

Choosing an Introductory Epidemiology Course Frequently Asked Questions

1. What's the difference between EPI 511 and EPI 512?

EPI 511 is a one-quarter, stand-alone, introductory course in epidemiology, intended for non-majors. **EPI 512** is the first half of a two-quarter introductory course sequence in epidemiologic research methods, intended mainly for Epidemiology majors. Students who take EPI 512 must also take EPI 513.

The EPI 512–513 sequence is *required* for Epidemiology majors and for students in certain other research-oriented programs outside Epidemiology. If your program requires EPI 512–513, you have no choice to make and can stop reading here.

EPI 512–513 is also open to graduate students from departments other than Epidemiology, either as an alternative to EPI 511 to meet the requirement for an introductory epidemiology course or as an elective. For those students, the following table compares the two options:

	EPI 511	EPI 512–513
No. of credits:	4	4 + 4 = 8
Quarters offered:	Autumn	EPI 512: Autumn; EPI 513: Winter
Day and time	Tu Th 10:30 AM – 12:20 PM	Same
Meet MPH requirement for an introductory course in epidemiology?	Yes (for non-EPI majors)	Yes, if <i>both</i> courses are taken
Target audience:	Those who need a basic understanding of epidemiologic concepts and terms as a foundation for work in another area of public health and for reading epidemiologic research	Those who expect to conduct research themselves using epidemiologic study designs
Prerequisites:	None	Prior completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, BIOST 511 or 517

As the main introductory course sequence for Epidemiology majors, EPI 512–513 covers topics in research methods in more depth and at a more demanding quantitative level.

2. Can I sit in on both EPI 511 and EPI 512 and then decide after a few sessions which I prefer?

Doing so is not easy, since the two courses are taught on the same days in the same time slot. (The reason is that no student should ever need to enroll in both courses.)

3. What if I sign up for EPI 512 and later decide that I don't really need or want to learn about epidemiologic research methods in such depth. Can I opt out of EPI 513 and still count EPI 512 to meet the requirement for an introductory epidemiology course?

No. Material is divided between EPI 512 and EPI 513 in such a way that neither course can stand alone as a self-contained introduction to the field. Both courses must be taken to satisfy the requirement for an introductory course in epidemiology. By taking EPI 512, you are thus committing yourself to a two-course sequence. In contrast, EPI 511 meets the introductory-course requirement by itself.

Another option, albeit awkward, in that situation would be to opt out of EPI 513 and then take EPI 511 the following Autumn. Doing so would involve considerable repetition of material already covered in EPI 512.

4. What if I take EPI 511 and then decide that I'd like to extend my studies of epidemiology by taking EPI 513 the following quarter. Can I do that?

EPI 513 requires EPI 512 as a prerequisite because of the way material is divided between the two courses. You would have to satisfy that prerequisite by taking EPI 512 next time it is offered, and then take EPI 513 the quarter after that. Note, however, that many elective courses in Epidemiology are open to non-majors and accept either EPI 511 or EPI 512–513 as a prerequisite.