Course Syllabus for Biology CP, Fall 2014
Course Instructor: Kristin Majda

The best way to learn more about this course and keep up with daily assignments and happenings in the class is to visit my webpage at **http://www.kmajda.net**. The best way to contact me is via email. There is a link on my webpage to email me.

Course Objectives

Biology is the study of living organisms and their interactions with their surroundings. It pertains to every moment of your every day. It is a fascinating and fun topic to study, and is important in your ability to care properly for yourself, your loved ones, and your environment, including the other living organisms that share this planet with us. By the end of this year, you should be able to:

- Understand the requirements living organisms need to survive, why these nutrients and resources are necessary, and how living organisms interact with one another and their environments to obtain them
- Understand how living organisms reproduce, the mechanisms by which they pass on genetic traits to their offspring, and how to determine the probability that offspring will inherit particular traits
- Understand how life first evolved on earth and the mechanisms by which species of organisms adapt to their environments and continue to evolve over time or fail to adapt and become extinct
- Understand how human activity has impacted the environment and biodiversity, the potential consequences of this impact, and potential solutions for addressing these consequences and preventing further impact
- Perform basic research including the ability to read and summarize academic text, analyze and develop models, identify the key factors in an experiment, design and carry out an experiment, and communicate your findings to others
- Define, evaluate and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activity on the environment and biodiversity

The course objectives above are based on the Next Generation Science Standards currently in the process of being adopted by California for all schools.

Course Supplies

Students are expected to bring the following to class every day:

- Textbook: Miller Levine "Biology" by Prentice Hall (provided by the school)
- One tape-bound composition notebook per semester for lab work and warmups - no spiral binding!
- Notebook paper, a pencil, a black or blue pen, a red correcting pen, two highlighters (yellow and pink)
- Colored pencils
- Recommended: if you prefer to do most work in pencil, bring a self-enclosed pencil sharpener so you do not need to leave your seat to sharpen your pencil
- A folder to keep your work in for the current unit (you will clip all work into your binder at the conclusion of each unit - see below)

In addition, students will need to obtain the following for this course:

- A 2 inch or 2.5 inch three-ring binder (this binder is to be used ONLY for biology as it will be kept in the classroom)
- Six section dividers for your binder - the type that allow you to name each section is preferable (you will use one for your classwork and homework entitled "**Daily Assignments**", one for a specific type of homework entitled "**Reading Logs**", one for your class notes entitled "**Notes**", one for passed-back tests entitled "**Exams**", one for labs and projects entitled "**Portfolio**", and one for your enrichment evidence entitled "**Enrichment**".)
- At least five plastic sheet protectors for the front of your binder (the plastic sleeves that protect papers)

If you cannot afford to purchase the materials above, please meet privately with Mrs. Majda so she can arrange to obtain these supplies for you. In addition to the supplies above, students will need access to a computer with internet and printing capabilities on a regular basis. Please inform Mrs. Majda if this is going to be a problem for you.

One more recommended purchase is the excellent book *Essential Study Skills for Science Students* by Daniel D. Chiras which can be purchased from Amazon.com for only $3.00. I cannot stress enough how important it is for students to learn the skills discussed in this book.

Grading

The following criteria will determine a student's grade each semester:

- 10% - Enrichment
- 10% - Classwork and Homework
- 40% - Content Knowledge (primarily demonstrated via exams)
- 40% - Critical Thinking (primarily demonstrated via projects and labs)

Grading Scale

90% and above = A
86% to 89% = B+
80% to 85% = B
76% to 79% = C+
70% to 75% = C
66% to 69% = D+
60% to 65% = D
Less than 60% = F

Students may earn up to an additional 10% by doing extra enrichment, and sometimes bonus "Challenge" questions are given on exams. Other than these, no additional extra credit opportunities are given.

Ten percent of your grade is earned by completing enrichment activities, which are listed on the course website. The purpose of Enrichment is to give you an opportunity to interact with science outside of class, in the "real" world. In order to get full credit, you must earn at least 50 points per semester. In addition, you may earn up to 50 additional points in extra credit per semester by completing additional enrichment activities. That means you can earn up to 10% extra credit per semester to help make up for any missed homework or poor test grades.

You will maintain an Enrichment section in your biology binder where you will keep your evidence of all enrichment activities that you have completed. No points will be awarded for activities in which evidence of your participation is not included. Your enrichment will be checked and recorded periodically throughout the semester, with all enrichment for the semester being due the week prior to final exams. In order to complete all enrichment on time, you should strive to complete an average of 5 points per week for full credit and 10 points per week if you want to earn maximum extra credit. In general, five points should equal about 1 hour of work, though some activities require additional time for transportation, etc.

