty IF the residues match or mismatch respectively=score (e.g. if match =1 then add 1, if mismatch=0 then add 0)
- Choose the direction that had the highest score and that equals the path that the alignment will go
- **The Smith-Waterman Algorithm for LOCAL Alignment**
  - <https://gtuckerkellogg.github.io/pairwise/demo/>
  - Very similar to Needleman-Wunsch
  - Uses a **harsher penalty for mismatches**
    - example: match = 1, mismatch = -1, gap = -1
  - One more possibility is added:
    - if the score is **negative**, put in a **zero** instead
  - Find the maximum value in the table, and go backwards from there until you reach a zero

## Unit 4: Database Homology Search

### - Database search

- Find homology using one sequence query → align it against all target sequences in the database
- Each target must be given a score reflecting **degree of similarity**
  - **Bit Score** → score obtained for local alignment → higher = better
- We then need to estimate the **probability** that the match could occur by chance (ie: statistical significance)
  - **E Value** → The number of matches with scores **equivalent to or better than S** (bit score) that are expected to occur in a database search **by chance**
  - The closer E Value is to 0, the better
  - Usually, **E < 0.01** (borderline significant),..., **E < 1e-10** (highly significant)
  - Significant sequence similarity indicates homology; Yet, non-significant sequence similarity does not indicate lack of homology
- One method: **SSEARCH**
  - Use S-W against all sequences, and sort by score and probability
  - Problem: speed

### - BLAST - Basic Local Alignment Search Tool

- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/BLAST/>
- A heuristic procedure → avoids looking at all possibilities
- **Word-based method (k-tuples)** that initially finds ungapped, locally optimal sequences alignments
  - Could also have larger word length but **permits inexact matches** between words
  - Length is usually 3 for protein and 16 for nucleotide
- Many types of BLAST from NCBI
  - **blastp**: protein query against protein database (db)
  - **blastn**: nucleotide query against nucleotide db



- **blastx**: translated nucleotide query against protein db
- **tblastn**: protein query against translated nucleotide db
- **tblastx**: translated nucleotide query against translated nucleotide db
- **PSI-Blast**: detection of remote protein homology using profiles
- It also considers different **reading frames** → forward 3 and reverse 3 = total 6
- Simplified procedure:
  - Break query into words
  - Search for (exact) word matches in db
  - Extend the match in both directions until alignment score falls below a fixed threshold (called High Scoring Pairs, HSP)
  - Merge HSPs into longer segments and allow gaps
  - Report E Values and S Values (hit scores)
- **Artifacts about Database Search**
  - Longer sequence = higher score (since more possible matches)
  - Query with repeats, low complexity regions, and short query may also cause problems
  - Always question about your search result!

## ***Unit 5: Multiple Sequence Alignment***

- **Multiple Sequence Alignment (MSAs)**
  - Alignment of **more than 2 sequences** at the same time
  - Basics of phylogenetics reconstructions (family trees) to find conservation and variation
  - More complicated as the number of sequence increases, yet it gets more accurate
  - It is computationally difficult
    - **Insertion** of a nucleotide in one sequence requires that a **gap** be added to every other sequence → Causes problem when scoring
    - **Order** in which sequences are added to an MSA can also affect end result
- **Computing MSAs**
  - Challenges:
    - Finding the best alignment that takes into accounts mutations/gaps for **ALL sequences**
    - **Scoring** entire alignment
    - Placement and scoring of **gaps**
    - Can't simply extend N-W or S-W → it will be very slow
  - We use **progressive approach**
    - A form of heuristic approach
    - Build up alignment, and add one sequence at a time
    - Start with **most closely related sequences**
      - May not be the most correct/optimal one, but we hope it is close enough
  - Ex: **ClustalW Algorithm**
    - Align all possibilities using pair-wise alignment → called "**all by all**"
      - Ex: for abc, do ab, ac, and bc
    - Calculate alignment score for each and create a **guide tree** based on scores – closest sequence will be neighbours

- Progressively align everything based on the location in the guide tree

- **Scoring MSAs**

- Using **sum of pairs** method for the overall alignment
- Add the score for all pairs for each column, then sum all the score

**Scoring MSAs: “Sum of Pairs” method**

Sequence	Column A	Column B	Column C
1	.....N.....	.....N.....	N
2	.....N.....	.....N.....	N
3	.....N.....	.....N.....	N
4	.....N.....	.....N.....	C
5	.....N.....	.....C.....	C

Complete this one on your own  
 N vs N score is 6 (3 total)  
 N vs C score is -3 (6 total)  
 C vs C score is 9 (1 total)

The final score should = 9 <sup>17</sup>

**Scoring MSAs: “Sum of Pairs” method**

Sequence	Column A	Column B	Column C
1	.....N.....	.....N.....	N
2	.....N.....	.....N.....	N
3	.....N.....	.....N.....	N
4	.....N.....	.....N.....	C
5	.....N.....	.....C.....	C
Alignment score	60	24	9

Total score = 93 = 60 + 24 + 9

- **Visualizing MSAs**

- Colouring by **property** or **conservation**
- Conservation
  - Evolutionary conservation is plotted for each column
  - Regions of high conservation may be particularly important
  - Variable regions are often less important (but not always, since they may underline evolutionary changes in function)
  - Can done by **conservation profile** or **consensus sequence**

- Visualizing alignment as **logos**
  - Convenient way of visualizing patterns in a MSA without looking at full MSA
  - Each column of an alignment is represented as **stacked letters**
  - **Height** of letter reflects its evolutionary conservation (more specifically its information content) in the alignment → taller = better conserved
  - Easy to see what regions are conserved/unconserved
- **MSA Programs**
  - **Clustal**: web-based <http://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/msa/clustalo/>
  - Note: MSA and PSA programs will align anything you give it, but it does not always mean that there is anything significant → garbage in, garbage out
- **MSA Databases**
  - We can **precompute** and store alignments of sequences
  - Ex: Uniref50 and Uniref90
    - Clustered sequences with **no more than** 50% and 90% identity
  - Other databases:
    - PFAM – A database of protein alignments
      - Database of protein domain families based on the protein profile of Hidden Markov Models (HMMs)
        - Proteins are often composed of multiple “domains” that are structurally, functionally, and evolutionarily distinct
    - DFAM – A database of DNA alignments
    - RFAM – A database of RNA alignments

