

Welcome to Contemporary Biology!
Biology 134 Online Sam Houston State
Summer I 2008

Instructor: Dr. P. Raelynn Deaton

Office: Lee Drain Bldg. Room 142

Office Phone: 294-1550

Office Hours: By appointment

This course (Biology 134) satisfies a general education requirement for natural science, and it is intended exclusively for non-biology majors. In fact, students majoring in biology cannot receive credit for this course.

Students in this class do not need to have any previous knowledge of biology. The textbook we will use is intended especially for students who know little about biology but who want to learn a little about the many biological issues that face our society right now. Some of the many topics you will learn about include diet, biodiversity, cancer, inheritance, and environmental issues. If you pay attention to what this class is trying to teach, you should become better educated on much of what you see in the news each day, and in turn, become a more informed voter!

After orientation, each week's assignments will follow a similar pattern. The details of the writing assignments will vary each week, but the due dates will always be the same.

Go to the weekly schedule in the "Course Documents" folder to get started! (All times are listed as central time -- that is, Texas time).

Here are some other resources that might help you along the way:

- Course Syllabus (including information about the textbook)
- Grading Policy
- Honor Code
- Types of Assignments

All of these can be accessed within the "Course Documents" Folder. Please read through all of the course documents carefully and let me know if you have any questions.

Want to know more about me? Please feel free to stop by my office to meet me in person, and to introduce yourself. It is always nicer when you can put a face to a name. I am a professor here at Sam in the biology department. I have been at Sam for 2 years. I have a BA in Biology from Berea College in Kentucky (where I am from), a Masters in Biology from the University of New Orleans, and a PhD in Zoology from the University of Oklahoma. I also teach Human Anatomy (Bio 245), Human Biology (Bio 341), Contemporary Biology Lecture (Bio 134) and General Zoology (Bio 162). Feel free to call or stop by my office anytime if you need help or have questions.

Biology 134 Course Syllabus – Summer I 2008

Course Texts:

- The **required text** for this course is ***Biology: Science for Life, 2nd edition***, by Colleen Belk and Virginia Borden (2007, Pearson Education; ISBN 0-13-148969-0). *Unfortunately, the first edition of this book will not work, because of extensive changes to the 2nd edition.* Assignments and online reading quizzes will relate directly to the text. Most other assignments will also use concepts from the book. So, the book is definitely required unless you want to compromise your grade for this course.
- The first half week of this course will consist of a course-specific orientation. These are fun activities so that we can get to know each other better and you can understand better how the course is going to work.

Grading:

- Course grades will be based on orientation materials (50pts) online reading quizzes, various writing assignments, and one open-book final exam. This course had a very large writing component, so beware! Writing is an integral part of learning in ALL subjects, from English to Science. Since we have only one exam in this course, most of your grade will be based on writing

- assignments where content is key. It is IMPERATIVE that you keep up with the material each week; otherwise you will find yourself behind and stressed! To find out more, visit the weekly schedule, course grading policies, and/or types of assignments. You can find all of this information under course documents.
- This course follows the university code concerning Academic Misconduct. Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, falsification of records, intimidation, and any other action that may improperly affect the evaluation of your performance. If you are not sure if what you are doing constitutes academic misconduct, please ask! Email your instructor with your questions about this. You will become more familiar with this during our course orientation.
 - Some assignments will not be graded by me, but you are still required to do them! Every assignment that you complete in this course counts toward your grade, even though you may not receive feedback from me. You MUST complete each assignment in order to receive credit. ALL assignments are subject to being graded by me. I will randomly choose which assignments will be graded for each student; therefore, you will not know which assignments of yours that I will grade. This means that you must complete ALL assignments with the anticipation that they may be graded by the instructor. Further, I reserve the right to dock points from any assignment that you post, regardless of whether I give you specific feedback or not. I read ALL of the assignments posted by ALL students; if your assignments do not meet the requirements, you will lose points and hear from me.
 - IMPORTANT: You are responsible for completing all assignments by the deadlines. Computer problems, commuting, no access to a computer, being sick (b/c you can work ahead), internet malfunctions, black board problems, (you should not wait until last minute to do your work), or not "getting" my emails are not an acceptable excuses for late work. I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK. No other excuses are valid, so please do NOT contact me and ask me to accept any late work (unless you have a serious medical emergency).
 - IMPORTANT: If you are caught declaring work that you did not do, or did not post on time, you will receive an automatic F for this course.
 - You are responsible for declaring ALL of your work. Forgetting to declare will result in you receiving a zero for that assignment, regardless of whether I grade it or not. IMPORTANT! It is YOUR responsibility to remember to declare your work. I will send email reminders periodically to help you remember, but if you

