

# Models and Languages for Computational Systems Biology

## Lecture 1: Systems and Models

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School of Informatics  
The University of Edinburgh

Monday 11 January 2010  
Semester 2 Week 1



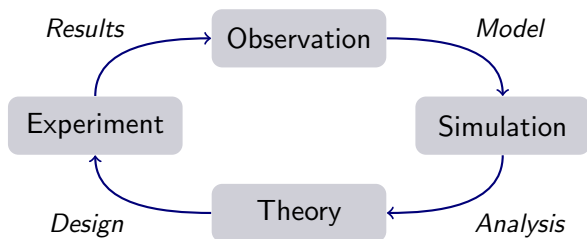
Biology is the study of living organisms; Systems Biology is the study of the dynamic processes that take place within those organisms.

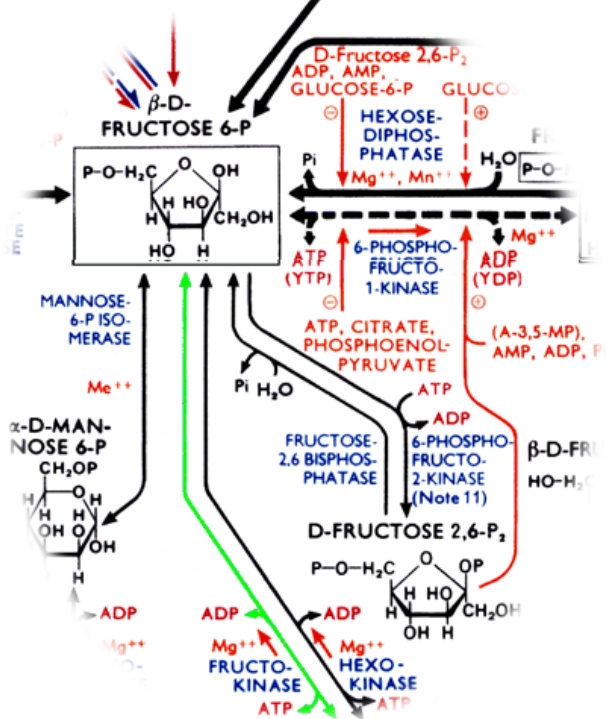
In particular:

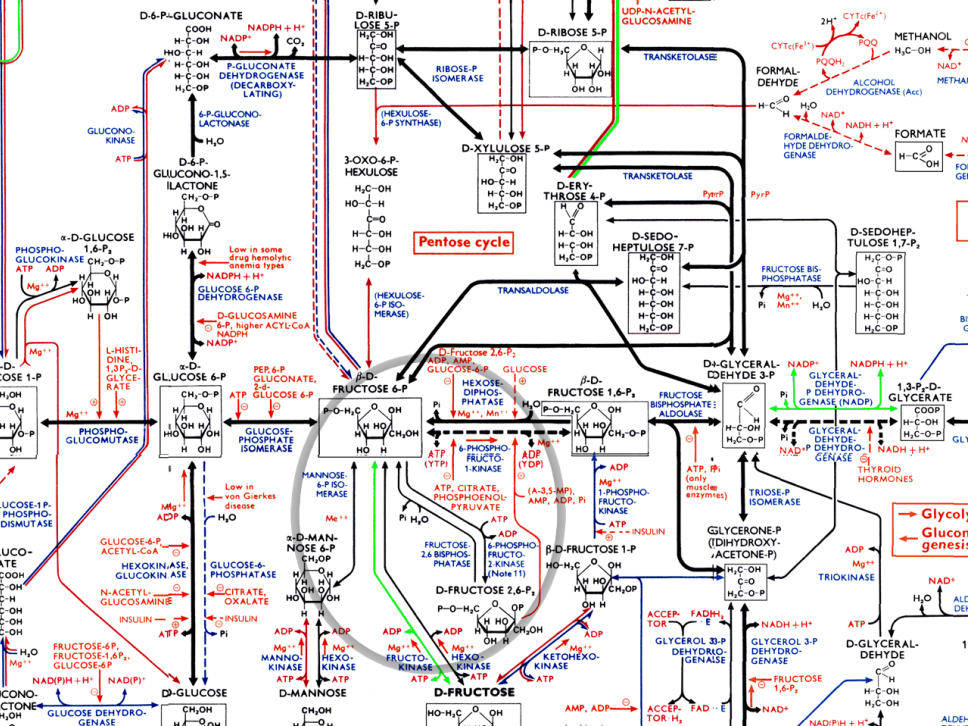
- Interaction between processes;
- Behaviour emerging from such interaction; and
- Integration of component behaviours.

