



**Course Description:**

Biology is an introductory life science course that guides students through a basic understanding of anatomy and physiology, cellular and molecular biology, genetics, evolution, and ecology. That is, we study living things at the molecular, cellular, organismal, and global level. The course content is aligned to the California State Content Standards for Science which can be viewed at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>. In addition to content mastery, students will explore ethical issues emerging technologies. Students will additionally develop critical thinking skills through research and laboratory investigations, and through assignments that fosters scientific thinking and creativity. Students will also develop technical reading and writing skills necessary to understand scientific literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, and learn to write formal lab reports and research papers. Finally, students will develop the necessary skills to design technical presentations and to discuss and present technical material in front of an audience.

**Required Text and Supplies:**

The text for this class is *Biology*, by Miller and Levine (Prentice Hall).

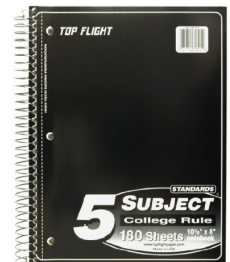
Additional Materials (please bring to class every day):

- Pen and Pencil, and a pencil sharpener that is self-enclosed to keep the shavings neatly
- Two tape-bound composition notebooks per semester – NO spiral binding or tear-out pages
- 1 inch or 1.5 inch binder with 5 dividers: Exams, Class Notes, Hand-Outs, Portfolio, Enrichment (please note, your binder should only be used for biology as it will be collected periodically)
- Six plastic sheet protectors for syllabus (2), lab safety rules (2), table of contents, periodic table
- Two highlighters – one yellow and one pink
- Colored pencils
- A red-ink pen

**YES**



**No**



**Course Requirements:**

The schedule for this class is very aggressive. Students who are not well organized or who miss class can easily fall behind. Students are expected to come to class on time with all necessary materials as defined above. Students are expected to work on their assignments every night, which includes reading and studying the textbook and notes, completing homework and in-class assignments, and working on upcoming reports and projects. Students will need to plan for extensive out-of-class computer use to complete web assignments, research, projects, and PowerPoint presentations. Students are expected to check the course website daily and seek help as needed. If you do not have access to a computer or the Internet at home, please use the library at lunch, before school, or after school, or make arrangements with me to use my classroom computer. If you are having difficulties getting online, please talk to me as soon as possible.

**Classroom Rules:**

The purpose of these rules is to maintain a safe, orderly learning environment. Students who disobey these rules will be subject to the consequences outlined in the Classroom Policies document.

1. Show respect to Ms. Majda and your fellow classmates and expect the same in return.
2. Know and abide by all of the course policies as outlined in the Classroom Policies document.
3. Know and abide by all laboratory safety rules, including knowing where all safety equipment is located.
4. Do not run or horseplay in class. Remain seated unless given permission to get up. Be in your seat working on the warm up activity when the bell rings.
5. No food or drinks in class except water. No water on lab days.
6. Cell phones and music players must be turned off and put away. If I hear or see them, I will take them away. Occasionally I will give permission to use them in class for learning purposes. If they are being used for other purposes, they will be confiscated.

## Grading:

Grades for each semester will be weighted as follows:

### Content Knowledge (40%)

The facts and core knowledge needed to understand the basic principles of biology. This part of your grade will be primarily determined by written exams, with tests and quizzes during each semester making up 20% of the grade, and the final exam comprising the other 15%.

### Scientific and Engineering Skills (40%)

California is in the process of adopting the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These revised standards include similar content to past standards but have a new focus on teaching students scientific research and engineering design skills, as well as critical thinking and technical communication skills. This part of your grade will reflect mastery of these skills. Each exam, including the final exam, will have a critical thinking component that will test your ability to apply content to real-life situations and solve problems using critical thinking skills. In addition to the critical thinking sections on the exams, students will also demonstrate mastery by completing hands-on projects, laboratory research (assessed via lab reports), and analyses of technical literature.