forget to declare, I will NOT declare for you. Please do not email me and ask me to declare work for you. I will NOT do this. This is an integral part of this course, and you need to get in the habit of declaring all of your work from the very beginning. **For each assignment in this course, you will follow these four steps: (1) complete the work; (2) post it into the discussion board; (3) respond to two other students; and (4) make your declaration. Think of posting the work in blackboard as “printing off your assignment” and think of declaring your work as “turning it in.”**

- EMAIL: For any online course, the instructor communicates mostly via email to the students. Therefore, it is necessary for you to check your email daily, as I send emails to the class on a regular basis. If you do not use your Sam Email, then you need to start using it NOW. Or, you must have your Sam mail forwarded to an account that you do check regularly. Not completing an assignment correctly, not following directions, or missing points on an assignment because you “did not receive” an email is NOT an excuse. It is your responsibility to use and check your email, as this is the MAIN way I will communicate with you throughout the semester. This is not negotiable! I will also keep an updated email archive in the Course Documents folder so that you can go back and view all emails sent by me.

What time is it?

- All times on this website are given as Central Time -- that is, the time in good old Texas.

Working ahead:

Assignments will be available one week ahead of the due date in case you want to start early.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change. If any changes are made, the instructor will notify you.

Dates	Week, Topic and Chapter
Mon 6/2 to Wed 6/4	Week 1 -- Orientation (all materials due by Wed. June 4 th at 11pm)
Wed 6/3 to Sat 6/7	Week 1-- Can Science Cure the Common Cold? Intro to the Scientific Method (Chapter 1)
Sun 6/3 to Sat 6/7	Week 1 -- Are We Alone in the Universe? Water, Biochemistry, and Cells (Chapter 2)
Sun 6/8 to Sat 6/14	Week 2 -- The Only Diet You Will Ever Need: Nutrients, Enzymes and Metabolism, and Transport Across Membranes (Chapter 3)
Sun 6/8 to Sat 6/14	Week 2 -- Is the Earth Warming? The Greenhouse Effect, Cellular Respiration, and Photosynthesis (Chapter 4)
Sun 6/8 to Sat 6/14	Week 2 – Note! We are skipping ahead to Chapter 12 this week. Prospecting for Biological Gold: Biodiversity and Classification (Chapter 12) *END OF UNIT*
Sun 6/8 to Sat 6/14	Week 2 -- Cancer: DNA Synthesis, Mitosis, and Meiosis (Chapter 5)
Sun 6/15 to Sat 6/21	Week 3 -- Are You Only as Smart as Your Genes? Mendelian and Quantitative Genetics (Chapter 6)
Sun 6/15 to Sat 6/21	Week 3 -- DNA Detective: Extensions of Mendelism, Sex Linkage, Pedigrees, DNA Fingerprinting (Chapter 7)
Sun 6/15 to Sat 6/21	Week 3 -- Genetic Engineering: Transcription, Translation, and Genetically Modified Organisms (Chapter 8) *END OF UNIT*
Sun 6/15 to Sat 6/21	Week 3 -- Where Did We Come From? The Evidence for Evolution (Chapter 9)
Sun 6/22 to Sat 6/28	Week 4 -- An Evolving Enemy: Natural Selection (Chapter 10)

Sun 6/22 to Sat 6/28	Week 4 -- Who Am I? Species and Races (Chapter 11) *END OF UNIT*
Sun 6/22 to Sat 6/28	Week 4 -- Is the Human Population Too Large? Population Ecology (Chapter 13)
Sun 6/22 to Sat 6/28	Week 4 -- Is Earth Experiencing a Biodiversity Crisis? Community/Ecosystem Ecology and Conservation Biology (Chapter 14) *END OF UNIT*
July 1 by 5pm	FINAL EXAM!