Students who are earning less than a C in the course may be required to attend mandatory tutoring. Students who do not complete their homework may 1) be kept in at lunch, 2) assigned an after-school detention, and/or 3) not allowed to participate in labs that depend on knowledge from that particular assignment. In addition, I will make every effort to contact parents if a student is falling behind. But please realize that I have a lot of students and a lot of responsibilities and may not always be able to communicate as often with parents as I would like. So it is very important for parents to be proactive about monitoring their child's grades on their own.

Tutoring & Office Hours

Students may meet with me as needed by appointment at lunch or after school. Students may drop in without an appointment at lunch, but it is a good idea to check with me to make sure I will be there or let me know you are coming so I do not leave. I will almost never be available after school unless you make an appointment with me.

Students who do poorly on an exam can bring up their grade by attending tutoring. Students may receive tutoring from a classmate or myself, and also do self-study at home on questions they missed on an exam. Then, when they feel they are ready, make an appointment with me to be verbally re-tested on the questions they missed. They will be awarded back full credit for any questions for which they can demonstrate sufficient understanding. **For this reason, and coupled with the fact that students can earn up to 10% extra credit by doing extra enrichment assignments, there is absolutely no excuse for students to earn anything less than a C in the course.**

Homework

Most sports practices last at least two hours, yet we expect our kids to do well in math, science, and language arts with less than an hour of direct instruction per day and 30 minutes of homework per night. Science is a rigorous subject. It involves learning complex concepts and skills. As such, it is not something that can be mastered in 50 minute daily periods. Students will need to devote at least 2-3 hours per week (30 minutes on average per night) to homework and weekly study plus enrichment activities. In addition, students will need to devote more time on occasion to complete projects and periodically to review for exams.

While students can make up all or most missed homework by doing extra enrichment activities, students who do not complete their homework are very likely not to do well on exams. Therefore it is important that students make every effort to complete their weekly homework and come for additional help, as needed, if they are having trouble understanding the material.

All homework is posted in class and on my website (www.kmajda.net) on the "Daily Agendas & Homework" page. Most students should be able to do the homework just fine if they manage their time well.

Peer Grading

Often times we will peer grade assignments and exams in class. If you are very sensitive about other students knowing your grade on an assignment, then you may write your student ID number instead of your name on any papers in which you would like to conceal your identity.

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Rules & Consequences

All school rules will be enforced, including:

Dress code: Students are expected to come to class dressed respectably like a student read to learn. *Students who wear clothing that violates the school dress code will be sent to the office.* No open toed shoes or excessively loose clothing are permitted on lab days for safety reasons. *Students will not be allowed to participate in labs if they are not dressed appropriately.*

Truancy: Students are expected to attend class every day, arrive to class on time and be in their seat ready to learn when the bell rings. Per the school policy, the office and parents will be notified of every tardy. After the third tardy, a student will begin to receive detentions for each subsequent tardy. The Attendance Advisor will be notified upon a fourth tardy. Referrals will be issued for the fifth tardy and all subsequent tardies with potential consequences including in-school suspension, Saturday School, parent conference, and possible removal from the class. Students who have eight or more unexcused absences in a semester may receive an automatic failing grade at the teacher's discretion.

Academic Dishonest: Students are expected to do their own work. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Students who turn in identical papers, cheat on an exam, or plagiarize an assignment will receive zeros on the exam or assignment and may be referred to the office for further academic discipline. In addition, the students' parents will be notified. Plagiarism is a serious offense that students sometimes commit by mistake. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes plagiarism. Visit this http://www.plagiarism.org to learn more.

Disruptive Behavior: Students are expected to behave in a professional manner showing respect to the teacher and their peers at all times. Students who are disruptive or defiant may receive one or all of the following consequences, generally in the following order by occurrence and according to severity - 1) phone call home, 2) detention (including withholding at lunch or break), 3) referral with subsequent episodes requesting parent to sit in on the course 4) suspension from the course with subsequent episodes requiring parent to sit in on the course. Please note that school policy and California law provide teachers the right to require parents/guardians to sit in on their courses with the student following a suspension from the course and prohibits employers from penalizing parents who miss work for this reason so long as they provide sufficiently advanced notice to their employer.

Lab & School Safety: Students are not permitted to eat or drink in the science classrooms or have food or drinks out on the desk. Bottled water is permitted except for on lab days. Students should wash their hands after labs and before leaving the classroom. No running or horseplay is ever permitted. Students are expected to remain in their seat unless given permission to move out of it. Students may not leave the classroom unless given specific permission, this includes to use the restroom and at the end of the period when the bell rings. Students are expected to be aware of their surroundings at all times and abide by the rules outlined in the Lab Safety Contract (on the back of this page), including knowing where important safety equipment is located like the fire extinguisher and eye wash.

Electronic Devices: Per school rules, electronic listening devises like iPods and CD players are not permitted on campus and cell phones must be turned off and put away during class unless specific permission has been granted by the teacher to use them for educational purposes. If I observe a student texting in class or using a phone in any way that violates these rules, it will be confiscated until the end of the period and the student may receive a detention and/or the parent notified. Per school policy, if a student is receives a call that disrupts class, the phone will be confiscated and sent to the office where the student will need to pick it up at the end of the day. A second violation will result in the parent having to pick up the phone and a third violation will result in the student not being permitted to bring the phone on campus.