# Systems Biology

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# What can Computer Science do for Systems Biology?

## Machines

Large Databases: Semistructured data; data integration; data mining

Large Simulations: Experiments *in silico*; parameter scans; folding search

## Ideas

Language: Abstraction; modularity; semantics; formal models

Reasoning: Logics; behavioural description; model checking

## Processes

- Metabolic networks
- Regulatory systems: promotion, inhibition
- Signalling pathways
- Gene expression: translation, transcription

## Models

- Discrete time, continuous time
- Discrete space, continuous space
- Deterministic, nondeterministic, probabilistic
- Qualitative, quantitative



# Biochemical Simulation

Biologists routinely use one of two alternative approaches to computational modelling of biochemical systems:

- **Stochastic simulation**
  - Discrete behaviour: tracking individual molecules
  - Randomized: Gillespie's algorithm
- **Ordinary Differential Equations**
  - Continuous behaviour: chemical concentrations
  - Deterministic: Numerical ODE solutions

The classical approach is to use the mathematics directly as the target formal system. However, experience in Computer Science suggests the value of an intermediate *language* to describe a system. An expression in this language can then be analysed as it stands, or further mapped into (one or more) mathematical representations.

# Topics to Cover


This course explores a variety of mathematical models for biological processes, and introduces formally precise languages to describe and reason about them.

- **Petri Nets:** Dynamic system behaviour; analysis of network properties.
- **Temporal Logics:** Linear time and branching time; model checking.
- **Markov Systems:** Probabilistic behaviour in continuous time.
- **Stochastic Simulation:** Gillespie algorithm; reaction kinetics.
- **Qualitative vs. Quantitative Analyses:** Differential equations.
- **Biological Process Algebras:** Modularity and compositional reasoning.

## Timing

4.10pm Mondays and Thursdays through weeks 1–10 of Semester 2

## Books

 D. J. Wilkinson.  
*Stochastic Modelling for Systems Biology.*  
Chapman & Hall/CRC, April 2006.

 M. Huth and M. Ryan.  
*Logic in Computer Science: Modelling and Reasoning about Systems.*  
Cambridge University Press, 2nd Edition, August 2004.

See course web page for further reading recommendations.

## Web

<http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/teaching/courses/mlcsb/>

The course web page carries lecture slides, a lecture log and links to resources mentioned, as well as occasional news and advice.

## Lecturer

<mailto:Ian.Stark@ed.ac.uk>

The most effective way to contact the lecturer is by personal email, from your University email address.

# Petri Nets

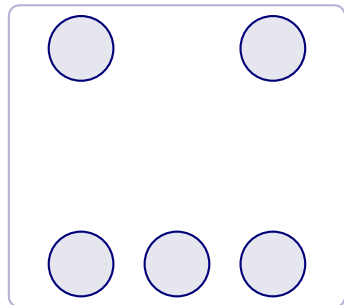
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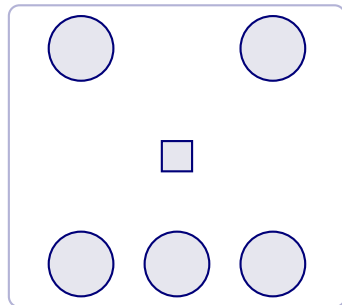