134 Summer I Online Grading Policy

For each Chapter, your work will be worth either 35 or 40 points (40 points for A-a-S chapters), depending on which type of assignment you do with that chapter (**for a total of 650 points for the course**), including orientation (50pts) and the final exam (100pts). In addition, you can earn up to 1 extra credit point for each Chapter via the Final Thoughts assignment (see types of assignments for more on this). If you do every Final Thought, this could make up for an entire missed assignment!

Your semester grade will be determined based on a straight scale. No curve will be given at the end of the semester:

- For an A: 90% and above (585 or more points)
- For a B: 80% and above (520 or more points)
- For a C: 70% and above (455 or more points)
- For a D: 60% and above (390 or more points)
- 389 or lower will result in a failing grade for the course

Some components of the course are graded based on effort alone: if you follow the directions and complete the assignment on time, you get full credit. I will randomly grade assignments for each student. Any feedback given by the instructor will be send via email, so you **MUST** check your email regularly (minimum once daily). The instructor reads ALL assignments, and will dock points accordingly when assignment requirements are not met. **Note: I reserve the right to grade ANY**

and ALL assignments for this course, and dock points for any and all assignments and responses for this course.

Other components will be graded for quality. For example, Black Board reading quizzes are open-book, but you still have to get the questions right to get credit.

Late work is UNACCEPTABLE except for a documented medical emergency. Colds, doctor's visits, etc. are not medical emergencies. Contact the instructor as soon as you can!

EXTRA CREDIT opportunity!

I will award one extra credit point for each Chapter for posting a Final Thoughts on the Discussion Board. But remember, you also have to respond to two other student postings.

I will also award one extra credit point for each mistake you find in the course.

I do not adjust grades, so do not expect a "curve" at the end of this course. If you work hard, and you put forth effort by doing your assignments, and learning the material for your final, you will be fine. Your final exam is open-book, just like your weekly quizzes, so no need to stress about the final. However, in order to do well on the final, you must understand the course material. So, don't let yourself get behind!

Biology 134 Honor Code

You will be responsible for recording the completion of many of your assignments in the Black Board gradebook. You will be doing this based on an Honor Code, which means you will honestly represent your efforts when you report your work at Black Board.

I will monitor the Black Board gradebook each week, checking entries for accuracy. So, please do not falsely report that you have completed an assignment. If you have any doubts about any Black Board gradebook declaration, please email your instructor at the time that you post your grade.

If you violate the Honor Code by falsely claiming credit for work that you did not complete, I reserve the right to lower your final grade in

the class by one letter grade for each violation. I also reserve the right to report the incident as a case of academic misconduct, which will result in failing the course.

In addition, this Honor Code requires that you must not commit any form of plagiarism in completing any assignment. I will use Turnitin to check random assignments for plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing, I reserve the right to fail you for the course, and will report you to the office of academic affairs.

If you have any questions about plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct, please consult the university code concerning [Academic Misconduct](#) (functional link in course links folder) and/or email your instructor!

Types of Assignments

You will be working daily in this course. Remember, this is a three credit course, which must be completed in one month! Therefore, you must be willing to learn the same amount of material in four weeks, as you would normally do in a 14 week semester. This means that you will be spending several hours a day on this course. Each assignment is developed to help you understand the course material. If there is material that you do not understand, you are welcome to email me or come by my office for help. Much of your grade in this course is effort based – which means that you can do very well in this class if you put forth time and effort. I expect that you will work approximately 4 hours/day on this course. If you are not willing to do so, then you may need to reconsider this course.

In this course, you will do the same types of assignments at the same time each week, as listed below. You will have one pre-test, which is part of your orientation material, and you will receive full credit for taking this exam, regardless of how well you scored (20 pts). I will post your score so you know how you did, but you will not receive that grade. You will receive a completion grade of 20 points simply for taking the pre-test. This pre-test is designed to allow me to see where you are at the beginning of the course, and what material you do and do not already understand. You will have one final exam in this course, which is worth 100 pts. This exam will count – whatever grade you make will be factored into your overall grade.