### Enrichment (10%)

Enrichment activities are provided to encourage students to experience science and technology in different ways outside of the classroom and as a means for students to pursue their own personal interests by investigating concepts discussed in class in more depth. Ten percent of your grade is earned by completing Enrichment activities. The enrichment activities are listed on the course website. Each activity is assigned a point value. **In order to receive full credit for the Enrichment part of the grade, you must earn at least 50 points per semester.** In addition, you may earn up to 50 more extra credit points per semester by completing additional enrichment activities. All enrichment activities are due at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester. This means you should plan to complete at least **5 points per week.**

Students are encouraged to come up with ideas for their own activities in order to learn more in-depth about topics we discuss in class. However, you must get teacher approval by submitting a brief proposal, in writing, of the activity to me. If your proposal is approved, I will sign it and return it to you with an estimate of the point value that you will earn if you do a thorough job. Keep this signed paper as a record of the approval to turn in with your activity when it is complete.

Please note that the point values listed on the website for Enrichment activities are approximate. The actual number of points awarded will be based on the quality of your work and my estimation of the time and effort you put into an activity, and the depth of learning I feel you achieved. This means that I may award you fewer points if your work merits such in my estimation. Conversely, I may award more points than indicated for work that shows exceptional effort and in-depth learning.

You will periodically receive assignments related to careers involving the life sciences. In addition to the self-chosen Enrichment activities listed on the course website, these career-development assignments will also be counted in the Enrichment part of your grade.

### Professionalism (10%)

This is a college prep class. Students are expected to learn appropriate study and workplace skills in addition to the course content and science and engineering skills. This part of your grade is subjective and based on my assessment of the following skills which indicate your professionalism:

- *Punctuality:* Do you arrive at class on time and are in your assigned seat with the bell rings? Do you turn in assignments on time?
- *Preparedness:* Do you come to class ready to learn with all of the materials you need? Do you do your homework and assigned reading ahead of time? **Do you print out the PowerPoint lecture presentations ahead of time so that you can take notes on them in class?** Do you come prepared for each lab with all of the assigned reading completed and knowledge of the lab objectives and procedures?
- *Neatness & Organization:* Do you keep your binder up to date, neat and organized with all documents in the appropriate sections? **Do you turn in a table of contents with your binder? Do you include your name, date, period, and title on all assignments?** Do you record your work neatly in your journal? Are you able to find key documents quickly and efficiently? Are tables and graphics in your projects neat and laid out in a well-organized, easy to follow manner?
- *Responsibility & Work Ethic:* **Do you do the in-class assignments and assigned homework?** Do you do your best on every assignment, to include proof-reading your spelling and grammar before turning in an assignment? Do you take steps to protect your work from plagiarism? Do you credit sources you reference when conducting research or using graphics in your projects? **Do you take the time to interact with your notes and look for and correct your mistakes on homework following class discussions or on graded work and projects after they have been returned to you?**
- *Interpersonal:* Do you treat your peers and teacher with respect? Do you participate in class discussions? Do you work effectively in groups with other students, to include participating equitably in discussions and handling differences of opinion in a democratic manner? Do you seek help when needed? Do you help others as needed? Do you contribute to a positive learning environment and minimize distractions to others?



### What Goes in My Journal?

Students will maintain a daily journal. Students will record the daily class agenda in their journal, which will be posted on the board at the start of every class and on the website at the end of each day. Students will also complete most in-class assignments, homework assignments, and lab notes in their daily journals. Due to the large amount of writing in the journal, students will most likely need one journal per quarter (two per semester).

Homework for the whole week will generally be assigned at the start of each week in order to enable students to work around their extracurricular activities (more hours some nights, less hours others). However, students are expected to complete the homework assignments and be ready to discuss them by the due date. Students who are not prepared to discuss the material in class may lose *Professionalism* points and will have more difficulty achieving the learning objectives for that day. In addition, most homework will be written in the daily journal which will be collected and graded periodically at my convenience and potentially without warning. Students should take the time to make corrections to their homework and other assignments in red ink when they discover errors. This will boost their professionalism grade.

### What Goes in My Binder?

Students will use dividers to separate their binder into five sections: Exams, Class Notes, Hand Outs, Portfolio, and Enrichment. The binder will be collected prior to the end of each quarter. Students will be given advance warning so that they can prepare a table of contents for their binder.

