

BIOL 106-002 Course Syllabus

Class Meeting: The class is completely online using the WSC Plato environment.

Instructor: Dr. David Doe

Office: Wilson Hall, room 216A

Phone and Voice Mail: 572-5291

E-Mail: Use email in course Plato website, not the WSC email.

Online Office Hours: Mon and Thurs 7:30-9:00 PM

Textbook: Customized book from *The Living World* by Johnson. 4th edition

Course Description: Introduction to the study of cells, cellular reproduction, inheritance and the gene, and the development of organisms.

Conduct of the Course: We will not meet face-to-face during this course. All communication will be conducted online. It is arranged by weeks. Each week has one or more topics (see the schedule of topics). Weeks begin on each Monday (except the first week) and end at midnight on the following Sunday. Content information is provided via the text, narrated PowerPoint presentations, tutorials, periodic podcasts and *Elluminate* sessions, and web links. Weekly requirements include reading the course content, participating in one or more discussion topics, usually doing a homework assignment, doing and reporting on activities, and a quiz on the week's material. Since this is a 4-credit course and is equivalent to a core lab course, the activity substitutes for the lab of the traditional course. The activities will vary in format throughout the semester, but all will require a report.

Begin your journey through the course with the "Getting Started Page." It contains information about the various components of the class and the "Plato" platform for the course.

There will be no exams. You will be evaluated on your participation in discussion forums, conducting and reporting the results of various activities, quizzes and homework assignments. Details about each of these will be posted on each week's Assignments and Activities page.

There are several ways by which we will communicate during the semester. For questions about course content, use the "Ask the Professor" forum which has a link on each week's page. This way everyone can access the forum and learn for your questions. I will also be available for online office hour chats on Monday and Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:00. You are not required to come to a chat session; I make it available for those who would like to use it. You may also use Who's Online and email in the Plato course shell to contact me. Do not use the regular WSC email. In addition, some of the office hours will be used for *Elluminate* sessions which will be interactive. I will email you the web links for the sessions.

Elluminate is a program that allows 2 or more persons to view the same screen and files simultaneously. It also allows real time communication by chat or voice. We will use two different configuration of the program. The first will be preset times for the entire class to participate in a presentation or office hour. These sessions can be recorded so if you can not be at the session, you can view and listen to it later. The second is called a *V room* in which I can communicate with no more than 2 students. These can be done on the spur of the moment if needed to answer a question or discuss a topic or problem. In either case, I will email the *Elluminate* code and

password to you so you can log into the session.

There is also a Student Lounge discussion forum for you to communicate with each other, not with me.

The course is organized into weeks with specific topics and concepts to be covered. Our week will start on Monday, so I will post the new content on Sunday evening. Each week will have a web page with links to the assignments, activities and discussions. Begin each week at the Weekly Assignments and Activities page (at the "Start Here" icon) for the instructions and background material for the week. I suggest printing this page for easy reference each week. Each Weekly Assignment and Activities page is divided into Introduction, Learning Objectives, Required Activities, and Additional References. Please note carefully the due dates and times for assignments. Assignments posted later than the due date will not receive credit. Homework and activities reports should be prepared as MS WORD .doc files and submitted as attached files to the appropriate web page.

You will be expected to read information in the text, on the PowerPoint presentations and on the linked sites in order to answer questions posted in the Discussion forum each week. There will be one or two (usually) questions or statements that you need to respond to each week. Use the Discussion forum link on the "Getting Started Page" to learn about the discussion forum procedures and the grading rubric. You will make two responses in each discussion, one to the question or topic and a second to a classmates post to the discussion. I will respond to each individual discussion forum post during the first two weeks so that you obtain a better understanding of what is expected. After that, I will only post general comments to the specific discussion forum topic. Please review my comments closely during the first several weeks. Your participation in the discussion is a large part of your grade.

You are expected to be able to use web browsers to access various sites and conduct activities on those sites. Several sites require that your browser be Java enabled and of course the speed of your processor and internet connection will influence the quality of your interactions with the web site. You are also expected to be able to download MS Excel files and conduct simple graphical and numerical analyses. I will post links to resources to help those who need it. Several activities require that you download Macromedia Projector files and complete a simulation activity. If you are unable to download this software, you can always visit the Biology Department Mac lab in Wilson 214 and conduct the simulations there.

Announcements: Any last minute information (e.g., changes in the schedule) or instructions will be posted here.

Introduction: A general introduction will appear at the beginning of every weekly assignment and activities page.

Learning Objectives: This is what you should accomplish for this specific subject.

Required Activities: Descriptions of the activities to be conducted during this week will be posted here. Please complete the week's activity and post your response no later than the following Sunday at 12:00 PM each week. During the last week assignments must be posted no later than 5 PM the last day of classes.

Online Learning Tips: How can I be an effective online learner?

