A course is a course, of course, except when it is a subject. At MIT course numbers and abbreviations refer to courses of study leading to specific academic degrees and, by extension, to the departments or programs offering those degrees. For example, Course 6 refers to the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Subjects are what many people typically think of as courses, i.e., a series of classes offered during a given academic period.

These descriptions are current but are subject to change. For schedules, consult the Online Subject Listing and Schedule (student.mit.edu/catalog). Below is a list of the departments and programs that offer subjects at MIT.

- Aeronautics and Astronautics (Course 16) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/16)
- Aerospace Studies (AS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/as)
- Anthropology (Course 21A) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21a)
- Architecture (Course 4) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/4)
- Biological Engineering (Course 20) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/20)
- Biology (Course 7) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/7)
- Brain and Cognitive Sciences (Course 9) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/9)
- Chemical Engineering (Course 10) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/10)
- Chemistry (Course 5) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/5)
- Civil and Environmental Engineering (Course 1) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/1)
- Comparative Media Studies / Writing (CMS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/cms)
- Comparative Media Studies / Writing (Course 21W) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21w)
- Computational and Systems Biology (CSB) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/csbs)
- Computational Science and Engineering (CSE) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/cse)
- Concourse (CC) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/cc)
- Data, Systems, and Society (IDS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/ids)
- Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences (Course 12) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/12)
- Economics (Course 14) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/14)
- Edgerton Center (EC) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/ec)
- Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/6)
- Engineering Management (EM) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/em)
- Experimental Study Group (ES) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/es)
- Global Languages (Course 21G) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21g)
- Health Sciences and Technology (HST) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/hst)
- History (Course 21H) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21h)
- Humanities (Course 21) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21)
- Linguistics and Philosophy (Course 24) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/24)
- Literature (Course 21L) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21l)
- Management (Course 15) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/15)
- Materials Science and Engineering (Course 3) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/3)
- Mathematics (Course 18) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/18)
- Mechanical Engineering (Course 2) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/2)
- Media Arts and Sciences (MAS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/mas)
- Military Science (MS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/ms)
- Music and Theater Arts (Course 21M) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/21m)
- Naval Science (NS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/ns)
- Nuclear Science and Engineering (Course 22) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/22)
- Physics (Course 8) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/8)
- Political Science (Course 17) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/17)
- Science, Technology, and Society (STS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/sts)
- Special Programs (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/sp)
- Supply Chain Management (SCM) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/scm)
- Urban Studies and Planning (Course 11) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/11)
- Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) (catalog.mit.edu/subjects/wgs)