



BIOLOGY COURSE SYLLABUS 2024-2025

Welcome to Biology! I'm looking forward to a fantastic year of scientific exploration together! I believe that a successful class is built upon a foundation of mutual respect. With your cooperation we will be learning a lot this year and having fun along the way.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mrs. Seanne Musca

Email: seanne-musca@scusd.edu

(916)395-5090 X 506127 Room B-27

Or, contact via Google Classroom private message

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Biology is the study of all living things pertaining to life. Students will use inquiry methods to present biology as an experimental science. This course challenges students to construct their understanding of concepts starting from the laboratory experience and to develop their scientific literacy skills. The breadth of content in this course is based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Content of course will be taught through discussions, lectures, labs, and other hands-on activities. Through the exploration of science content, students will learn to think critically, solve problems, work collaboratively and develop inquiry skills. This course satisfies the biological science high school graduation requirement and the University of California laboratory science "A-G" requirement for biology.

WHAT WILL WE LEARN ABOUT?

This course will explore topics related to biology (the study of life), such as cellular structure & function, cellular respiration, photosynthesis, genetics, natural selection, matter cycles and energy flow.. Earth science standards will also be integrated into this course, with a focus on the interplay between living organisms and our earth. In addition, the course will cover sexual health education and HIV prevention to fulfill the requirements of AB 329 (CA Healthy Youth Act 2016).

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 inch binder or folder (students choice)
- Computer and internet
- Writing utensils (pencil, pen)
- Paper

GRADING POLICIES

Grades are based on percentage calculations from points earned out of total points possible. Categories for assignments and their point ranges include:

- **Participation & Engagement** (5-10 points)
 - Warm-ups, Spider Web Discussions, Group Work
- **Formative Assessments** (5- 20 pts)
 - ENB, Classwork, Homework, Quick Quizzes
- **Summative Assessments** (20- 100 pts)
 - Quizzes, Tests, Labs, CERs, Projects

GRADING SCALE

The following percentage calculations will determine the final grade (subject to change by district policy):

Score	Final Grade
90 – 100%	A
80-89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
below 60%	F

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. **Be prepared with a strong foundation** for a higher level of science education by developing the skills to think, act, comprehend, and communicate as scientists.
2. **Practice and apply scientific methods** through inquiry-based labs, simulations, and other activities.
3. **Develop scientific literacy skills**, by making observations of scientific phenomena, asking questions, gathering and analyzing data, developing models through collaboration and discussion.
4. **Build a greater understanding of and appreciation for** the scientific method, biology, and the natural world to be informed and thoughtful global citizens.
5. **Develop important life skills and habits of success** such as collaboration, mindfulness, and resilience.

ABSENCES & LATE WORK POLICY

It is important that students attend and participate in class. However, I understand that sometimes there are circumstances outside of your control that may prevent you from attending class. If you need to miss a class for any particular reason, please notify Mrs. Musca in advance if at all possible. We will work together to make arrangements for you to make up missed classwork and receive information and directions given in class.

If a student is absent the day of an exam, the **student will only be able to make it up during the day you return**, unless other arrangements are made with Mrs. Musca. If the assessment is not made up within a week, the grade will become an **automatic zero**. Since quick quizzes cannot be made up, if a student is absent the day of a quick quiz or the day prior to the quick quiz, they will be excused from the quiz.

All work is expected to be turned in on time. Late work will be accepted however, it will result in a 10% point reduction *per day late*, for a maximum of 30% deduction (unless an extension has been requested and already agreed upon with Mrs. Musca in advance).

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty (cheating) will **NOT** be tolerated! If you are suspected of cheating on **ANY** assignment (tests, quizzes, homework, class activities, etc.), you will receive a **ZERO** on that assignment. Academic dishonesty is defined as (but not limited to) giving and receiving answers during tests and quizzes, copying another student's work, and/or plagiarizing copyrighted work. Parents and/or admin will also be notified as appropriate.

Additional Assistance

If you need additional help, please ask! Mrs. Musca is available before school, during Lunch A. Please make an appointment with me if you want some additional help or need to meet after school.

Google Classroom Codes:

Period 1-

Period 2-

Period 3-

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Class Expectations

- 1) **Be respectful** of yourself, your classmates and your teacher at ALL times.
- 2) **Be present, prepared & productive!** Which means, NO CELL PHONES out during class, unless granted permission by teacher, and no doing work from another class. Bring all materials, stay on task, follow directions and remain in seats unless given permission to get up.
- 3) **Be teachable.** Practice self-control, learn to enjoy learning and never give up (no matter how tough something is)!

