

**BIOL 1306 ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY**  
**CRN 20808**

**Spring 2023, 3 credits, MW 12:00-1:20 PM, Undergraduate Learning Center 128**

**A. INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT**

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth LaRue, e-mail: [ealarue@utep.edu](mailto:ealarue@utep.edu), Office: B-404

Office hours: Monday 2 – 3 PM in-person/virtual or by appointment

***Emails.*** Emails are read during business hours on Monday - Friday during the academic semester and will be responded to on the next business day. Emails received on weekends, holidays, or university breaks will be responded to on the next university business day. Students are responsible for reviewing the course policies covered in the syllabus and emails should reflect this knowledge.

***Appointments.*** Please plan accordingly before deadlines – students must plan at least two business days ahead when requesting appointments (note that this does not guarantee I will be able to schedule you for a meeting exactly 48 hours after your request due to other existing obligations or meeting requests by other students).

***Forms of course communication.*** Students will receive information about the course through the syllabus, in-class announcements and lectures, Blackboard, and UTEP emails. Per UTEP policy, I can only email with students through their official UTEP email.

**B. FORMAT OF INSTRUCTION**

**This class is being conducted *in-person* and you are generally expected to come to class.**

However, there will be some flexibility to accommodate attendance for students that are ill and must quarantine. Everything in this syllabus is liable and subject to change based on COVID conditions or other pandemic-related policies set by the university. Students needing semester disability accommodations should contact CASS ([Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#)).

**C. COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Understand how evolution drives: (i) diversity of life on Earth (ii) ecological interactions among organisms and their environments, and (iii) structure and function of organisms.

**Learning outcomes – Concepts**

- 1) Describe how Darwin convinced the scientific community of the importance of evolution. More broadly, understand how scientific knowledge is generated by achieving consensus among different types of evidence.
- 2) Explain how evolution drives life on Earth at small and large scales.
- 3) Identify major groups of organisms within the tree of life and describe its structure. Be able to reason about the evolutionary history of a group including determination of traits in ancestral lineages.
- 4) Explain the principles of anatomy and physiology in plants and animals.
- 5) Describe how organisms interact with each other and with their environment.

**Learning outcomes – Skills**

- 1) Gain improved proficiency in reading graphs, interpreting mathematical equations, and interpreting box and arrow diagrams depicting biological phenomena.
- 2) Be able to interpret phylogenetic trees showing relationships among lineages.
- 3) Master ~200 biology vocabulary terms.
- 4) Grow understanding about biological inquiry, both in how scientists apply it, and in how to ask questions about biological knowledge through the scientific method.

#### D. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Instead of a traditional textbook, we will use the CogBooks platform. You can purchase a code at the UTEP bookstore or pay for CogBooks online when you begin our course on Blackboard. There will be a link to CogBooks through our Blackboard shell under course content. Once logged in for the first time, a Payment Gateway Process screen will appear, and you will be asked to either enter a code (purchased from the bookstore) or purchase the CogBooks courseware. Once you have purchased or entered a code, you will then have access to the CogBooks courseware for the entire semester. CogBooks is not a textbook. It is software that guides you through various readings and activities that cover concepts and materials in our course.

There is a tutorial video for navigating in CogBooks here: <https://youtu.be/QGiTUT8ohh8>

#### E. ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend and participate in-person lectures. A student's grade will suffer from poor attendance. I will allow you to miss up to 6 classes (3 weeks of non-exam lecture days), so I expect you will have enough flexibility to work around any illness or other absences you may experience. Due to this generous absence policy, I do not do make-up assignments. If you need to miss more class than that, I will likely encourage you to medically withdraw from the class, but please talk to me.

#### F. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

##### *CogBooks Modules - 30%*

Each week, you will have several CogBook submodules to complete before class (total 150 points for the whole semester). These assessments are posted on Blackboard but are linked through your purchase of "CogBooks" and can be found on the left side of Blackboard "Cogbooks Modules". The modules are designed to increase your familiarity with new material, and thus should be completed before class. The modules will have you conduct activities and will ask questions to determine if you feel comfortable with the topics. The CogBooks software will walk you through this and will make recommendations for where to go for review if you are not comfortable with the material. This is not graded on a performance scale; you either earn credit for doing it or you do not. You will only receive full credit for the assessment if you complete them at the indicated time. ***Late submissions will NOT be accepted.***

##### *Exams – 70%*

All students will take four multiple choice exams (75 points each, the lowest of which will be dropped, for a total of 225 points so each exam is worth 15%) and a final (125 points or worth 25%). The final exam grade cannot be dropped. **Because the lowest exam will be dropped, there are no makeup exams.** You should treat the dropped exam a built-in absence in case of an emergency or illness, not a free exam. If you do not study and treat each exam seriously, then you run the risk of earning a lower grade due to an unplanned absence. The online exams will be open note, timed blackboard exams that will be available during a specific period. Even though the exams are open note, you must study to do well. The exams will be timed, and questions will be randomly selected from a question bank. These exams can be started at any time within the window (typically the exam date shown on the course schedule – last page of syllabus), but once they begin, there will be a set time (for example, 60 min) to finish. If you do not study, you will find it difficult to complete all the questions within the allotted time. The final will be cumulative, open-note and will occur in-person as an e-exam in class. You will be required to come with a laptop with Blackboard on it. This means you need a functional, fully charged laptop with the software installed or need to check out a laptop from the library for each exam. Further instructions can be found at:

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/Files/docs/BB\\_E-Exams.pdf](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/Files/docs/BB_E-Exams.pdf)

### ***Option to down-weight your exam grade percentage***

The exams can account for 70% of your grade if you wish or you can choose to complete in-class participation to reduce the exam grades to 50%.