- *Exams*: Students will keep their exams here. It is important for students to keep their exams in case they suspect an error has been made to their grade. Students should always track their grade carefully to ensure that it is accurate and no erroneous grades have been assigned.
- *Class Notes*: Students should print the PowerPoint presentations beforehand and bring them to class to take notes on. However, if the PowerPoint presentations are not available before class or if the student does not print them out, then the student should take notes on line paper and print the PowerPoint slides later to insert into the binder. It is important that students interact with their notes. They should write down additional key information on the PowerPoint slide printouts such as information discussed in class but not included on the slides, definitions of key terms, questions discussed in class or that the student looks up later, etc. During class lectures and discussions, and while studying for exams, students should highlight key vocabulary and concepts in one color and use a separate color to highlight supplemental information, like questions they have or any hints given about what might be on a test. In addition, students should create study guides that summarize their notes and text book reading in ways that help them organize and remember the information.
- *Handouts*: This is where students will place any worksheets, web quests, or reference materials passed out in class or posted on the web for students to print and fill in. Web quests are online assignments in which students answer assigned questions by visiting prescribed websites. These will be posted on the course webpage and usually assigned as homework. Some web quests will ask students to write the answers in their journals while others require the student to print them out and fill them in. The latter are the ones that should be placed in the handouts section of your binder. Many homework assignments that go into this section will first be graded and then returned to you to place into your binder. It is important to keep all of these assignments, even if they already have a grade, as the grade may not be recorded for you until the binder is collected and also as evidence in case a wrong grade is recorded by accident.
- *Portfolio*: This is where students will keep all of their projects, formal lab reports, and research papers which make up most of the Scientific and Engineering Skills portion of their grade. Students will put these documents into their binder after they have been returned back to them with a grade. It is important to keep all of these assignments, even if they already have a grade, as the grade may not be recorded for you until the binder is collected and also as evidence in case a wrong grade is recorded by accident.
- *Enrichment*: This is where students will keep their enrichment assignments. Enrichment assignments will be graded and recorded each time the binder is collected. They will not be collected and graded separately. *However*, they will not be recorded into your grade until the end of the semester. Therefore it is important to keep all of your Enrichment activities safely in your binder. Do not remove or throw any away.



## Classroom Policies

- **Labs:** Students are expected to know and abide by the laboratory safety rules. Students who violate these rules will sit out and receive a zero for that lab. Students may also receive a detention or referral for more serious violations. Students who habitually violate the rules will not be allowed to participate further in any labs. Students are expected to come to lab prepared. Students who do not complete the pre-lab assignment will not be allowed to participate in the lab until it is complete. This may affect their ability to complete the lab and earn a passing grade.
- **Finishing Early:** If you finish an assignment or test before other students, use the extra time to work on projects or Enrichment assignments. It is your responsibility to bring your binder to class every day with the materials you need to do your work.
- **Writing Expectations:** Students are expected to use the MLA style guide unless otherwise noted.
- **Tutoring:** Students are expected to seek help as needed. After school tutoring days/hours will be posted in class and online. In addition, online resources are posted on the course website to provide additional assistance. Mandatory after-school tutoring will be assigned to students who are struggling.
- **Late Homework:** You will be assigned homework. In addition, any class work you do not finish during class should be considered homework. Homework is considered late if it is not turned in when I collect it or stamp it. I will often verify that you completed your daily work on time without collecting it by stamping it instead. You can still do work that is late and include it in your journal or binder as assigned. However, your grade will be docked for late work (that which is missing a stamp or grade). You will not receive credit for work missing from your journal or binder after it has been collected, even if you include this work in your binder prior to the next collection. Late work impacts the professionalism part of your grade.
- **Late Projects:** Your grade will be docked if you fail to turn in a project on time. Unless otherwise stated, the penalty will generally be up to 10% of your grade per day late. Projects due at the end of the term cannot be turned in late and will receive a failing grade if not turned in by the due date.
- **Absences:** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to check the course website or with a classmate to find out what you missed. Work assigned before your absence and due while you were absent is due immediately upon your return. Also, work assigned before your absence that is not due until after your return is still due on the assigned due date. For example, the work for the week was assigned on Monday and is due Friday; if you are absent Monday through Thursday, the work is still due for you on Friday unless I determine that you need help learning the material and grant you additional time to complete the assignment(s). It is your responsibility to see me about work assigned while you were absent. If the work was assigned while you are gone and is due the day you return, you will have an additional day per day you were absent to do it. It is your responsibility to see me at a time that does not disrupt the class if you need to discuss due dates for makeup work, or turn in / get stamped makeup work.