Other policies:

- **BE ON TIME.** If you are not in your seat AND working when the bell rings you will be marked tardy.
- **Plagiarism.** Any work that is copied or shared will be returned without a grade. When completing any class activity, working together is essential, although copying information word for word will be considered cheating. If this occurs, both students will receive a zero for the assignment.
- **Restroom.** Any moment you are not in class is a waste of valuable learning time. Use the restroom during passing period. In case of emergency, you may go but please ask during an appropriate time (please NOT when I am giving instructions).
- **No food or drink!** *Except water!

Violation of Class Expectations

If you **CHOOSE** to **break** class expectations there will be the following consequences:

1st Violation- Visual or Verbal Warning

2nd Violation- loss of participation points, and a call home

3rd offense- lunch or after school detention in my room, receive a call home

In some cases, students will be referred to the office for disciplinary action.

BIOLOGY BINDER

We will do much of our science work in packets, which we will organize in a biology binder. The binder is very structured and part of your grade will be a reflection of how well you followed directions in organizing it and completing it. After the completion of each packet, you will organize it in your Biology Binder. The packets will be graded at the end of each unit and your organized binder will be graded at the end of the quarter with intermittent spot checks.

You must bring your Binder to class everyday or just leave it in the cupboard!

Some things to remember:

- In packets- always write and draw neatly, use pencil only, never use markers
- Everything should be hole punched and clipped into the binder in the correct order.
- Packets & paper Warm-Ups should be kept in the binder

CELL PHONE POLICY

- (10 minute read)an article relating [Adolescent Cell Use and Mental Health](#)
- (20 minute watch)a news story [CBS News "The Anxious Generation"](#))
- (2h 26 min listen) A podcast [Huberman Lab: Smart Phones and Mental Health](#)

I recognize that cell phones are powerful devices and can be used as learning tools. However, I have witnessed the evolution of teens and cell phone use and have noticed differences in my students "before the pandemic" and "after the pandemic." It seems that before the pandemic, I was able to guide students to use their phones as tools when necessary, with phones being a minimal distraction to the classroom. After the pandemic, I see many with severe addiction tendencies to cell phones. Coupled with the trauma of the pandemic, losing a year of social interaction, and a

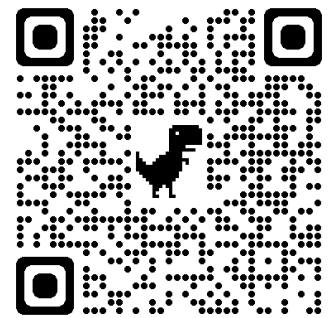
rise in mental health issues, many of my colleagues and I have come to the conclusion that we need to support our learners differently and adopt a cell phone policy that takes into account the research and information we have available about cell phones in classrooms. Our school administration has also asked for a strict NO cell phone policy in classrooms because they are linking cell phone use to cyber bullying, escalation of violence, and coordination of fights. I believe that for the safety of our kids both physically and mentally, this policy is a must. Here is how I will implement the cell phone policy in Biology.

Policy:

- 1) **At the beginning of class, cell phones will be placed in the box assigned to their table number and stored behind my front desk/lab station.**
- 2) **They will retrieve their phone during the last minute of class in an organized and efficient manner that I will carefully explain and that we will practice daily.**
- 3) **If a student does NOT have a cell phone or it is taken away for a time period, **Parents/Guardians**, please provide them with a note signed by you, the parent/guardian with your contact information OR email me at seanne-musca@scusd.edu. If you need to contact your child during class please call the school at 916-395-5090 and they can transfer you to room B-27. If your family is in crisis and you would prefer your child's phone NOT be taken away during this crisis period, please email me.**

AMAZON WISHLIST

If you feel so inclined, you can scan the QR code to check out my amazon wishlist. There are some supplies for Social-Emotional purposes, general classroom supplies and science lab supplies.



HOW TO THANK YOUR TEACHER

Obviously, you'll be so pleased with your incredible new knowledge of biology that your heart (and sometimes wallet) will be bursting with generosity toward your beloved teachers. But what do they like? **Free but sweet gestures:** e-cards, email notes, pictures of flowers from your garden, your personal artwork or at least a picture of your artwork. **Low-budget:** In person stuff: cards, photos of you, dark chocolate, almonds, fruit, plants. Digital: Gift Card for coffee (I love and need coffee. Philz, Temple, Starbucks, I love them all), Target and Amazon digital gift cards so I can buy books (I love to read).

A THANK YOU FROM YOUR TEACHER

Every year, I get to know and work with incredible students. They give their heart, effort, are willing to make mistakes, and grow. Students, I so appreciate you, and I appreciate your commitment to trust, respect, and responsibility. I appreciate you being yourself in my classroom and sharing your unique personalities. Parents and guardians, thank you from the bottom of my heart for sending me your wonderful children. It is my great pleasure to teach them, and they make my work very rewarding.



Parent/Guardian: This is your job so your child receives their 10 points....please fill out the quick questionnaire either by clicking the link below or by scanning the QR code.

<https://tinyurl.com/muscasyllabus24>