## Unit 6: Phylogenetics

### - Phylogeny

- Hypothesis of the evolutionary history of a group
- All life forms are related together by descent
  - Use phylogeny to explain diversity
- A **phylogenetic tree** is a graphical summary of the history evolution (phylogeny)

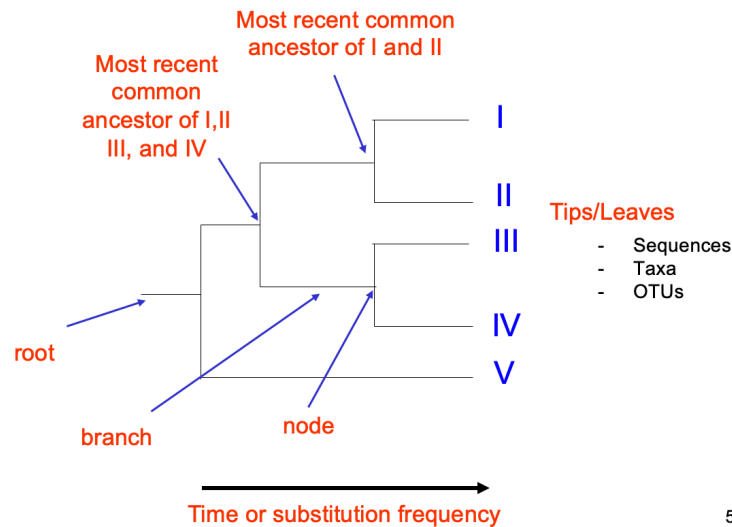
### - Phylogenetics

- Study of **evolutionary relationships** using gene sequences
- A phylogenetic analysis of a family of sequences may provide information on how the family **diversified during evolution**

### - Species Tree

- **Structure of a basic tree**

## Basic tree structure



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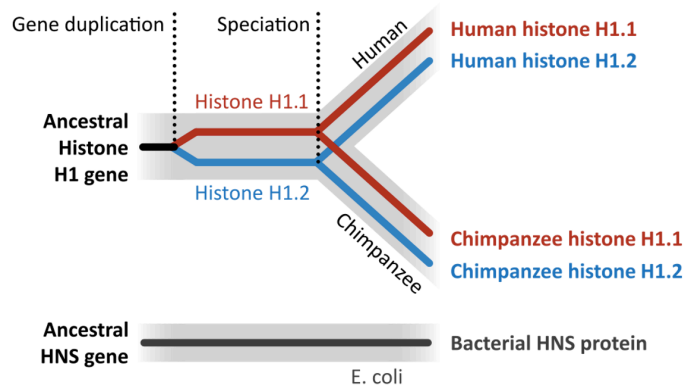
Consists of root, branch, node, and tips

### ○ Species Tree

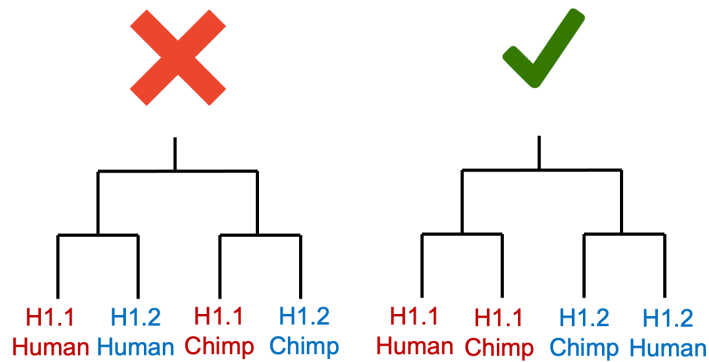
- phylogenetic tree that represents the evolutionary pathways of a group of species
- **Nodes** represent **common ancestors**

- **Bifurcations** (splits from nodes) represent **speciation events**
  - **Scaled and Unscaled Trees**
    - **Phylogram**: length means evolutionary distance (scaled)
    - **Cladogram**: only the structure is important, branch length is not (unscaled)
  - **Rooted and Unrooted Trees**
    - **Unrooted** if we cannot find the root of the tree
      - we can force the root to be anywhere to produce a **rooted tree** → but that rooting can be right or wrong!
    - To root correctly → use **outgroups**
      - Root is on the branch leading to the outgroup
- **Gene Tree**
  - Based on **molecular phylogenies**
    - Traditionally, phylogenies based on **morphological (phenotypic) traits**
      - Yet, similar phenotype does not always mean homology → might be due to **convergent evolution**
    - Molecular phylogeny is based on DNA/protein alignment across species
      - More reliable and contain more data
  - Gene tree models evolution of a gene family
    - (split from) nodes could represent:
      - **Speciation events, OR**
      - **Gene duplication events**
    - Gene trees can be used to infer species tree

# Gene duplication & speciation



- , and when grouping by homology (share a common ancestry)



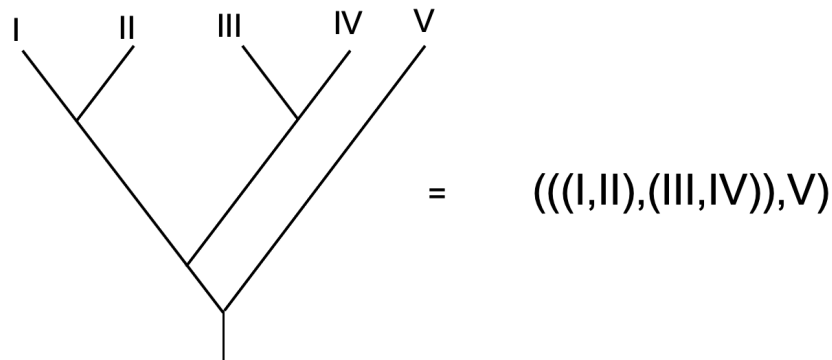
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## - Homologs

