

GENERAL BIOLOGY (BIOL 1305) – FALL 2020

Instructor: Jeffrey T. Olimpo, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Scheduled by appointment only (held via Zoom)*

E-mail: jtolimpo@utep.edu

*In an effort to ensure that your privacy is maintained, I have elected to hold office hours on an individual basis. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please send me an e-mail. I am here to help! ☺

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to *a study of life*! This course examines biological principles from cells to communities with a particular emphasis on structure and function. As a result, you will be introduced to a variety of topics including genetics, metabolism, cell structure and physiology, and homeostasis. Applications of biology to other areas of science will also be discussed.

COURSE STRUCTURE: AN OVERVIEW

Whether you have recently completed a course in the field or you have not been in the classroom for more than a decade, you possess the means to be successful in this class and have a wealth of experience to contribute to our discussions. This semester, our course will be conducted **asynchronously via Blackboard**. In an effort to familiarize you with this learning environment and assist you in achieving your biology learning goals this term, I have applied the RIPE (Review, Interact, Practice, Examine) method to each unit. You may be curious what this means for you as a student. Specifically, RIPE offers a scaffolded way to approach course content, as follows:

- First, you will want to **review the tasks that you need to accomplish for each week**. In order to help you achieve this objective, I will post a “Weekly Updates” announcement to our Blackboard site that indicates which lectures you should view, optional and mandatory assignments that should be completed, etc. This announcement will also be distributed via e-mail, so *please be sure to regularly check your UTEP e-mail account!*
- Within Blackboard, you will have an opportunity to **interact with course content** in the form of lectures, thought questions, and activities. Weekly discussion boards also provide you with a formal space to pose questions, share ideas, and enhance your comprehension of course content.
- For most units/topics presented in the course, you will have an opportunity to **practice what you have learned** via completion of animation-based exercises. More information about homework for the course can be found later in this syllabus.

- Lastly, course assessments (e.g., exams) will provide a venue for you and me to **examine your understanding** of material presented in each unit. Additional details about the exams, such as dates, can be found later in this syllabus.

COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide students with a broad introduction to the field of biology. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the basic principles of the discipline including relationships and applications to other areas of science (e.g., chemistry)
- Discuss and demonstrate how scientists solve problems in the discipline
- Discuss and demonstrate attitudes important to the scientific community such as discerning cause-effect relationships, making evidence-based claims, and synthesizing facts from multiple sources in order to understand situations as a whole
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically and use the “language” of biology

COURSE TEXTBOOK & MATERIALS

1. *Principles of Life (3rd Ed.)*; Hillis, Sadava, Heller, and Price.
W.H. Freeman, Publishers; ISBN-13: 9781319017712 (Hardcopy)

NOTE: The textbook is **not required** for this course, and all assignments and exams will be structured around the lectures and activities delivered online. However, the textbook is a recommended resource for reviewing material that you might have found particularly challenging or need further clarification on before exams.

2. *OpenStax Textbook:* The *OpenStax* site provides both online and PDF versions of a general Introductory Biology textbook (<https://openstax.org/details/books/biology-2e>). Please note that the first 16 chapters are most relevant to the course.
3. While it will not be used frequently, you may wish to keep a calculator on hand.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of a scholarly community dedicated to healthy intellectual development, students and faculty are expected to share the responsibility of maintaining high standards of honesty and integrity in their academic work. All material for this course must be your work and no one else's. **Cheating or plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated.** This includes, but is not limited to, copying someone else's work on an assignment or exam. Please note that all suspected instances of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be referred to the Dean of Students Office, in accordance with UTEP policies and procedures.

The honor code also states that all members of the UTEP community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UTEP community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

COMMUNICATIONS

When you e-mail me, please include a proper subject, any message you are responding to, the course name and CRN, as well as your name. Please use your UTEP account to ensure the e-mail is not blocked by the university's spam filter. If you e-mail me directly from our Blackboard course, essential information like the course name and section will automatically be included. I will do my best to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours. If you do not receive a response from me within this timeframe, I ask that you please re-send your e-mail. Ensure that you regularly check the e-mail account listed for you in Blackboard, as this is where I will send all communications.

CENTER FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations must be registered with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) Office in Room 106 of the Union East Bldg. You may contact them at (915) 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu for more information. Once you are registered with the CASS Office, I ask that you please schedule a time to meet with me so that we may have a private conversation to discuss accommodations, as recommended by CASS.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The IT Support Team can assist with Blackboard, password resets, and student e-mail accounts. Hours and other helpful information can be found at <http://www.helpdesk.utep.edu>.

COURSE GRADING & EXPECTATIONS

COURSE GRADING:

- Midterm Exams #1 - #3 45% (lowest grade will be dropped)
- Final Exam (Cumulative) 25%
- Animation Review Questions (ARQs) 20%
- Attendance/Participation 10%

A = 90 - 100%	D = 60 - 69%
B = 80 - 89%	F = <60%
C = 70 - 79%	

I may, at times, distribute extra credit that is designed to reinforce course concepts. It is your choice whether or not to complete these assignments. Please also note that the “+/-” grading system will *not* be used in this course as per departmental and university policies.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

You attendance and participation in all parts of this course are expected. Given the virtual nature of this course, attendance is defined as the viewing of all online lecture materials, submission of all assignments, and completion of all online exams (i.e., more than merely accessing the course). Please note that my priority is to ensure that you are able to successfully complete the course and meet your own personal learning goals this semester. Therefore, I **strongly encourage** you to reach out to me via e-mail in the event that you have difficulty accessing material, require additional time on an assignment due to extenuating circumstances, etc. I will make every effort to assist you as best as I am able.

Your participation in the course is likewise vital, as it will allow you to gain the most from this experience. You will notice, for instance, that there are review/thought questions embedded within the video lectures, and activities/case studies will routinely be made available for you to work on throughout the semester. While the majority of these exercises are optional, it is in your best interest to complete them, as they are designed to assist you in reviewing content that will appear on subsequent exams.

Notably, I will ask you to submit five activities for points. These activities include a(n):

- Brief introduction post on the “Community of Learners” discussion board, which will be due on Sunday, August 30th.
- Thermodynamics review worksheet, which will be due on Sunday, October 11th.
- Cellular respiration case study exercise, which will be due on Sunday, November 1st.
- Gene expression case study exercise, which will be due on Sunday, November 22nd.
- End-of-semester reflection, which will be due on Wednesday, December 9th.

Specific instructions and information related to each activity will be distributed via the “Weekly Updates” announcements, with **all activities due no later than 11:59pm (MT) on the date specified**. Collectively, these activities will account for 10% of your overall grade in the course.

BLACKBOARD

This class makes extensive use of Blackboard® (<https://adminapps.utep.edu/blackboardlearn>). You will use Blackboard to download/print lectures and other course materials, access assignments, and check your grades. Please note that your login and password are the same as you would use to access your UTEP e-mail account. Please also note that new lecture materials will be released on Blackboard each week no later than Sunday at 5:00pm (MT).

LECTURES

In an effort to facilitate your successful progression through the course, I have structured the schedule to include two lectures/activities per week, just as would be the case if we were to meet in a face-to-face environment (please see the lecture schedule near the end of the syllabus). However, because our course will meet asynchronously, you may view lecture content at your own convenience once it is released. Assignments and exams are the only items that **MUST** be completed on or by the date specified! In order to increase access to lecture content, please note that each week's "Lecture Materials" folder will contain (at minimum) three items: (a) completed versions of that week's lecture notes; (b) a video lecture for each topic presented that week, per the course lecture schedule; and (c) an audio-only version of each lecture. In addition, a discussion board will be available in each week's folder, which will serve as a place to post general comments, concerns, and questions related to that week's material. As a rule of thumb, it is in your best interest to download/print the PowerPoint slides *prior* to viewing each lecture and then add notes as you listen to the lecture recordings. Furthermore, you may want to write down any questions that you have as you are listening; that way, you can submit the questions to the discussion board at a later date. Importantly, video-/audio-lectures can be downloaded and played (including fast-forwarding/rewinding) as often as you would like, so do not hesitate to revisit them as necessary.

FRIDAY ROUND-UPS

Each week, I will hold an **optional** "live" session on **Friday, from 4:00 – 5:00pm (MT)**. During these sessions, you will have an opportunity to work collaboratively with your classmates to complete review activities focused on that week's material, ask questions about course content, etc. Collectively, these sessions are designed to enhance your understanding of the topics discussed in the course while simultaneously providing additional avenues to support the formation of a classroom community. Sessions can be accessed using the following link: <https://bit.ly/3ar58qE>. If necessary, the password is **BIOL1305**.

MIDTERM & FINAL EXAMS

Each of the first three midterm exams will cover material from the lectures directly preceding it, not including material covered on previous midterm exams (if applicable). You are required to complete all examinations (including the final exam, which is described below). Exams not taken will be averaged in as a grade of zero, with the lowest of the first three midterm exam scores being dropped. Please note that you *cannot* drop the final exam score.

Midterm exams will be available online via Blackboard, as follows:

- **Exam #1** – Wednesday, September 16th, from 8:00am – 8:00pm (MT)
- **Exam #2** – Wednesday, October 14th, from 8:00am – 8:00pm (MT)
- **Exam #3** – Wednesday, November 11th, from 8:00am – 8:00pm (MT)

Each exam will consist of a series of **50 multiple-choice and T/F questions**, and you will have **90 min.** to complete each midterm exam. Please note that you will be able to view all exam questions at the same time (i.e., on the same page rather than one question at a time), and you must complete exams in a single sitting once you begin.

As was the case with the midterm exams, the final exam for this course will be delivered online via Blackboard. This exam will be available on **Wednesday, December 9th, from 8:00am – 8:00pm (MT)**. Please note that the final exam is cumulative and will consist of **75 multiple-choice and T/F questions**. The exam will be presented in the same format as the previous midterm exams (e.g., all questions available at the same time), and you will have **3 hrs.** to complete the test.

PLEASE PREPARE! Although this is an online course and you will have access to the entirety of your lecture materials (among other resources) while completing each exam, the questions will be presented to you in a random sequence, so you must be prepared. Please note that the exam dates posted in the lecture schedule below are non-negotiable. Therefore, if you miss an exam without prior notification and approval, you will receive a score of zero for that exam.

ANIMATION REVIEW QUESTIONS (ARQs)

In an effort to help you prepare for upcoming exams in the course, I will distribute (via Blackboard) a series of animation-based modules that contain questions pertaining to the major topics covered within each unit. **New modules will open at 5:00pm (MT) on the release date and are due at 11:59pm (MT) on the specified due date** (please see the homework schedule on the next page for all release and due dates for the semester), unless otherwise noted. There will be ten (10) ARQs distributed throughout the semester, with this series of assignments collectively accounting for 20% of your overall grade in the course.

Each ARQ will consist of three components, as follows:

- **Warm-Up Assessment:** Warm-up assessments will consist of seven (7) questions, including both content-based and attitudinal items. These assessments will be untimed and are intended to provide a baseline representation of your understanding of and comfort with the topical focus of each ARQ.
- **Video Assignment:** After completion of the warm-up, you will be able to access the animation associated with the ARQ content topic. All video animations have been structured using the EdPuzzle online platform, which presents you with additional opportunities to review (via questions embedded in the animation) material covered in the video/in class. In order to access the videos, you will need to register for an EdPuzzle student account. This can be done by: (a) clicking on the video assignment link; (b) clicking “Sign Up” on the EdPuzzle window that appears; (c) registering as a **student** using your full first name and last name, UTEP login, and a self-generated password; and (d) clicking

“Join.” While watching the animation, I would strongly encourage you to take notes, with the intent that those notes will supplement other lecture notes/activities in the course.

Once you have completed the animation in its entirety, please navigate back to Blackboard and click the “Mark Reviewed” button under the video link.

- **Wrap-Up Assessment:** Wrap-up assessments will consist of ten (10) questions, including both content-based and attitudinal items. These assessments will be untimed and are intended to provide an understanding of the extent to which the video itself impacted your comprehension of the material.

Each component must be completed in **sequential order** prior to the due date. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns as you are working *or* if you experience any technical issues, and I will work to resolve them ASAP!

ARQ #	Topic	Release Date	Due Date
1	Scientific Inquiry	Aug. 31 st	Sept. 7 th
2	Macromolecules	Sept. 9 th	Sept. 16 th
3	Cells and Organelles	Sept. 21 st	Sept. 28 th
4	Cellular Membranes	Sept. 28 th	Oct. 5 th
5	Energy and Metabolism	Oct. 5 th	Oct. 12 th
6	Cellular Respiration	Oct. 21 st	Oct. 28 th
7	DNA Replication	Oct. 28 th	Nov. 4 th
8	Translation	Nov. 16 th	Nov. 23 rd
9	Cell Division	Nov. 23 rd	Nov. 30 th
10	Genetics	Nov. 30 th	Dec. 2 nd

