Frequently Asked Questions:

1.) My intended major is (insert major here), would AISS and/or IBC be applicable?
   a. Both AISS and IBC are excellent courses to get you started as a science major. AISS is a year-long course combining Bio, Chem, and Physics, whereas IBC is a semester long course combining Bio and Chem. This format is adopted so that students are able to learn how these divisions of science are intertwined, and adopt a deeper appreciation for science as a whole.

   AISS has previously hosted students from a variety of intended majors, however students should enter with the caveat that students of interdisciplinary courses spend as much time studying outside of class as students taking the courses individually. If your only interest is to speed up completion of introductory science requirements so that you may travel abroad, you may want to consider the time and effort this course requires.

2.) What are the websites for AISS/IBC?
   a. AISS: www.kecksci.claremont.edu/AISS
      IBC: www.kecksci.claremont.edu/AISS/Biological-Chemistry.asp

3.) What is the difference between AISS and IBC?
   a. AISS is a year-long course that presents biology, chemistry, and physics in an interdisciplinary manner. Students who take this course will receive 4 science credits, and will have achieved the requirements to enter into upper division science courses in all three subjects. AISS is team taught by three professors (biology, chemistry, and physics).

      IBC is for the first semester only and includes biology and chemistry taught in an interdisciplinary manner. Students who take this course will receive 2 science credits, and will have achieved the requirements to enter into BIO44 and CHEM15 the second semester. These courses are the second semester of Introductory Biology and Chemistry, respectively. IBC is also team taught by two professors (biology and chemistry).

4.) Do I have the right educational background for AISS/IBC?
   a. The best way to find out is to apply! Most students who apply for AISS/IBC have had at least some Honors or AP Biology, Chemistry, Physics and/or Calculus. That being said, not all students selected for AISS in the past have had the privilege of taking all of those courses. Applicants are chosen who have scored well on the SAT or ACT exams and who demonstrate an interest and commitment to learning science in their personal statements.

      Previous interdisciplinary students have described the course as a lot of work, however they have also mentioned that the professors never assume you have a background in the subject being taught.

5.) How important or helpful are these programs to a student who wants to pursue a medical degree in the future?
a. AISS and IBC are applicable to students who are following the pre-med track. AISS is unique and, when students apply to medical school, we include a description of the sequence in the packet we send to the medical school. We tell the schools to count AISS as 1 year of introductory chemistry and 1 year of introductory physics. Students are required to complete 1 year of biology, which they do with genetics and/or biochemistry (or some other set of upper division biology courses.) Organic chemistry is still required, though now the expectation is only 1 semester.

Because AISS is non-traditional, when we initiated the program, we wrote 15 of the most popular medical schools. Of these schools, only 1, Emory, said that they would rather have the students follow the traditional format. However, many of the schools wrote back and said that not only do they approve of AISS, but would prefer if all students followed the more integrated format. Given the fact that many institutions concerned about undergraduate education in biology such as the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Research Council are calling for more interdisciplinary approaches to science education, it is more likely that AISS will benefit a pre-med student. Still, there will be some institutions which may be more reluctant to accept a student which has not followed the traditional. We have a full time medical school adviser to help you while you are at Scripps.

Unfortunately, we do not have any data yet on the likelihood of AISS students being accepted to medical school. Only 2 students applied last year. In addition, the sample size is too small to make any conclusion even if we did know the acceptance rate. However, the acceptance rate of students at these colleges is around 80%, well above the national average.

IBC, which is, in terms of class time, identical to 1 semester of introductory biology and 1 semester of introductory chemistry. Hence it should be accepted by all school since there is no variation in class time from the traditional route.