I have read the course syllabus and these rules, and agree to abide by these rules.

Student Signature: _____ Print Name: _____ Date: _____

I have read the course syllabus and these rules and have discussed them with my child.

Parent Signature: _____ Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Best Way to Contact Parents (email and/or phone numbers): _____

Student Safety Contract

School Name _____ **Teacher** _____

PURPOSE

Science is a hands-on laboratory class. However, science activities may have potential hazards. We will use some equipment and animals that may be dangerous if not handled properly. Safety in the science classroom is an important part of the scientific process. To ensure a safe classroom, a list of rules has been developed and is called the Science Safety Contract. These rules must be followed at all times. Additional safety instructions will be given for each activity.

No science student will be allowed to participate in science activities until this contract has been signed by both the student and a parent or guardian.

SAFETY RULES

1. Conduct yourself in a responsible manner at all times in the science room. Horseplay, practical jokes, and pranks will not be tolerated.
2. Follow all written and verbal instructions carefully. Ask your teacher questions if you do not understand the instructions.
3. Do not touch any equipment, supplies, animals, or other materials in the science room without permission from the teacher.
4. Perform only authorized and approved experiments. Do not conduct any experiments when the teacher is out of the room.
5. Never eat, drink, chew gum, or taste anything in the science room.
6. Keep hands away from face, eyes, and mouth while using science materials or when working with either chemicals or animals. Wash your hands with soap and water before leaving the science room.
7. Wear safety glasses or goggles when instructed. Never remove safety glasses or goggles during an experiment. There will be no exceptions to this rule!
8. Keep your work area and the science room neat and clean. Bring only your laboratory instructions, worksheets, and writing instruments to the work area.
9. Clean all work areas and equipment at the end of the experiment. Return all equipment clean and in working order to the proper storage area.
10. Follow your teacher's instructions to dispose of any waste materials generated in an experiment.
11. Report any accident (fire, spill, breakage, etc.), injury (cut, burn, etc.), or hazardous condition (broken equipment, etc.) to the teacher immediately.
12. Consider all chemicals used in the science room to be dangerous. Do not touch or smell any chemicals unless specifically instructed to do so.
13. Handle all animals with care and respect.
    a. Open animal cages only with permission.
    b. Never handle any animals when the teacher is out of the room.
    c. Do not take animals out of the science room.
    d. Do not tease or handle animals roughly.
    e. Keep animals away from students' faces.
    f. Wear gloves when handling animals.
    g. Report any animal bite or scratch to the teacher immediately.
14. Always carry a microscope with both hands. Hold the arm with one hand; place the other hand under the base.
15. Treat all preserved specimens and dissecting supplies with care and respect.
    a. Do not remove preserved specimens from the science room.
    b. Use scalpels, scissors, and other sharp instruments only as instructed.
    c. Never cut any material towards you—always cut away from your body.
    d. Report any cut or scratch from sharp instruments to the teacher immediately.
16. Never open storage cabinets or enter the prep/storage room without permission from the teacher.
17. Do not remove chemicals, equipment, supplies, or animals from the science room without permission from the teacher.
18. Handle all glassware with care. Never pick up hot or broken glassware with your bare hands.
19. Use extreme caution when using matches, a burner, or hot plate. Only light burners when instructed and do not put anything into a flame unless specifically instructed to do so. Do not leave a lit burner unattended.
20. Dress properly—long hair must be tied back, no dangling jewelry, and no loose or baggy clothing. Wear aprons when instructed.
21. Learn where the safety equipment is located and how to use it. Know where the exits are located and what to do in case of an emergency or fire drill.

AGREEMENT

I, _____ , (student's name) have read and understand each of the above safety rules set forth in this contract. I agree to follow them to ensure not only my own safety but also the safety of others in the science classroom or laboratory. I also agree to follow the general rules of appropriate behavior for a classroom at all times to avoid accidents and to provide a safe learning environment for everyone. I understand that if I do not follow all the rules and safety precautions, I will not be allowed to participate in science activities.

_____
Student Signature

_____
Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We feel that you should be informed of the school's effort to create and maintain a safe science classroom/laboratory environment. Please read the list of safety rules. No student will be permitted to perform science activities unless this contract is signed by both the student and parent/guardian and is on file with the teacher. Your signature on this contract indicates that you have read this Science Safety Contract, reviewed it with your child, and are aware of the measures taken to ensure the safety of your son/daughter in the science classroom.

_____
Parent/Guardian Signature

_____
Date

Important questions:

Does your child wear contact lenses?
Y or N

Is your child color blind?
Y or N

Does your child have any allergies?
Y or N

If so, please list: