

Biology of Organisms I (Bio 121) Online Course Syllabus

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Course Overview: This course serves as the first of a two-part sequence to introduce biology at the major's level. Bio 121 is tour through some of the major concepts in biology, and the methods and processes used to gather the facts that inform those concepts. The course focuses on cellular and molecular biology, and leads into inheritance and evolution. Throughout the course we will refer to the methods and logic that were used to explore these concepts.

As an online course, students are expected to learn from the text independently. The course is divided into 4 units (see schedule below) that each include assigned reading, discussions, and online assignments. Though there are some short recorded lessons, most of the primary learning for this class occurs through reading the textbook. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that students learn the assigned material independently. To help assist with independent learning, the textbook required for this class has been modified, and online assignments are designed to reinforce and augment the text. Additionally, the course is designed such that the entire class is working on the same topics at the same time, so that communication and discussion between students can occur.

Each unit also includes an exam that is taken online. It is advised that you complete all of the assignments for each unit prior to taking the exam. The exact software that will be used for proctoring has yet to be determined, but you will likely need to pay a small amount (~\$15) for each exam. Because of this, the exams from units 1 and 2 will likely be combined, and the exams from units 3 and 4 will likely be combined to reduce the costs associated with this course. Practice exams for each unit are built into the course website so that you may become familiar with my testing style.

Course Goals: This course is designated as a university studies 2a course. Therefore, by the end of the course you should be familiar with some fundamental concepts of biology, be able to explain how the scientific method generates knowledge (facts and conclusions), use quantitative information to demonstrate knowledge, and use this knowledge to solve problems. These goals will be assessed using exams, online assignments, and discussion boards.

Course Materials: This course will use the Pearson Mastering Biology website that accompanies the digital textbook. You must first purchase access to Mastering Biology from Pearson publishing (either buy an access code from the UMD bookstore or buy access directly from Pearson publishing <https://www.pearsonmylabandmastering.com/northamerica/masteringbiology/>), second you will sign in to our specific course with the course ID: MBWINSLOW23807. This resource allows me to post notes, links, and other resources directly to the textbook to share with the class. These edits will serve to supplement the text, and largely take the place of lecturing.

Text – “*Campbell Biology, 11th edition*”. Urry et al. Pearson publishing, digital copy (available through mastering). You must purchase access to the mastering biology website, and use the code above to access our version of this textbook. Because the text is edited to fit the online format of this course, you are required to use the digital version of this text that is run through the Mastering Biology website. You do not need to buy a hard copy of the textbook (see above).

Course Website: A myCourses website has been established for this course. You can access this course by logging into your myUMassD portal from the UMass Dartmouth website (www.umassd.edu). The course website will become available shortly before the beginning of class. If you have not done so, you will need to take a myCourses tutorial and run a browser check. The myCourses website will be the main interface of this course. All assignments will be conducted through this website, with the exception of exams.

Grading: Grading will follow a standard grading rubric. 97-100 = A+, 93-96 = A, 90-92 = A-, 87-89 = B+, 83-86 = B, 80-82 = B-, 77-79 = C+, 73-76 = C, 70-71 = C-, 67-69 = D+, 60-66 = D, >60 = F.

Exams are worth 60% of the total grade – 4 exams will be administered throughout the semester (exams 1 and 2 are combined, and exams 3 and 4 are combined). Each exam will be weighted equally, and is worth 15% of your total grade. Exams must be taken through a proctoring service (see above). Details will be provided at the start of the semester. Exams are not cumulative.

Online Assignments/Activities are worth 25% of the total grade – Each unit will have additional assignments related to the class material. These assignments will be conducted through the course website, and will vary in format from simple quizzes to essays to additional discussion topics. Specific instructions will be provided for each assignment. Each assignment will be open on the course website for the entire unit, however, it is recommended that you complete all assignments prior to taking your exams, because they are intended to help solidify the material and prepare you for exams. It is also recommended that you complete the assigned reading for each assignment to prepare. All non-exam assignments are considered “open book”.

Class participation in the form of discussion questions is worth 10% of the total grade – Each unit, up to 2.5 points towards your overall grade will be awarded based on your participation in discussion boards. The discussion board is intended to serve as a tool for you to interact with and learn from your peers in the class, and with me. Discussion topics will be focused around either that week’s topics, or around interesting current events if they are broadly aligned with the course. Discussion boards will open at the beginning of each unit, and remain open throughout the unit. To receive full credit for each discussion you will need to read the discussion thread and add to it with at least **two** comments of substance that move the discussion forward, or start a new unique thread. I expect you to add your comments at different times, that is, check back in on the

discussion after your first comment and then post another. You are encouraged to enter more comments as you wish.

A Pre/post-assessment is worth 5% of the total grade - In an effort to assess student learning, all students are required to take the same (short) assessment during the first unit and the last unit of the class. The first assessment (pre-assessment) is on the myCourses website welcome page, and is due at the end of the first unit, Monday June 19th at midnight (available now). The second assessment will become available at the beginning of the last unit, and is due at the end of the last unit, July 13th at midnight. Whichever assessment you do better on will count for 5% of your final grade. Grades from each assessment will only be released at the conclusion of both assessments.

You can find all assignments, links to discussion boards, and general instructions for each unit by clicking on the side bar tab for that unit, found on the left hand side of the course website. You will only be able to access the side bar tab for a specific unit during that unit. It is your responsibility to complete all of the assignments during that unit.

Policies/Other:

- For technical issues with the website, go to <http://www.umassd.edu/cits/id/student/> or contact the student IT service center: 508-999-8884 Email: mycourseshelp@umassd.edu. More information is available in the UmassD portal mycourses page.
- I am not responsible for insuring that your posts/other assignments go through. However, there is a practice discussion board and a practice test for you to use in the first week of class to make sure everything is working correctly. I will also do my best to return grades as soon as possible, and will notify students when new grades are posted. Use this information to address any problems as they arise.
- I will not hold virtual “office hours”, however I will respond to emails as soon as I can to answer your questions as they arise. I will be in my office on campus for at least portions of each week. If needed I am happy to schedule an appointment or a phone conference to help with the material.
- I will be communicating with the class both by posting announcements on the website, and by emailing to the class roster. You are responsible for checking the website for announcement and for ensuring that your email address is functional.

Schedule

Unit Dates

Unit 1 - Biological molecules and cells
Tue 6/11 – Mon 6/17

Unit 2 – Cellular physiology
Tue 6/18 – Mon 6/24

Unit 3 – Inheritance and gene expression
Tue 6/25 – Thur 7/4

Assigned Reading

CH 1-7

CH 8-10

CH 12-18

Unit 4 – Evolution
Fri 7/5 – Thur 7/11

CH 22-25

*detailed topic list available upon request.