- Sequences that share a common ancestry (ie: homologous sequences)
- Types of homologs:
  - **Orthologs**
    - Related by **speciation events** → same gene in different species
  - **Paralogs**
    - Related by **gene duplication** → within or between species
  - **Xenologs**
    - Related by **lateral gene transfer**
- We want to use **orthologs** to infer phylogeny of a species
  - Usually use **rRNA** – a universally conserved orthologs

- **Store Phylogenetic Trees**

- Use **Newick Format**



- 
- Order does not matter, only groups does

- **Methods for Tree Reconstruction**

- We start from **multiple sequence alignment** → the better the alignment, the better the tree
- **Distance Matrix methods** - compute evolutionary distances and constructs tree based on distances → **Distance based**
- **Maximum Parsimony methods** - search for shortest pathway leading to character states (tree with shortest length) → **Character based**
- **Maximum Likelihood methods** - compute trees based on model of evolution and best tree is the one with highest maximum likelihood score → **Character based**
- No method is guaranteed to produce the correct tree
  - Since results are only **hypotheses**
  - Use multiple methods to compare the results
  - Yet, if both distance and character-based methods produce similar trees, the trees are likely to be of high quality

- **Distance Matrix Methods**

- Use a distance matrix
- **UPGMA - Unweighted Pair Group Method with Arithmetic Mean**
  - Developed in the 1950s for analyzing morphological characters (not for tree reconstruction!)

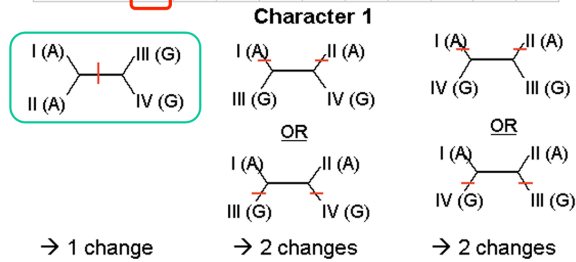


- Takes data and creates a table of “distances” for all pairwise comparisons
    - % differences between sequences → **P distance** (# difference/# sites)
  - Then reconstruct based on the table
  - Steps
    - Examine sequence alignment and create a pairwise distance matrix of **number of non-matching nucleotides**
    - Find the **smallest distance**, group them
    - Create a new matrix, with the new group in place
      - The new score is the average of the old ones
        - Ex: the new group is DE, then A-DE is  $(D-A + E-A)/2$
    - Repeat until all taxa is combined into a tree
  - A clustering method → we are making a lot of assumptions
    - No implication of underlying evolutionary mechanism
    - Tree produced not guaranteed to have the **smallest total branch length**
  - **Neighbour Joining (NJ) Method**
    - Based on **minimal evolution principle**
      - Fewest evolutionary steps are most likely
      - Also used in **maximum parsimony method**
    - Improvement over UPGMA
      - attempts to produce the tree with the smallest sum of branch lengths
    - Among all possible pairs of OTUs, the one that gives the smallest sum of branch lengths is chosen.
    - These OTUs are then regarded as a **single OTU** and pairwise comparisons are done again to create a new distance matrix
- **Character Based Methods**
  - Use multiple sequence alignment directly

○ **Maximum Parsimony Method**

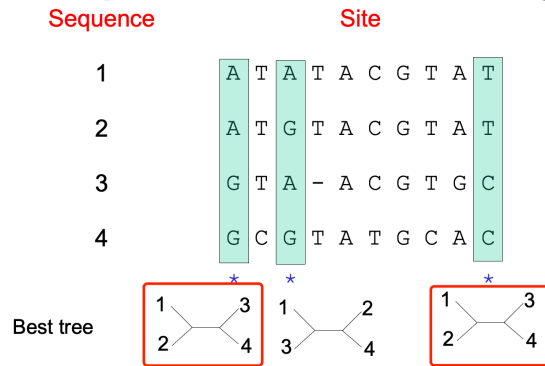
- Find the tree with the fewest changes → **minimal evolution principle**
- Evaluates **many possible trees** to find which tree(s) are consistent with the fewest # changes
- We use **phylogenetically informative sites** to find the better trees
  - **invariant sites** (completely conserved) are **uninformative** → those sites do not tell us which tree is better
  - Informative sites, in general, must have:
    - at least **two different** characters (nucleotides or AAs)
    - each character has to be **present more than once**
- Steps:
  - Identify **how many possible trees** exist for the data set (4 taxa = 3 unrooted trees)
  - Examine each **informative site** and determine which tree is preferred
    - Preferred: fewest number of ancestral substitutions

	DNA Site									
Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I	A	T	A	T	A	C	G	T	A	T
II	A	T	G	T	A	C	G	T	A	T
III	G	T	A	-	A	C	G	T	G	C
IV	G	C	G	T	A	T	G	C	A	C



- For all informative sites in the entire alignment tally the number of times each tree is preferred

## Example: Maximum Parsimony



- The one with the greatest number in the tally is the most parsimonious tree

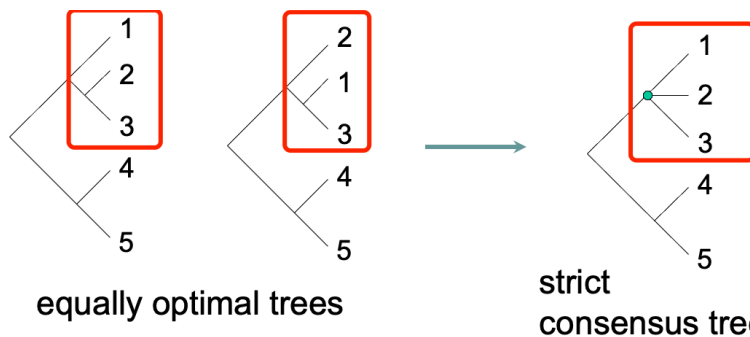
- you can have more than one solution

- **Maximum-Likelihood Methods and Bayesian Methods**

- Both look through many possible trees to find the best one
- **ML:** Finds the tree that maximizes the **probability of the alignment** (probability of data given a certain tree)
- **Bayesian:** Finds the tree that maximizes the **probability of the tree** given the data