Starting Assumptions (due each Sunday for all Chapters covered that week (due by 8 p.m. with responses by 11 p.m.) -- 5 points/Chapter

You will do ONE Starting Assumption assignment for each Chapter (x 14)

The purpose of these assignments is to get you to express some of your opinions or thoughts about each subject before you really dig deeply into it. Each assignment includes a set of questions; you can answer as many of them as you like in your Starting Assumptions post. As part of this assignment, you will need to respond to the assumptions of at least two other students.

Digging Deeper assignment (due on M, T, W or Th at 8 p.m. with responses by 11 p.m.) -- 15 points/Chapter

You will do EIGHT digging deeper assignments.

This assignment will be different for each Chapter, but all will have the same purpose: to encourage you to further explore a particularly challenging and/or interesting aspect of the chapter's topic. As part of this assignment, you will need to respond to the assignments that at least two other students have submitted. I will grade some of these assignments, but you must complete all of them.

Freelance Writer assignment (due on M, T, W, or Th at 8 p.m. with responses by 11 p.m.) -- 10 points each

You will do FOUR freelance writer assignments.

This assignment will be similar each time. You will select a format that lends itself to the creation of installments, or episodes -- think TV series (comedies, dramas, mysteries, cartoons, soap operas, game shows, talk shows, reality shows), short stories, fairy tales, Nancy Drew or Sherlock Holmes mysteries, comic books, etc. Each week, you will pretend to be a freelance writer assigned to create a new installment for your chosen format. The episode will have to meet certain criteria, which will change for each Chapter, but which will always apply what you have learned from the week's topic. I will grade some of these assignments, but you will also get feedback from other students. You are responsible for completing all of these assignments.

Adopt-a-Species assignment (due on M, T, W or Th at 11 p.m. with responses by the next day at 11 p.m.) -- 20 points each

You will do TWO adopt-a-species assignments.

At the end of each unit, we will have an Adopt-a-Species assignment in place of the Freelance Writer or Digging Deeper assignment. In the first one, you will choose a species to "adopt" for the rest of the semester. Your subsequent Adopt-a-Species assignments will build on the first, integrating the concepts from each unit's chapters and applying them to your chosen species. I will grade some of these assignments, but you will also get responses from your classmates. You are responsible for completing all of these assignments.

Reading and Reading Quiz (due each Friday by 11 p.m.) -- 10 points/Chapter

You will take 14 reading quizzes – one per Chapter. Each week, you can work on all reading quizzes for the Chapters covered that week at your own pace. They will all be due by Friday each week. Week 1 (Chapters 1-2), week 2 (Chapters 3,4,12, and 5), week 3 (Chapters 6-9) and week 4 (Chapters 10,11,13, and 14).

The purpose of the reading and quiz is for you to acquire the basic information you need to complete your subsequent writing assignments. Each day or so you will read one assigned Chapter from your textbook. You will then log on to Blackboard and take a multiple-choice quiz over the chapter. The quiz will have 10 questions, each worth 1 point, randomly selected from a bank of 25-30 questions. **You can take each quiz as many times as you want in BB, but remember that BB only records your last attempt!** Each time you take the quiz, some or all of the questions may be different.

Final Thoughts (due for each Chapter between Friday Noon and Saturday 11 p.m.) -- 1 points/chapter EXTRA CREDIT (optional)

The purpose of this extra-credit assignment is to help you reflect on what you learned over each chapter. It is for extra credit only, because you can complete the assignment only during a very limited time: you need to wait until the other students have had a chance to post their responses before you can do this assignment. So, the Final Thoughts assignment is limited to after Friday at Noon and before Saturday at 11pm.

Final Exam – 100 pts (due by Tuesday July 1st @ 5pm)

*** One final note: “Hawk’s Eye” Reward - If you find a mistake in the course (e.g. typo, quiz mistake, broken link, etc.) then let me know so I can fix it, and I will give you one bonus point!**