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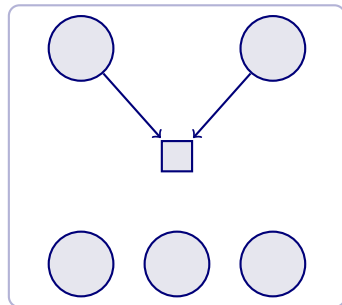
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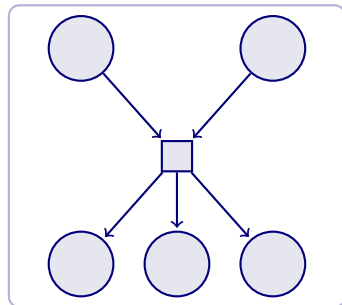
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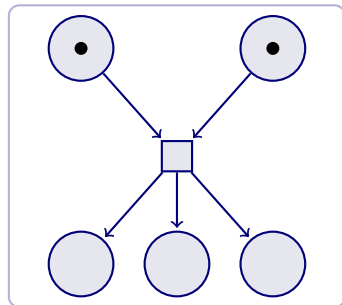
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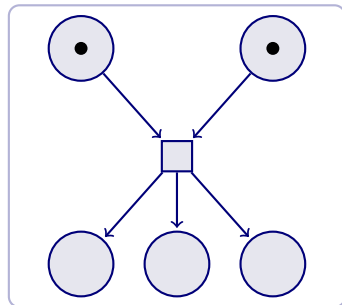
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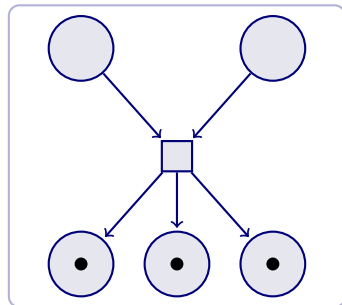
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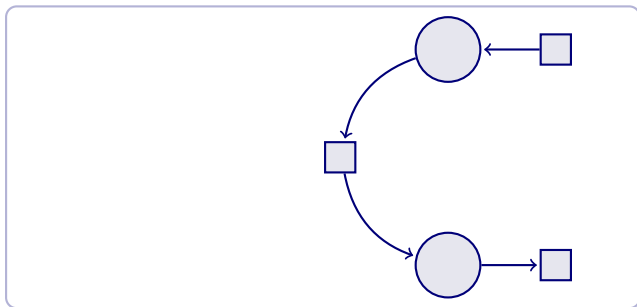
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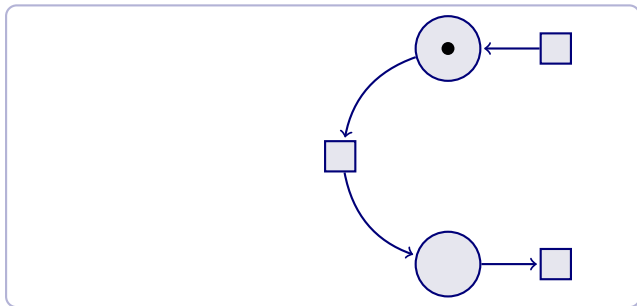
**Firing:** When tokens move from input to output places.



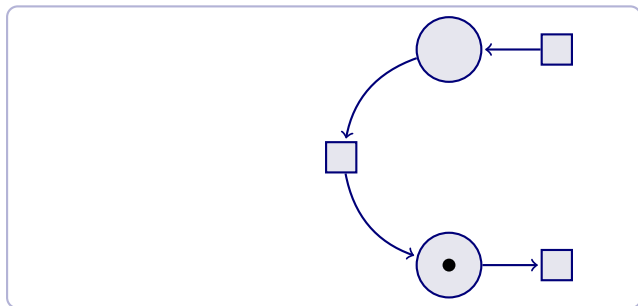
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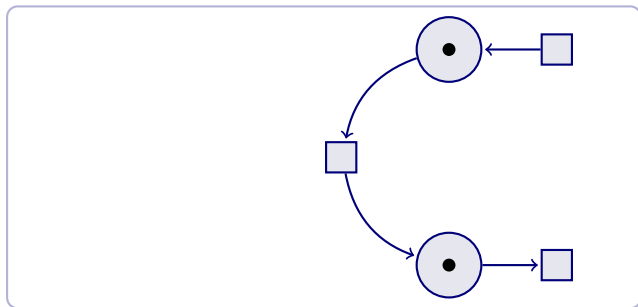
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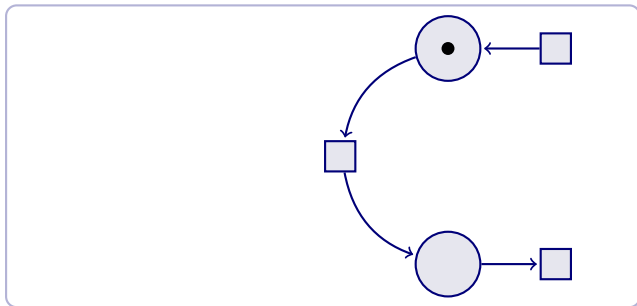