- **Consensus Trees**

- Parsimony and, to a lesser extent Likelihood methods can sometimes produce **many equally optimal trees**
- Consensus tree **combines ambiguous nodes** within equally optimal trees
  - **strict consensus** (all equivalent trees agree), or
  - **'majority rule' consensus** (more than half the trees agree)



- **Quality of Trees**

○ **Bootstrap Confidence**

▪ **Steps:**

- Start with a multiple sequence alignment
- Divide the alignment into a set of N ordered sites
- Randomly **choose N** sites from the alignment, with replacement (can choose a particular site more than once)
- **Recalculate tree**, often 1000 times or more
- Determine the **frequency of each node** within the replicates

	original alignment										resampled alignment (N=9)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6	3	4	1	7	7	1	9	2	3	
A	G	T	A	C	T	C	G	A	A	T	A	C	A	C	G	G	G	A	T	A	
B	G	T	C	C	T	G	A	G	A	A	B	G	C	C	G	A	A	G	A	T	C
C	G	A	C	C	T	G	C	G	A	T	C	G	C	C	G	C	C	G	A	A	C
D	G	A	A	G	A	C	T	A	C	A	D	C	A	G	G	T	T	G	C	A	A

▪ **Record Bootstrap confidence level:**

- the **percentage of times** that clade is present in the collection of trees → you want as close to 100 as possible
- The less supported (low bootstrap score) groupings can be “collapsed” (ungrouped) so that we don’t make unsupported claims about their order of splitting

## ***Unit 7: Structural Biology***

### **- Protein Structure**

- Crucial to understanding how a protein works, and provides a framework for explaining molecular biology
- Organization of structures
  - **Primary:** linear sequence of amino acids
  - **Secondary:**  $\alpha$ -helix (A),  $\beta$ -sheet (B),  $\beta$ -turn (C)
  - **Tertiary:** overall three-dimensional shape of a polypeptide chain
  - **Quaternary:** two or more polypeptide chains held together by non-covalent forces, in precise ratios with a precise 3D configuration
- **Sidechains** of Amino Acids
  - What makes protein unique and determines the fold
  - Vary in size, charge, polarity, and shape
- **Hydrophobicity**
  - One of the governing principles of protein structure
  - Non-polar side chains are similar to oil-like solutes
    - Interaction with water is unfavourable
  - **Hydrophobic collapse:** folding nuclei formed by core hydrophobic residues
    - Charged AAs are often excluded from the protein interior
    - Exterior is mostly charged, yet you still do find a lot of charged side chains (about 1:1 charged: uncharged)

### **- Protein Data Bank**

- Stores .pdb files → **3D atomic resolution** of a molecule and a 4 digit identifier
- Different structural visualizations:
  - **Ball and stick**
    - **main chain bolder** than side chains
    - Sometimes represented as “ball and stick”
    - Gives a lot of information

- **Ribbon**
    - course of the chain is represented by **smooth interpolated curve**
    - chevrons indicate chain direction
    - only gives the information of the backbone
  - **Cartoon**
    - cylinders represent helices
    - arrows represent strands of sheet
    - easy visual information about secondary structure
- **Structural Determination**
  - Proteins generally fold into **single, stable 3D structures** based on their sequence
  - Lowest energy state, most stable → **native state**
  - Determined by **favorable interactions** within/between amino acids
  - Structure can be determined **experimentally** and in some cases reasonably approximated **in silico** (using computers)
  - **Experimental Determination**
    - X-ray crystallography
    - Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR)
    - Cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM)
  - **Prediction of Structure**
    - **Ab initio** → from first principles
      - **Energy minimization** → Compute energies associated with structures → computationally very challenging
      - Issues: **Local minima traps**, single domain vs multi-domain, energy functions
    - **Comparative modeling**
      - **Template-based**, uses existing fold information from PDB
      - **threading** (fold-recognition) and **homology modeling**
- **Ab Initio**
  - Based on first principle of **Energy minimization**

- find the most stable conformation (3D position of all atoms) based on **energy functions (CHARMM)**
- Parameters include **bond angles** and **interactions between atoms**:
  - Primary chemical bonds
  - Weaker interactions
- Find the “folding tunnel”
- **Computational issues**
  - Are the parameters complete/accurate?
  - Search space is massive
- Simple proteins can usually be modeled based on few parameters
- Larger proteins usually have **too many parameters** to examine exhaustively, therefore heuristic approaches must be used
- **Local Minima Issue**
  - Not looking at all possibilities (heuristic methods) means falling into local optimums
  - Impossible to distinguish from global optimum (if optimum is unknown)
- **Solution to Local Minima Issue**
  - **Steepest descent**
    - estimates energy at current conformation
    - changes coordinates to **move directly down gradient**
    - Stop when can't go any lower -> no global
  - **Conjugate gradient**
    - uses **two successive gradients** to make an intelligent guess at the location of the minimum
  - **Newton-Raphson**
    - gradient of the gradient (**second derivative**)
    - works well, but computationally expensive
  - **Monte Carlo Procedure**
    - Uses random search

- Useful for finding the minimum of a **function of many variables**
- Steps:
  - Generate **random set of values** for variables (i.e., a random conformation)
  - Perturb variables to generate a **neighbouring conformation**
  - Calculate the energy of the new conformation
  - Decide whether or not to accept the change or try another one
    - If energy **decreases** (i.e., the step creates a better state), then accept (the perturbed conformation becomes the new current conformation)
    - If the energy **increases** or **stays the same**, sometimes accept the new conformation
      - this helps avoid local optimum solutions
      - Allows the temporary movement to 'worse' solutions
  - Go back to step 2 and repeat until exit condition
- **Levinthal's Paradox**
  - Does nature really explore all possible protein folds until it finds the lowest energy one? Because that would take very long... yet protein folding is FAST
- **Comparative modeling**
  - **Homology Modelling**
    - Most reliable method of modeling protein structure
    - Requires detectable **sequence homology** to existing structures
      - These structures are used as **templates**
    - At least 40-50% identity required
      - But higher identities are much better (e.g., 75% +)
    - **E-value** must be significant as well (of course)
    - Use of **multiple template** can increase accuracy