PEER LEARNING ASSISTANT – CARESS RIDDELL



Please join me in welcoming Ms. Caress Riddell as our peer learning assistant for BIOL 1305 this semester. Caress will be available to assist with one-on-one/group tutoring sessions and any questions or concerns that you might have. Outside of her office hours (TBD), she can best be reached via e-mail at criddell@miners.utep.edu.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Wk.		Date	Lecture Topics	Textbook Section(s)
1	M	Aug. 24	Course Intro./Comm. of Learners	-
	W	Aug. 26	Characteristics of Life	-
2	M	Aug. 31	Scientific Inquiry	1.5
	W	Sept. 2	Introduction to Evolution	1.4, 13.1
3	M	Sept. 7	Chemistry of Life Small Molecules	2.1, 2.2, 2.5
	W	Sept. 9	Carbohydrates and Lipids	3.1, 3.2
4	M	Sept. 14	Proteins and Nucleic Acids	3.3, 3.4
	W	Sept. 16	EXAM ONE	-
5	M	Sept. 21	Cells: The Building Blocks of Life	4.5
	W	Sept. 23	Cells: Organelles	4.5
6	M	Sept. 28	Cell Membranes (Part I)	4.1 – 4.3
	W	Sept. 30	Cell Membranes (Part II)	4.1 – 4.3
7	M	Oct. 5	Thermodynamics	2.3, 2.4
	W	Oct. 7	Enzymes	3.5
8	M	Oct. 12	ATP & Metabolism	5.1, 5.4
	W	Oct. 14	EXAM TWO	-
9	M	Oct. 19	Cellular Respiration (Part I)	5.2
	W	Oct. 21	Cellular Respiration (Part II)	5.2
10	M	Oct. 26	Cellular Respiration Case Study	-
	W	Oct. 28	DNA Structure Case Study Review	-
11	M	Nov. 2	DNA Replication (Part I)	9.1, 9.2
	W	Nov. 4	DNA Replication (Part II)	9.1, 9.2
12	M	Nov. 9	Transcription	10.1, 10.2
	W	Nov. 11	EXAM THREE	-
13	M	Nov. 16	Translation	10.3, 10.4
	W	Nov. 18	Gene Expression (Lecture/Activity)	-
14	M	Nov. 23	Cell Division: Mitosis	7.2
	W	Nov. 25	Cell Division: Meiosis	7.3, 7.4
15	M	Nov. 30	Introduction to Genetics (Part I)	8.1
	W	Dec. 2	Introduction to Genetics (Part II)	8.1

* Please note that the course drop date is October 30th.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN BIOL 1305

1. Create a “Cheat Sheet” for each Lecture

At the end of each lecture, I would encourage you to create a one-page “cheat sheet” that outlines the content of that lecture. You do not have to (nor should you) copy everything from the PowerPoint notes onto your sheet word-for-word. Instead, ask yourself: *What are the most important concepts from this lecture? What terms, tips/tricks, etc. will I want to have access to come exam time? Are there specific visuals that I want to include on my sheet?* These are the items that you should write down. Broadly-speaking, you should also make sure that your “cheat sheet” is organized. If you cannot locate specific information when necessary, the sheet will not be as useful to you as it otherwise could be.

2. Science is a Different Language

This is the only time I am going to condone memorization. You just cannot get by in a biology course (or any science course) without having an understanding of the definitions and terminology used by that discipline. In my opinion, the easiest way to accomplish this goal is to keep a series of notecards containing the definitions of popular terms that have been discussed in the online lectures. Do **NOT** try to copy everything from your notes onto a flashcard – this will only become overbearing. Instead, consider the notecards as one strategy (among many) to facilitate your learning.

3. Your Textbook is a Resource

Your textbook is a guide and a resource. It is not meant to replace participation in the course, and we will not cover much of the minutia discussed in the book. That does not mean you should not read it. Just be aware that it is a tool to support your learning, not a mechanism to learn via osmosis.

4. Find a “Study-Buddy” or form a Study Group

Do this sooner rather than later, but only if study groups help you!! Try re-teaching lectures to your friends or quizzing them on important topics. If you are capable of teaching material to your group, believe me, you understand it.

5. Get Help Sooner, not Later

If you are having difficulty with a topic, do not wait to seek help. Information about how to schedule an appointment with me is on the first page of this syllabus. *Please reach out!!* I enjoy working with students and am here to help, no matter what question you might have!

6. **Budget your Time Wisely**

I understand that you have other classes and obligations. The rule of thumb has always been to spend 2-3 hours outside of class each week for every hour “in class.” Personally, I find that to be insane. Instead, I recommend keeping a calendar that indicates, each day, what goals you intend to accomplish for BIOL 1305. It does not have to be anything big, either. Your goal might be “make flashcards for Chapter 3.” Setting reasonable and manageable goals will help keep you motivated.

7. **Stay Positive!**

I got a “D” on the first biology exam I ever took in college, and I about lost it. But here I am, more than 10 years later, still in one piece (I know; I am old). My point: *stick with it!* Believe in yourself and do everything you need to do to succeed. And remember, I am here to help!

*** Disclaimer: I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus due to unforeseen circumstances.
Students will be given notice of relevant changes through Blackboard and e-mail.
Exam dates will **NOT** change.***

WELCOME TO BIOL 1305!!! 😊