BIOL1103: Concepts in Biology

Instructor Contact

Instructor: Trevor Richards

E-Mail Address: trevor.richards25@uga.edu (Note: The UGA outlook system likes to try to auto-correct this e-mail to my eLC e-mail. Before sending anything make sure this has not occurred.)

Virtual office hours: I am available by appointment only, but have a flexible schedule during normal work hours (Monday - Friday, 9 AM - 5 PM). Of course if we need to meet outside of these time that is possible too.

To make an appointment just send me an email. Please contact me through my email trevor.richards25@uga.edu.

If you have any problems logging in to Collaborate Ultra Rooms, please email me directly. I will be online, and will be there to help you.

I will typically respond to e-mails within 24 hours. However, I will likely be slower on the weekends. If I have not responded within this time frame please reach out again.

Non-Traditional Format

This course will be conducted fully online in an asynchronous environment

Course Description

This course is intended to improve your general science literacy skills and fulfill the University of Georgia's General Education Core Curriculum science requirement. There are no pre-requisites for this course. The science literacy skills you will master in this course will help you address issues faced in your everyday life regarding scientific and pseudoscientific claims about health, the environment, and society. You will work to master quantitative literacy skills that will form the foundation for your development as a critical consumer of science information in the media. My goal for you is to truly master skills that you will use for the rest of your life and to inspire you to continue learning and using science. Topics include cellular structure, function, and energetics, heredity, molecular genetics, evolutionary biology, and principles of ecology.

Not open to students with credit in BTNY 1210-1210L or BIOL 1107-1107L or PBIO 1210-1210L

Course Goals

In this course, all the content is taught in context of some contentious and confusing issues related to biology in everyday life. Now that the Internet puts the world at your fingertips, you don't need to memorize facts. Instead, you need to practice applying and using facts to make decisions. You will still learn a lot of content, but much of it will be in the context of a specific problem.

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Apply the basic scientific principles in cellular and molecular biology to real-world situations such as evaluating how healthful a certain food is, deciding if you should get genetic testing to tell if you are at risk for a common disease like heart disease, or how to evaluate the news about global climate change.

- Identify and evaluate valid sources of scientific information.
- Discern and analyze that information to make everyday decisions.
- Model the process whereby researchers test a scientific claim, including composing a valid scientific argument.
- Integrate ideas and communicate your understanding about biology with others in a format which: is adapted to particular circumstances and audiences; addresses issues in the context of the larger community and environment; and allows you to apply societal ethics to scientific inquiry and findings.
- Learn about yourself, learn to work effectively with others in a group, and develop and cultivate an interest in current science issues.

Content Delivery

The course readings will be available via an open-access textbook, OpenStax, created at Rice University. Links will be provided to view individual chapters within each module, or you can access an entire website with pdfs and links to each of the chapters in the textbook (note: the link will bring you to the summer 2013 call number for BIOL 1103). All readings, animations, and other videos to help you master content will be available in the content modules as clickable links.

Course Requirements

You will need to complete each of the 6 modules and a final project to complete the course. Each module consists of content delivery, assessment quizzes, discussion posts, and end-of-module assignments to help you apply the content in your own life.

Minimal technical skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use of eLC mail, discussions, quizzes, and assignment dropbox.
- Use of Blackboard Collaborate for online office hours (available through eLC).
- Open, access, and save files in commonly used word processing program formats including Microsoft Word and Adobe .pdf.
- Embed graphics and hyperlinks into assignment documents.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.

Course Outline

The Course at a Glance Table is a general plan for the course with due dates and a summary of assignments; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Each of the 6 content modules is available under the Content Link and consists of:

- **Readings, animations, and videos** to help you learn the relevant biological concepts/content for each topic;
- **Self-Assessment quizzes (not for credit) to test your own understanding**
- **Assessment quizzes** (open-note) to formally assess your understanding and ability to apply the content.
- **Discussion postings** to get you to view the content in relation to societal interests; and
- **End-of-Module Assignments** to demonstrate your mastery of skills and content introduced in the Module (including exploratory writing, concept mapping, discussion postings). Each of these small summative assignments are designed to let you get a taste of what completing a final project in this topic would entail.