If you miss a test, you may only make it up if your absence is excused, and you need to be prepared to take it the FIRST day you return. Be warned that makeup tests are often more difficult than the original test.

Quizzes cannot be made up. However, students will be able to drop their two lowest quiz scores. If a student misses more than two quizzes and all of the absences are excused, the student should come after school to make special arrangements with the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to make sure this is done.

- **Honor Code Violations:** Lying, cheating (including plagiarism), falsification of information, and theft will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes copying words or illustrations from a source without properly referencing it, even if it is only a single phrase in a sentence. Plagiarism also includes copying the work of a classmate or allowing a classmate to copy your work (you will both be disciplined). An honor code violation is a very serious offense and will be dealt with according to the consequences outlined in the Academic Dishonesty Policy printed in your Time Tracker.

Please note that working in groups on assignments outside of class is highly recommended as this is an effective study technique. However, it is important that the work you turn in is your own. Under no circumstances should one partner simply copy what another has written. This includes one partner creating a series of data tables and graphs on the computer and then printing copies for everyone else. When you work with others, be sure to note who you worked with at the bottom of your assignment so that I will understand why your ideas and conclusions are so similar (but they should be written in each student's own words).

- **Cell Phones:** Personal calls, texting, or other forms of inappropriate cell phone use during class time are not permitted. However, it is permissible to use an internet-enabled phone in class to assist with assignments if you first seek permission from the teacher. Students caught using cell phones inappropriately or without permission will receive a detention and their cell phone will be confiscated until the end of the school day. Repeated violations will result in notification of parents and your parent will have to come to pick up your confiscated cell phone.

- **Moving Around the Classroom:** Students are expected to remain in their seats unless given permission to move about the room. Unless otherwise stated, students should be in their seats working on the warm up assignment during the first 10 minutes of class. Do not ask to get up during this time. Keep trash at your desk until the end of the period or until you are instructed to dispose of it.
- **Leaving the Classroom:** No one may leave the classroom at any time without permission. If you need to use the restroom, you must sign out and take the bathroom pass with you. Remember to sign in when you return. No one may leave the class the first or last 10 minutes, including to use the restroom. Do not ask me to go to your locker.
- **No eating, drinking, chewing gum or applying makeup in class.**
- **Disciplinary Consequences:** Depending on the severity of the offense, one or more of the following consequences may apply: (class consequences apply when the class, as a whole, fails to follow directions or maintain an appropriate working environment)

Individual

- Verbal warning / reprimand
- Removal from class activity
- Parent notification
- Detention (possibly multiple days)
- Long form behavior referral
- Removal from class

Class

- Late dismissal (at break, lunch or after school only)
- Extra assignment (that reinforces the class policies)
- Pop quiz (on the course policies)
- Modification or cancellation of activities as needed

- **The Bottom Line:** Have fun, ask questions, share ideas, and embrace your curiosity! However, remember that you will soon be a voting citizen of the United States, responsible for helping to make important decisions that affect the entire world. With great power comes great responsibility. You have an obligation to learn as much as you can about how the world works and what we need to do individually and as a nation to address local and global issues based on our modern understanding of science and using modern technology. Like every other generation before you, it is incumbent upon you to take up the torch of knowledge and pass it forward to the generation that will come after you. For many of you, high school will have THE GREATEST impact on your understanding of science and technology. Make the very most of it. You owe it to YOUR children.

*Let's make this a GREAT year!*

Please note that a few phrases and wording used in this syllabus were copied from Ms. Frohn's syllabus. Thank you Ms. Frohn.