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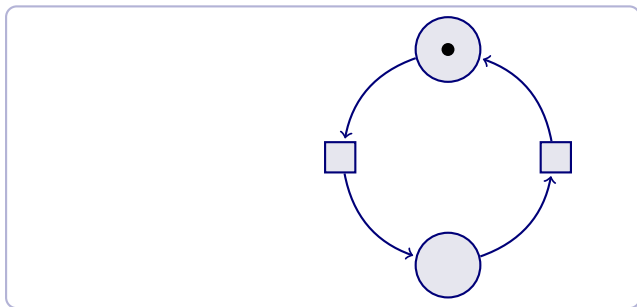




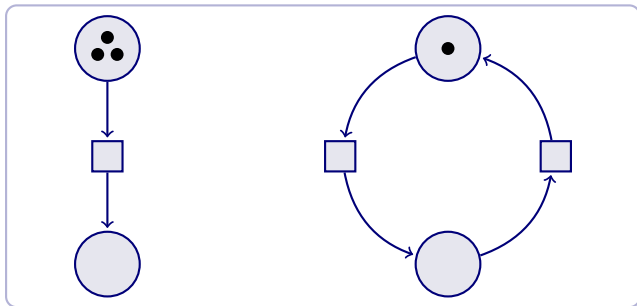
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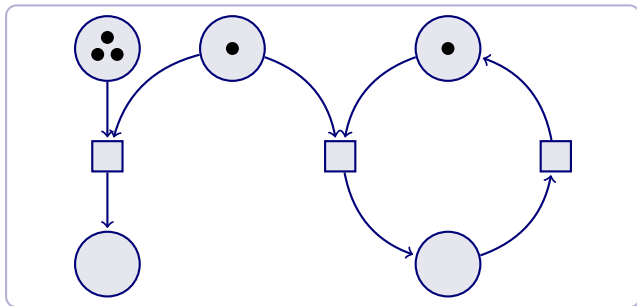
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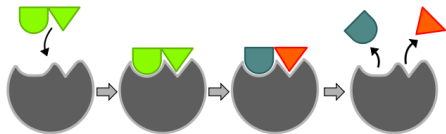
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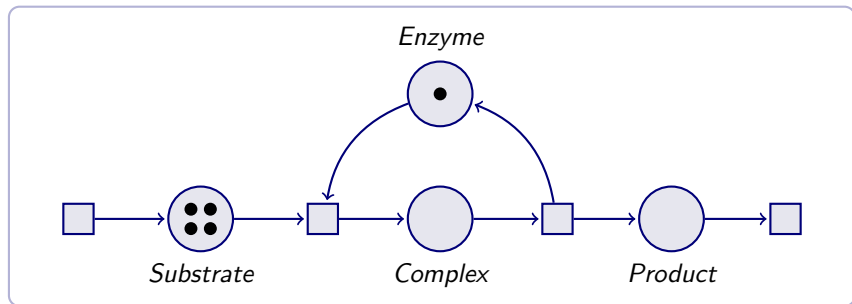
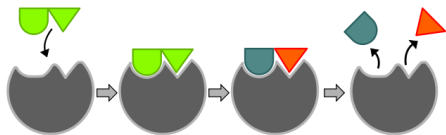
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# Example: Enzyme Catalysis



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# Homework

In preparation for the next lecture:

- Get a copy of the following paper.



M. Heiner, D. Gilbert, and R. Donaldson.

Petri Nets for systems and synthetic biology.

*In Formal Methods for Computational Systems Biology, Lecture Notes in Computer Science 5016. Springer-Verlag, 2008.*

- Read Section 3 and Section 4.1, up to Figure 6.
- Look at some of the demonstrations on the Petri Net Pathways:  
<http://genome.ib.sci.yamaguchi-u.ac.jp/~pnp/>