- Structurally reliable alignments rely on **sequence identity and length**:
  - Shorter sequence needs higher minimum identity
- Steps:
  - Template selection (e.g., top BLAST match from PDB)
  - Align target to template
  - **Generate backbone as template**
  - Loop modeling (insertion/deletion)
    - Variations between the template and target sequences are most likely in loop regions
    - Deletions easier than insertions → just remove it
    - Insertions modeled as loops → energy minimization
  - Side-chain modeling
  - Model optimization
  - Model validation: if poor quality, go back to (1) or (2)!
- **Fold Recognition - Threading**
  - When template is not present
  - There are only about 2000 ways that a protein can fold → same fold can occur for many different proteins
  - Basic idea:
    - For each possible fold structure
      - pull string of amino acids (target) through fold
      - **examine (score) the compatibility** of each amino acid with that fold
    - If score is significantly high, **template is assumed to fold in much the same way** as that structure
  - try many alignments and try all templates, to see which model is the best
- **Evaluating Model Quality**
  - **Force Fields**
    - Residues in energetically unfavoured environment; energy minimization

- **Ramachandran plot**
  - Main chain structure can be approximated using the sequence of 3 angle values for each amino acid
    - N-Caplha ( $\phi$ )
    - Calpha-C ( $\psi$ )
    - Angle of rotation around the peptide bond (either trans or cis)
  - The plot separates into areas of **possible and preferred conformations** for amino acid residues
  - Areas of the plot indicate likelihood of alpha-helices and beta-sheets
  - See if the structure falls into expected region of bond angles
- **Structural Alignment**
  - How similar our structure is to other structures
  - This can sometimes, **but not always**, be inferred using sequence homology (i.e., BLAST)
    - **Structure is more conserved** than sequence information throughout evolution
      - Sometimes, structures might be unidentifiable at the sequence level, but still have similar structure
    - Sometimes aligning sequence information without structural data is misleading
      - Can miss homologies, especially if distantly related
  - Distantly related proteins can be detected based on conserved spatial contact patterns between residues
  - Successful in finding very **distant evolutionary relationships**
  - Two commonly used tools:
    - DALI and VAST (**Vector Alignment Search Tool**)

## Unit 8: Genomics

### - Genome

- full complement of genetic material within an organism or cell/tissue sample of interest
- Genome sequencing encompasses:
  - Organelles, plasmids, viruses, prokaryotes, eukaryotes
  - Single cell sequencing, cancer genomics
  - Environmental DNA samples (metagenomics – Collection of genomes)
- Fundamental problem: A fundamental problem of genomics is the Genotype-to-Phenotype problem: still largely unsolved
- Steps in genome analysis:
  - Selecting an organism → collect sample → sequencing → genome assembly → genome annotation

### - Selecting the Genome

- The selection is based on:
  - Genome size
  - Cost
  - Relevance (disease, biological question, agriculture, etc.)
- Can also sequence **1 individual** or **multiple individuals**
  - Multiple individuals example: **1000 Genome Project**, look for genetic diversity by examining 1000 individuals' whole genome

### - Sequencing the Genome

- 2 main approaches:
  - **Whole-genome shotgun sequencing (WGS)**
    - first done by Sanger on Bacteriophage  $\Phi$  X174 and then used by Venter and Colleagues (Celera)
  - **Hierarchical shotgun sequencing (more traditional)**
    - Divide the genome up to regions and line them up
- Terminologies

- **Read** – an individual sequence fragment (output by sequencer) – often short
- **Contig** – set of overlapping clones/sequences/reads from which a longer sequence can be obtained. Contigs are derived from assembling the reads (but not necessarily the whole genome)
- **Scaffold** – ordered set of contigs placed on the chromosome (may contain missing sequences and gaps)
- **Draft sequence** – incomplete sequence of the genome (more sequencing still in progress) (most in NCBI database are draft sequences)
- **Finished sequence** - genome is completely sequenced with no gaps
- **STSs: Sequence-tagged sites**
  - short segments of unique DNA sequence on a chromosome
  - usually defined by a pair of PCR primers that amplified only one segment of the genome
  - used as 'road markers' on the chromosome → orientation
- **ESTs: Expressed Sequence Tags**
  - unlike STSs, ESTs are from transcribed regions (regions that made mRNA)
  - short segments (<500 bp) from cDNA
  - identify coding regions
- **RNA-seq:** related approach that sequences the full complement of expressed transcripts in a sample
- **Shotgun Sequencing**
  - **Random fragmentation** of genome by shearing or restriction
  - Universal primer used to sequence random selection of fragments
  - Sequences assembled into contigs
  - Gaps are targeted for additional specific sequencing; Overlaps are the original sequences
  - Can only work alone → since otherwise there will be repetition work

- **Hierarchical Genome Sequencing**
  - Also called: top-down, map-based, ordered clone, clone-by-clone
  - **Breaks down genome** into smaller and smaller pieces → Divide into large segments of known orders
  - Allows for:
    - assembly of high resolution physical and genetic maps
    - global groups to work together without repetition
- Example: **Human Genome Project**
  - Used **hierarchical sequencing**
  - **Restriction enzymes** used to chop chromosomes into pieces
  - Pieces inserted into vectors, for replication in
    - *E. coli* : Bacterial Artificial Chromosomes (BACs), about 150 kb
    - Yeast : Yeast Artificial Chromosomes (YACs), 150 kb to 1.5 Mb
  - Restriction maps and common STSs used **to identify overlapping BACs and YACs**
  - Assembled into contiguous overlapping segments of DNA (**contigs**)
  - STSs used to locate contigs on chromosome
  - **Public and Private Genomes**
    - There were two draft versions of the human genome,
      - public (Human Genome Project) and private (Celera)
    - Public database is more accessible (i.e. free)
    - Private used public data as well
    - Private effort likely 'motivated' public effort
    - Few differences between the initial versions
    - Full human genome sequence completed April 2003
- **Finishing the Genome Assembly**
  - Raw genomic information are submitted to NCBI through the HTG sequence division and sequences are categorized into 4 phases
    - 0,1,2 = unfinished; 3 = finished

- Genome is finished when 5-10 fold **coverage** (but much higher these days)
  - **Coverage**: average time that each base is covered by the reads
- Greatest difficulty is repetitive elements
- **Genome Annotation**
  - the process by which the key features of the genome are described
  - Includes:
    - **Basic genome stats**: Genome size, # chromosomes, GC content, etc.
    - **Location** of non-coding region
    - **Location** of protein-coding genes (introns/exons)
      - *De novo* or *Ab-initio* methods
      - Empirical
        - EST/mRNA based
        - Homology-based (ex: blast)
    - transcription start sites, promoters, RNAs, regulatory elements, repetitive elements, etc.
    - What are the **functions** of the genes and other genomic elements?
- **Prokaryotic Genome Annotation**
  - First, look to **non-coding regions**
    - e.g., rRNAs, tRNAs – common structure → tend to be easier to find
    - Remaining sequence can then be scanned for protein-coding genes
    - **rRNA genes**
      - can have many copies in the genome
      - **well characterized** that they are easy to distinguish
    - **tRNA genes** (often >50)
      - The complement of tRNA genes indicates **codon preferences**, which makes protein coding gene detection easier
  - **Detection of tRNA genes using tRNAscan**
    - tRNA genes have **highly conserved structure**
    - Algorithm developed using **alignment of many tRNA sequences**

- identifying regions of high sequence and structure conservation
- Uses a **decision tree** – see if that sequence is consistent with the tRNA pattern
  - at each step in the procedure the sequence has to pass a test
  - in tRNA, the pairing sites are **very conservative** since they hold the structure together → invariant bases
  - Also has allowable insertion sites → variable length
  - tRNAscan looks for pre-defined feature → once if failed, it shifts the sequence and tries again
  - The question gets more specific as you move on
- Effective:
  - Predicts 97.5 % of tRNA genes
- Accurate:
  - one false positive/3 million bases
- very good for prokaryotes
- error rate too high for eukaryotes → modified algorithm for eukaryotes
- Gene density is high with prokaryotes → about 85% - 88% nucleotides are within coding regions
- # of genes varies (several usually thousands), yet minimal set of genes for absolute survival is usually from 30 – 150
- Genes with **related functions** are often grouped within an **operon**
  - several genes with **one shared promoter**
  - one RNA transcript for all genes in operon (**polycistronic RNA**)
- **Looking for Genes in Prokaryotic Genome**
  - Relatively easy compared to eukaryotes
    - Lack of introns simplifies process of gene finding
  - Genomes are **circular** and there is typically **one gene for each KB** of genomic DNA
  - Matches to simple conserved promoter sequences

- Features used to find genes:
  - **Open reading frames**
    - ORFs are stretches of DNA with **no stop codons** for a particular reading frame
    - The longer the potential ORF, the more likely it is to really be a gene
    - One **stop codon** is **expected every 20-25 codons** in random sequence
      - The likelihood of internal stop codons occurring in a random sequence increases with its length
      - ORFs longer than 60 codons have <5% chance of being a result of chance
    - Defined by a **start codon** (typically AUG) and a **stop codon** (UAA, UAG, UGA)
      - There are exceptions to standard codons (e.g., E. coli uses GTG for 9% and TTG for 0.5% of start codons)
  - **Sequence motifs/patterns indicative of genes**
    - **Shine-Dalgarno sequence**
      - upstream of start codon
      - May find multiple in frame start sites
      - identifying a ribosome binding site can be an important indicator of likely start site
      - In bacteria, it is a sequence that is complementary to the 3' end of the SSU rRNA (5'-AGGAGGU-3')
    - **Transcription initiation sequences**
      - Pribnow box (-10) sequence: **TATAAT consensus**
      - -35 sequence: **TTGACA consensus**
  - **Codon Usage**



- Protein-coding genes possess a **distinct codon usage profile** (“signature”) that can distinguish them from non-coding DNA
  - the frequency occurrences of different amino acid codons in genes and intergenic (non-coding) DNA are different
  - Can be used as a **gene-prediction feature**
- **Homology to known genes**
  - **Putative genes** (predicted ORFs) can be compared to databases
    - BLAST against NCBI, etc.
  - Becomes more effective as databases get larger
- Pitfalls with Prokaryotes Gene Predictions
  - Difficult to distinguish whether short ORFs are genuine ORFs or are false positives
  - Partial genes
    - Sequencing errors?
    - Pseudogenes?
    - Frameshifts?
  - It is relatively easy to find genes in prokaryotic genomes, but can be much **harder to assign them function**
- **Eukaryotic Gene Annotation**
  - **Differences between Euk and Prok**
    - Scale of analysis is much larger
    - Gene structure causes eukaryotic gene detection to be much harder
      - Eukaryotic genes contain **introns** and **exons** due to **splicing**
      - Length of the exons is on average smaller than in prokaryotes making ORF recognition more difficult
    - Lower gene density
      - E.g., 98.5% of human genome is non-coding DNA → coding sequences are rarer and harder to detect
    - Abundance of **repetitive sequences**

- “junk DNA” → These can lead to errors in gene prediction and genome annotation
- **Introns and Exons**
  - Most protein coding introns follow GU-AG rule:
    - **start** of intron is 5'-GU-3'
    - **end** of intron is 5'-AG-3'
    - additional recognition sites within intron also available
  - Length minimum is **~60 bp**, no real upper bound
  - Introns are less common in simple eukaryotes
  - About 95% human genes contain introns
  - Exons are shorter than that of prok, but both the length of introns and exons can vary
- **Alternative Splicing**
  - Majority of eukaryotic genes appear to be processed into a single mRNA
  - However, **over 50%-75% of human genes alternatively spliced**
  - Alternative splicing - depends on a cell type and other regulatory factors, one gene can produce different mRNA to make different proteins
- **Repetitive Elements**
  - Many DNA regions contain **repetitive sequences**
    - can be removed from dataset to simplify gene finding
  - Typically, large repetitive chunks are divided into:
    - **tandemly repeated DNA** (ex: 5' CTCTCTCT 3')
      - **Satellite DNA**
        - long, simple sequences (up to 10mbp) with skewed nucleotide compositions
        - repeating fragments of up to 2,000bp
      - **Minisatellite DNA**
        - not as long as satellites (up to 20kbp)
        - copies of sequences of up to 25bp

- **Microsatellite DNA**
  - shorter than minisatellites (up to 150bp)
  - up to 100 copies of sequences of up to 5bp (typically 2-3)
  - "TAGTAGTAGTAGTAGTAGTAG..."
  - Example: humans, '**CA**' repeats
    - occur once every 10,000bp
    - make up 0.5% of human genome
  - repeats that are interspersed throughout the genome (e.g., LINE and SINE elements)
- **Eukaryotic Gene Regulation**
  - Eukaryotic **promoters** more variable in composition and position
    - TATA box and CCAAT box – RNAP recognition
  - Eukaryotic genes are also regulated by **enhancers**
    - Enhancers may be close to OR far away (sometimes megabases) from the gene
    - May be upstream or downstream or even within introns
    - This makes them hard to predict
- **Important Eukaryotic Genome Annotations**
  - **cDNAs** – reverse transcribed from mRNAs
  - **ESTs** - expressed sequence tags (short segments of cDNAs)
  - **RNA-seq** sequences the pool of cDNA extracted from a sample
    - Very valuable in understanding transcript
      - can be used to identify intron/exon boundaries
      - can be correlated with structure of other genes

## ***Unit 9: Transcriptomics***

### - **Functional Genomics**

- Includes Transcriptomics, proteomics, and other omics
- To understand the function of genomes, instead of individual gene only → **multigene process**
- **Genome-wide expression analysis**
  - Two major perspectives (& there are more):
    - mRNA transcript abundance - **transcriptomics**
      - **Microarrays and RNA-seq**
    - protein abundance – **proteomics**
  - Unlike the genome (static), transcriptomes and proteomes are dynamic
    - Diverse behavior in different cells/tissues/conditions
    - many more transcripts and proteins than genes
  - A lot more info than just looking at genome

### - **Transcriptomics**

- full set of **mRNA transcripts** expressed in a sample of interest → organism, cell, tissue, etc.
- Reflects the **biological state** of the sample and **pattern of gene regulation**
  - Stage of development, growth, death; Cell cycle; Diseased vs. healthy; Response to therapy or stress
- By comparing transcriptomes you can **detect changes in transcription levels** for all genes in a genome

### - **Microarray analysis of gene expression**

- mRNA isolation → prepare cDNA from mRNA → Fluorescent labelling → hybridization to the assay
- **One-colour technique**
  - A single sample is hybridized to each microarray after it has been labeled with a **single fluorophore**
  - Allows for comparison across many microarrays

- **Two-colour technique**
  - A single sample is hybridized to each microarray after it has been labeled with a **two fluorophores**
  - Produce different colours based on the reaction
- **Determination of Expression Level**
  - Brightness is **proportional** to amount of cDNA bound to spot on chip
  - Colour is due to relative expression levels between control and experimental
  - Raw data are signal intensities
- **Data Processing**
  - Initial data processing:
    - Subtract 'background' signal detected for each spot on the array (reflects noise)
    - Minimize noise variation in data **by log-transforming raw signal intensities**
  - Normalization or standardization
    - Adjust data **to fit a predefined distribution** (e.g., gaussian distribution) that is suitable for statistical analysis
      - There is often a skewed observation of high intensity spots, yet in general we should expect normal distribution
  - Expression data from different samples can be **centered** to have the same median level and **transformed** to have a similar distribution (**between sample normalization by mean centering**)
  - Outlier removal
- **Data Normalization**
  - Normalized expression values for every gene calculated as **ratio of experimental and control expression**
    - Called the “**fold change**”

- E.g., Cy5 (red) labeled probe from healthy tissue used as a control for expression profile in a Cy3 (green) labeled probe from a tumor
- But these values are not symmetric around 1
  - To solve this: take **logarithms** of the ratios
  - **+ve values** will reflect experimental up-expression relative to control
  - **-ve values** will reflect experimental down-expression relative to control
  - **This will make the distribution symmetric around 0**
- Log is commonly used as a **relative** measure
  - **Semi-quantitative data**
    - Easy to distinguish presence/absence
    - Absolute levels beyond current methods
    - Relative levels are difficult but possible
      - Especially after normalization of data

#### - RNA-seq

- More modern solution for problems previously addressed by microarray
- applies **NGS (next generation sequencing)** to sequence all mRNAs (cDNAs) within a sample of interest
- NGS produces FASTQ Files, and then apply quality control removes poor data
- Each transcript is sequenced at a different coverage
- Coverage indicates gene “expression level” → high abundance gets more coverage
- Complexities and considerations
  - RNA-seq may be difficult without a reference transcriptome or genome to map reads to
  - How to handle multi-mapped reads (reads that align to multiple regions)?
  - How to distinguish splice isoforms? (a gene with multiple splice forms)

- When comparing between samples, it is often assumed that the **total mRNA abundance is the same** (yet often not true)
            - To solve this → use a **negative control** of known amount, and normalize to the amount of control, rather than overall sample
- **Normalization of gene expression levels**
  - Simply counting the number of reads that pile up over a gene will be inaccurate → longer gene will have more reads simply due to its length, even though its expression might be low → so, we have to **normalize and account for the length of genes** → ex: use number of reads per base
  - **RPKM: reads per kilobase million**
    - Account for length (kilobase) and size of data (per million reads mapped)
    - Count total # reads in sample and divide by 1 million
      - Gives you “**per million scaling factor**”
    - Count # reads that map to a gene and divide this by the per million scaling factor
      - Gives you **reads per million (RPM)**
    - Divide RPM value by length of gene (in kb)
      - Gives you RPKM
  - **TPM:** number of transcripts per million reads →  $10^6 * \text{RPKM} / (\text{sum RPKM})$
- **Transcriptomic data analysis**
  - Two main quantitative analyses are performed:
    - Detection of **differentially expressed genes (DEGs)** between samples
      - T-test, from repeated experiments
      - If there are a lot of genes → apply **Multiple hypothesis correction** (Bonferroni adjustment and False-discovery rates (FDR))
      - Top DEG candidates will **have logFCs (Fold changes) of high magnitude AND will be statistically significant**
        - Often DEGs are ranked by *p*-value
      - Usually above a horizontal line on **VOLCANO PLOT**

- Cluster analysis of **co-expressed gene** sets
  - Hierarchical Clustering, PCA (visualization)
    - cluster genes based on their expression profiles across samples and/or cluster samples based on their gene expression profiles
    - ie: what genes have similar expressions? This might suggest that they are functionally linked. Or another reason, what samples have similar expressions?
- **Hierarchical Clustering**
  - Matrix of **genes vs samples** (derived from multiple microarray or RNA-seq experiments)
    - Samples may be different tissues, conditions, time points, etc.
    - Values can be FPKM, TPM, relative expression levels (e.g., fold changes)
  - Matrix can be clustered by rows or columns
  - Values Colored as heat map (usually: red = up regulation; green = down regulation)
  - **Clustering of Experimental Data**
    - A measure of similarity between expression pattern is needed
    - Can compute the **correlation coefficient** ( -1.0 to 1.0) between any two expression profiles
    - Use this as a distance/similarity measure between genes, with 1.0 being an exact match and -1.0 being negatively correlated
    - Apply UPGMA to cluster data, and generate a **similarity tree** for genes



## ***Unit 10: Network and System Biology***

### **- System Biology**

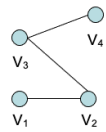
- Extremely difficult to define → Meant many things over the last 50 years
- Institute for Systems Biology:
  - Systems biology is the study of an organism, viewed as an **integrated and interacting network** of genes, proteins and biochemical reactions which give rise to life.
- Instead of analyzing individual components or aspects of the organism, such as sugar metabolism or a cell nucleus, systems biologists focus **on all the components and the interactions among them**, all as part of one system.

### **- Network**

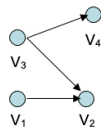
- A **biological system** is its **components** and their **interactions**
- This information can be represented as a **network**
- By examining a biological system as a network of interacting components, we can view the big picture
- 2 elements in a network:
  - **Node:** Gene, Protein, Neuron, Species
  - **Edge:** Physical interaction; Regulatory interaction; Functional interaction; Electrical signaling
- Biological networks include Protein Interaction Networks, Gene Regulatory Networks, Metabolic Networks (ex: KEGG Database), Cell, Organisms, Ecosystems

### **- Important Terminologies**

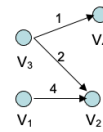
- Each **edge** is specified by a pair of **vertices (nodes)**
- In a **directed graph**, the edges are **ordered pairs** of vertices
- In a **labeled graph**, there are values associated with each edge
- An **undirected unlabeled graph** specifies connectivity without orientation



Graph



Directed Graph



Labeled Directed Graph



Stimulatory interaction



Inhibitory interaction



Autoregulatory interaction



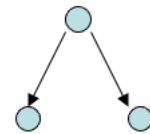
Reciprocal interaction

Stimulatory interaction, inhibitory interaction, autoregulatory interaction, reciprocal interaction

- **Common Network Motifs in Biological Networks**

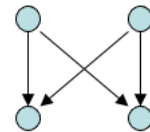
o **Fork**

- Single-input motif, one incoming signal, multiple outputs (can amplify signal / **cascade**)
- Effective for activations of large sets of genes from a single impulse



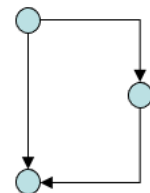
o **Scatter**

- Multiple-input motif
- Can function as an OR operation
- Both downstream impulses are activated by either upstream element



o **One-two punch**

- Feed-forward loop
- If both paths are needed, it operates as an AND
- Can filter out 'noisy' stimuli



- **Structure vs. Dynamics**

- o Modeling of a biological network requires knowledge of its:
- o **Structure – this is static**

- Can be retrieved from **databases**
      - E.g., Known structure of human metabolism
    - Can be **inferred**
      - E.g., construct gene regulatory network by connecting **coexpressed genes** (Pearson correlation > K – the threshold)
      - Connect two proteins if there is significant evidence of a **physical interaction**
      - Extracted from **published literature** (text-mining)
  - **Dynamics**
    - How does the network **change over time**, in response to various cell types, pressures, perturbations, etc.
    - Requires **experimental data**
    - Enzyme kinetics, binding coefficients, concentrations, etc.
- **The String Database**
  - Infer network structure
  - Combines eight types of evidence to support and interaction between two proteins:
    - **Gene Neighborhood** → Interacting genes tend to be clustered in the genomes
    - **Gene fusion** → Fusions indicate that those genes are interacting in some way
    - **Co-occurrence** → Genes that appear together across many species (it might suggest that one requires the other, or some pathways require both)
    - **Co-expression** → Genes expressing together
    - **Experiments** → Usually high throughput – many proteins against many other proteins → most credible source
    - **Textmining** → use programs that detects word associations across big databases

- **Database** → existing information about the structure
  - **Homology** → similar proteins might interact with each other (usually)
- Connects proteins based on **total score** (specified threshold)
- Additional information:
  - Can also add **protein functions** to the network (**Gene ontology (GO) functions**) → hubs
    - Map the functional annotation by, for example, colouring
  - Add **linkages/hubs** AND **subcellular localization** data
  - Results in a more realistic computational model of the cell
- **Hubs**
  - Proteins that participate in the **same functional module** (e.g., complex) are organized into hubs
  - many proteins all interacting with each other or with a central protein
  - Two types:
    - **Party Hub**
      - Members of hubs interact with each other most of the time
    - **Date Hub**
      - Interact with different partners at different times and locations
  - Analyze networks to identify nodes → important proteins with many connections → **hub proteins**
- **Inferring Pathways from Genomes**
  - By using **Homology**
    - Define known pathways with **reference enzymes** for each reaction
    - Use **homology** (e.g., BLAST) to detect presence/absence of **homologous protein** for species of interest