Finally, there is One Final Project that is possible for each of the 6 content areas.
The content and skill modules are designed to be completed in the first six weeks of this eight-week course. By the end of these modules, you will need to choose one of the content topics that interests you and explore it in depth in your final project. This final project is designed to allow you to practice using the content and skills we have learned in the first six weeks to address real-world issues. You will have an opportunity to turn in a full draft of your project for instructor feedback during the second to last week of the semester. I will take the weekend to read and comment on all the drafts, and then you will have the final two days of classes and the two days of final exams to revise your draft and submit your final project to the Discussion board and to Dropbox. All students will be asked to help review these postings using a provided peer grading rubric. I will use this feedback to help determine if the content was presented at the appropriate level to appeal to your peers' interest, and your final grade on the project will be influenced by how interesting and informative your classmates and I found it to be.

Missed Quiz and Discussion Posts: Make-Ups/Extra Credit

The course at a glance table contains the due dates for each module. **Missed quiz and discussion post assignments will not be available for make-up after the due dates indicated.** However, we will drop the lowest 2 quizzes, so if you forget to take a quiz, it can count as one of those dropped quizzes. We will also drop one of your discussion posts, if you forget to complete one of those as well. Extra credit assignments are not given in this course.

Late work submissions: End-of-module assignments and final projects only

Late end-of-module assignments and final projects will be accepted with a 10% deduction of total points for each day it is late. **These are the only assignments that are accepted late in this course.**

Evaluation and Grading

All assessment quizzes are designed so that you access the course readings or online resources to answer the questions. You just have to answer them yourselves without using the "phone a friend" option. In addition to the quizzes and discussion posts, all written work is individual work, and it would be considered a violation of The University of Georgia's Academic Honesty policy to use unauthorized assistance or to plagiarize work.

- Content Assessment Quizzes (25%)
- Discussion Posts and Peer Comments (25%)
- End of Module Assignments (25%)
- Final project (25%)

I will begin grading assignments as soon as the due date for them has expired. My goal is to have all assignments for a Module posted within 3 days of their due dates.

Grade scale to determine final grades:

Letter Grade	Point Value
A	94% and above
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%

C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

Late work submissions

Late work will be accepted with a 10% deduction of total points for each day it is late.

Email Response Time

I will try to respond to course emails within 24 hours. I will reply as quickly as possible.

Assignments will be posted within 1 week of the due date, but my goal is closer to 3 days. I will be monitoring your class discussions and will be posting summary comments after your discussion period ends.

Attendance Policy/Expectations of Participation

This is not a correspondence course where I mail you some worksheets and test you at the end of the course for comprehension of content. Student participation is an expected and critical component of success in this course. You are expected to log in at least 3 times a week, and should expect to spend about 10 hours a week on this course. Approximate/suggested times for completion of each activity are posted on the Module-at-a-Glance page posted as the first page in each module. Each week you will be expected to complete readings, assessment quizzes, assignments, and respond to discussion posts by the deadline indicated so that your peers can respond to your comments in a timely manner.

Available Help (Class-Related and Technical Issues)

Please let me know if you need individual help. I want to get to know you and hear about what interests and questions you have about biology. Additionally, there will be a discussion forum in this online course for you to post any issues or concerns.

For TECHNICAL PROBLEMS with eLC or other issues, contact: UGA's Enterprise Information Technology Services (EITS) Help Desk at 706-542-3106, or email at helpdesk@uga.edu.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's Academic Honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in A Culture of Honesty. Lack of knowledge of the Academic Honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Disability Statement

UGA is committed to the success of all learners, and we strive to create an inclusive and accessible online environment. In collaboration with the Disability Resource Center (http://drc.uga.edu/), we work with students who have documented disabilities to access reasonable accommodations and academic supports.

For more information or to speak with a Disability coordinator, please call the Disability Resource Center at (706) 542-8719, TTY only phone (706) 542-8778.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a tool, blog, or wiki. While some of these are required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identifiable/sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

Netiquette

Netiquette is a way of defining professionalism through network communication. Students who violate proper Netiquette will be first given a warning, and if it occurs twice, will be administratively dropped by the instructor from the course.

Here are some example Guidelines to the class:

- Do not dominate any discussion.
- Do not use offensive language.
- Never make fun of someone's ability to read or write.
- Use simple English.
- Use correct spelling and grammar.
- Share tips with other students.
- Keep an "open-mind" and be willing to express even your minority opinion.
- Be aware of the The University of Georgia's Academic Honesty policy.
- Think before you push the "Send" button.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- When in doubt, always check with your instructor for clarification

(Sample policy used with permission from: Mintu-Wimsatt, Alma, Kernek, Courtney, and Lozada, Hector R. 2010. "Netiquette: Make it Part of Your Syllabus" *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 6, No.1.*)

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