1. Manage your time wisely.

Online courses are similar to face-to-face courses in that there are fixed work requirements and deadlines. However, because there are few live classes to attend, some participants find that due dates fall off their radar screens. The best way to avoid this pitfall is to read the course requirements carefully. At the beginning of the course, record deadlines on your calendar, even deadlines for informal assignments like posting discussion comments. Budget how much time you can afford to spend on each assignment. Then schedule exactly when that time will be spent.

2. Schedule a regular time for your coursework.

Decide what time of day and which days of the week are optimal times for your coursework. Keep your time slots realistic—do not plan to start your coursework at midnight if you have to get up at five a.m., and do not pick two p.m. if sitting at the computer after lunch makes you sleepy. Once you have decided on a time slot in which you generally have energy, schedule it into your calendar and stick to it! Consider it a weekly investment in your future.

3. Expect the unexpected, and reward yourself

Even the most organized students encounter events they have not planned for, so it is healthy to expect the unexpected and not get frustrated by technical or scheduling problems. Consult the college's Center for Instructional Technology (X5664) for assistance in technical problems. However, it is also important to stick to your work schedule as much as you can. One way to stay motivated is to give yourself small rewards for finishing projects on time. Whether it's time spent shooting hoops, playing scrabble, or reading for pleasure, small incentives can make finishing your work a little more inspiring.

4. How much technology knowledge do I need to feel at ease in an online course?

You do not have to be a technological wizard to excel in an online learning environment! Even novices in the field of computer technology can be star students as long as they understand a few core concepts, including how to use plug-ins, how to access streaming video, how to participate in synchronous and asynchronous discussions, and how to send email attachments. Also, do not be intimidated by the jargon. These concepts sound more complicated than they really are.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of basic structure and function of cells, principles of inheritance, and fundamentals of development.

Assessment: Basic knowledge of these facts, processes, and concepts will be assessed through use of quizzes, discussions, homework assignments and activity reports.

2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how to conduct a scientific investigation.

Assessment: Knowledge of how to conduct a scientific investigation will be assessed through use of activity reports.

Skills

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how to use computer spreadsheets and simulation software to solve scientific problems.

Assessment: Knowledge of how to use computer spreadsheets and simulation software to solve scientific problems will be assessed through use of activity reports.

2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how to obtain reliable information from a variety

of sources (e.g., web, popular media, and scientific publications).

Assessment: Knowledge of how to obtain reliable information from a variety of sources (e.g., web, popular media, and scientific publications) will be assessed through use of online writing and discussions.

3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how to communicate the results of a scientific investigation in written formats.

Assessment: Knowledge of how to communicate the results of a scientific investigation in written format will be assessed through use of activity reports.

Assignments:

1. Quizzes: There will be weekly multiple choice quizzes.
2. Discussions: Students are expected to read and discuss concepts or case studies or answer questions in an online format. Use the Discussion forum link on the Getting Started Page to learn about the discussion forum procedures and the grading rubric.
3. Activities: Biology Today is an introductory core lab science class covering such topics as cells, genetics, DNA, forensics, stem cells, cloning and development. The in-class version of the course includes a weekly lab. This online version will include weekly activities that attempt to accomplish the weekly lab goals of presentation of a problem or hypothesis, conducting the experiment, data collection, and analysis of the data. Each activity will have its own grading rubric.
4. Homework Assignments: Will investigate important concepts during the semester. Use the Homework Assignment link on the Getting Started Page to learn about the homework assignment grading rubric.

Grade: The extent to which students meet the above objectives will be determined in the following ways:

Quizzes	15 %
Discussions	30 %
Activities	30 %
Homework	25%

Total **100 %**

A final grade is expressed as a percent and converted to a letter grade by a scale no more stringent than:

A = 90 to 100% B+ = 87-88.9% C+ = 77-78.9% D = 60-68.9%

A- = 89-89.9% B = 80-86.9% C = 70-76.9% F = < 60%

B- = 79-79.9% C- = 69-69.9%

Academic Honesty: Consult the Westfield State College Bulletin, 2009-2010 for information relative to academic honesty with regard to quizzes. Cheating (taking, receiving, or intentionally giving aid) on quizzes will not be tolerated. Anyone who cheats or attempts to cheat on a quiz, or uses a false excuse to obtain a make up for an exam, will receive a zero for the quiz and a report on the incident will go to the academic dean.

Plagiarism: "*Plagiarism is the act of presenting the intellectual work of others (words, ideas, artwork, computer programming code, etc.) as if it were one's own. Some common forms of plagiarism are (1) submitting someone else's paper as one's own; (2) copying a passage from another source without citing the source; (3) expressing a published idea or theory in different words, without crediting the source of the idea. Plagiarism constitutes intellectual dishonesty and undermines trust between members of the college community.*" (Westfield State College Bulletin, 2009-2010) [Click here for more information on how to avoid plagiarism.](#) Anyone who plagiarizes their writing assignment (from an online source, printed source, or another student) will receive a zero for the assignment and a report of the incident will go to the academic dean.

NOTE: Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of their abilities should contact me as soon as possible, so that we can discuss class requirements.

Any comments or suggestions? If so, please send them to Dr. Doe [via](#) Plato email

Last updated: 8/26/09