### ***In-class participation via iClicker polls - 20%***

The main way to earn participation points is through in-class answers to iClicker questions (typically 1-3 questions per class). The questions are mainly meant to be instructional, with points for participation (6 points per day if all questions are answered that day) and no penalty for incorrect answers. Installation of the necessary iClicker app is described in an announcement on Blackboard.

**You can miss up to 6 classes with no penalty on participation days** – I will count points for up to 17 days but no more than this (i.e. participation points earned cannot be over 100 points or 20%).

Participation grades will not be counted for the first two class periods to let students have a test run of the iClicker polls. Participation grades are not collected on exam days. No make-ups are given for missed participation points. To setup your iClicker account on our course Blackboard follow these instructions: [https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/Files/docs/iClicker-REEF\\_Blackboard-Student-Instructions.pdf](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/Files/docs/iClicker-REEF_Blackboard-Student-Instructions.pdf)

### ***Extra-credit:***

There is only one extra-credit opportunity for this course (worth up to 15 points if completed). It must be submitted through the Blackboard submission link by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Submissions after this date will not be accepted and no other extra-credit opportunities will be given. You may write a 2-page, single-spaced paper summarizing and discussing a real-world global change issue related to organismal biology. Topic choices are climate change, invasive species, air/water pollution, microplastics, wildfires, overuse of water in drylands, or habitat fragmentation from urbanization (pick one). Include one or more real-world examples of this issue. At least 5 reputable sources must be cited (Wikipedia does not count). To earn all 15 points, you must include all citations and cite the sources appropriately (i.e., do not copy or paraphrase without citing the source). You must also pay attention to grammar.

### ***Submitting assignments***

**All work must be submitted on-time and through the appropriate submission link** (Blackboard, iClicker polls, etc). If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. It is your responsibility to give yourself enough time to submit the assignment by the deadline.

### ***Late work policy***

Late work will not be accepted and a zero will be given for any late assignments.

### ***Make-up work***

Make-up work will not be given because the lowest exam grade is dropped, and a student may miss up to 6 class periods for associated participation points. Cogbook modules are self-paced homework assignments that are completed outside of class, so no make-ups are given.

### ***Final grade***

The course grade will be derived from the following chart and are based on the percent of the earned points on assignments and participation out of the total possible points: A (90-100), B+ (80 - 89.9), C (70 - 79.9), D (60.0 – 69.9), F (< 60.0)

## **G. TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:**

You will need to have access to a laptop with Blackboard for exams. You will also need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Zoom Adobe Acrobat Reader. You will need a webcam and a microphone for virtual office hours. Check that your computer hardware and software

are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following [link](#) for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

Although the class periods are intended to be delivered in person, course content such as required readings and assignment submission is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure that your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the [UTEP Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance.

#### **H. COURSE DROP POLICY**

**The UTEP Spring 2023 drop deadline is March 30, 2023.** The College of Science does not approve any drop requests after this date; therefore, it is your responsibility to drop the course by this deadline. If you do not, you will be assigned the grade earned for the course. To be dropped from the course, you must initiate this request by contacting the [Registrar's Office](#).

#### **I. INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY**

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

#### **J. ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

#### **K. SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

#### **L. COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS**

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

#### **M. COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS**

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

#### **N. COURSE RESOURCES**

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.
- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide. Individual Resources
- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

**Schedule of Topics (subject to change)**

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Class #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Course Topic</b>	<b>CogBooks Module</b> (Complete by date listed for credit)
<b>1</b>	1	January 18	Syllabus & Introduction	
<b>2</b>	2	January 23	Evolution	Evolution, Origins of Life
	3	January 25	Evolution	New Species
<b>3</b>	4	January 30	Evolution	Behavior
	5	February 1	Evolution	Evolution of populations, Evolution in populations
<b>4</b>	6	February 6	Review	
	7	February 8	<b>Exam 1</b>	
<b>5</b>	8	February 13	Phylogenetics	Phylogenies and the history of life
	9	February 15	Viruses	Viruses
<b>6</b>	10	February 20	Bacteria, Archaea	Prokaryotes: Archaea & Bacteria
	11	February 22	Protists, Fungi	Protists, Fungi
<b>7</b>	12	February 27	Review	
	13	March 1	<b>Exam 2</b>	
<b>8</b>	14	March 6	Plant diversity	Plant diversity
	15	March 8	Plant form and function	Plant Form and Physiology
<b>9</b>		March 13,15	SPRING BREAK	
<b>10</b>	16	March 20	Plant reproduction, photosynthesis	Plant reproduction, photosynthesis
	17	March 22	Soil and plant nutrition	Soil and Plant Nutrition
<b>11</b>	18	March 27	Animal diversity	Animal Diversity
	19	March 29	Animal diversity	
<b>12</b>	20	April 3	Review	
	21	April 5	<b>Exam 3</b>	
<b>13</b>	22	April 10	Ecology – populations, communities	Intro to Ecology
	23	April 12	Ecology – ecosystems, biomes	World biomes
<b>14</b>	24	April 17	Ecology – climate change	Climate change
	25	April 19	Ecology – conservation	Conservation
<b>15</b>	26	April 24	<b>Exam 4</b>	
	27	April 26	Animal structure and function	Homeostasis
<b>16</b>	28	May 1	Animal structure and function	Body Tissues
	29	May 3	Review	
<b>17</b>		May 8-12	<b>Final exam (date/time TBD)</b>	