

BIOL 1306 ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY (CRN 20740)
Spring 2024, 3 credits, MW 1:30-2:50 PM, Undergraduate Learning Center 116

A. INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT

Dr. Elizabeth La Rue, e-mail: elaru@utep.edu, Office: Biology Building 404
Office hours: Monday 3 – 4 PM or by appointment (in-person/virtual)

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.

Appointments. Please plan accordingly before deadlines – students must plan at least two business days ahead when requesting appointments.

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 will only email with students through their official UTEP email.

B. FORMAT OF INSTRUCTION

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

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 consilience 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. It is software that guides you through various readings and activities that cover concepts and materials in our course. 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 tutorial: <https://youtu.be/QGiTUT8ohh8>

E. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

CogBooks Modules - 30%

Each week, you will have CogBook modules to complete. 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. 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 but I will drop the three lowest CogBook module scores. These are due at 1:30 PM of the date of the next midterm exam covering that material (i.e., complete assigned modules by the next scheduled midterm exam).***

Exams – 70%

All students will take four multiple choice midterm exams (the lowest of which will be dropped, so each exam is worth 15%) and a mandatory final take-home exam (worth 25%, cannot be dropped). *Because the lowest midterm exam will be dropped, there are no makeup exams.* You should treat the dropped midterm as a built-in absence in case of an emergency or illness, not a free exam. The midterm exams will be open note, timed blackboard exams that **must be taken in-person during the scheduled lecture period.** Even though the exams are open note, you must study to do well. Once the exams are started, you will be required to finish it within the consecutive lecture time. If you do not study, you will find it difficult to complete all the questions within the allotted time. The final will be a cumulative take-home final exam. You will be required to come with a laptop that has Blackboard on it to take each exam. 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

Option to down-weigh 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 assignments and quizzes - 20%

The main way to earn participation points is through in-class answers to iClicker questions. There may also be other participation activities or quizzes that contribute to the points of this category. The questions are mainly meant to be instructional, with points for participation and no penalty for incorrect answers. Installation of the necessary iClicker app is described on Blackboard. **You can miss up to six classes with no penalty on participation [non-exam] days** – I will drop the six lowest participation grades for each student (i.e. participation points earned cannot be over 20% toward the total grade). No make-ups are given. 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

Extra-credit:

Small extra-credit opportunities *might* be provided upon occasion throughout the semester as pop-quizzes or extra questions on mid-term exams. Requests for additional extra credit by an individual student will not be accommodated. Students should complete course assignments to earn their grade.

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 or CogBooks help (support@cogbooks.freshdesk.com). It is your responsibility to give yourself enough time to submit the assignment by the deadline.

Attendance and make-up work policy

Students are expected to attend the lectures; your grade will suffer from poor attendance. **I will allow you to miss up to six lectures (3 weeks of non-exam lecture days) toward participation assignments and quizzes, one mid-term exam, and three Cogbooks assignments.** To standardize grading across students, independently of whether you use the absences or not, I will drop the lowest six lectures of participation, one mid-term exam, and three Cogbooks assignments. I therefore 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.** The only exceptions for excused absences are individuals that have documentation from CASS for approved accommodations or for official UTEP travel (i.e. sports team). In special circumstances such as student hospitalization, the Office of the Dean of Students may provide a letter as proof of undue hardship. Please provide documentation in one of these three formats when requesting an excused absence and make-up assignment.

Late work policy

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

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)

F. TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS:

You will need to have access to a laptop with Blackboard for exams and iClicker for in-class participation. You will need to access Blackboard and CogBooks software for complete course assignments. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. Although the class periods are intended to be delivered in person, course content 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.

G. COURSE DROP POLICY

The UTEP Spring 2024 drop deadline is March 28, 2024. 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](#).

H. 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.

I. ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

J. 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. **In this course, working with another student on an exam or quiz is cheating.** 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](#).

Course policy on the use of artificial intelligence

Claiming that content generated by artificial intelligence as your own work is not allowed. Students must write their own answers for this course, unless specifically instructed to use AI on an assignment. AI can be a useful study tool to summarize concepts learned in the class, but **the use of AI is strictly prohibited on midterm or final exams (i.e. you cannot use ChatGPT).**

K. 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.

L. 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.
- [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)

Week #	Class #	Date	Course Topic	CogBooks Module (Complete by the next mid-term exam)
1	1	January 17	Syllabus & Introduction	
2	2	January 22	Evolution	Evolution (due 2/7 at 1:30 PM)
	3	January 24	Evolution	New Species (due 2/7 at 1:30 PM)
3	4	January 29	Evolution	Evolution of populations (due 2/7 at 1:30 PM)
	5	January 31	Evolution	Evolution in populations (due 2/7 at 1:30 PM)
4	6	February 5	Review	
	7	February 7	Exam 1 (evolution)	
5	8	February 12	Phylogenetics	Phylogenies and the history of life
	9	February 14	Viruses	Origins of Life (due 2/28 at 1:30 PM)
6	10	February 19	Bacteria, Archaea	Prokaryotes: Archaea & Bacteria (due 2/28 at 1:30 PM)
	11	February 21	Protists, Fungi	
7	12	February 26	Review	
	13	February 28	Exam 2 (phylogenetics, microbes)	
8	14	March 4	Plant diversity	Plant diversity (due 3/25 at 1:30 PM)
	15	March 6	Plant form and function, reproduction	Plant Form and Physiology, Plant reproduction (due 3/25 at 1:30 PM)
9		March 11-15	SPRING BREAK	
10	16	March 18	Photosynthesis, soil and plant nutrition	Photosynthesis, Soil and Plant Nutrition (due 3/25 at 1:30 PM)
	17	March 20	Review	
11	18	March 25	Exam 3 (plants)	
	19	March 27	Animal diversity	Animal Diversity (due 4/22 at 1:30 PM)
12	20	April 1	Animal diversity	
	21	April 3	<i>No class</i>	
13	22	April 8	Ecology – populations, communities	Intro to Ecology (due 4/22 at 1:30 PM)
	23	April 10	Ecology – ecosystems, biomes	World biomes (due 4/22 at 1:30 PM)
14	24	April 15	Ecology – global change	
	25	April 17	Review	
15	26	April 22	Exam 4 (animals, ecology)	
	27	April 24	Animal structure and function	Homeostasis, Body Tissues (due 5/3 at 5 PM)
16	28	April 29	Animal behavior	Behavior (due 5/3 at 5 PM)
	29	May 1	Review	
17		May 6-10	Timed take-home Blackboard final exam; Opens May 6th Monday 9 AM and is due Friday May 10th 5 PM	