

Welcome to the Bio 11 On-Line Hybrid Class!

I know what you're thinking right now... "The last thing I want to have to do this semester is take a biology class. They're too hard and boring." I used to feel the same way you do right now but I am here now as proof that anyone can succeed in biology. If anything, I am living proof that you don't need to be a brainiac to study biology. My high school grades were less than stellar and my early college career as a psych major didn't really work out. I dropped out of college, managed record stores for a few years and started to realize the importance of going to college. I went back to school, found out that I actually liked biology and got my degree, though it took me 3 community colleges and 2 four-year colleges to get it done!!! If you every need convincing that you can achieve anything despite what life throws at you, come see me!!!

I think that you will find that this class will be an interesting journey through the basics of biology. I will work hard to make it enjoyable and interesting and before you know it you may be telling your friends some of the things that you learned in this class! I may even turn some of you into lovers of biology by the end of the semester. The only things that I ask of you is that you come to class, put in a honest effort and come and see me if you need help.

Biology is an important subject that permeates all aspects of our lives. Biology is part of the breakfast that you ate this morning, part of some of the cultural norms in society, part of how we act and behave, part of why dogs and cats can't live together and part of the health of the Earth. Global decisions that are made without considering biology can have horrible effects. (See global warming, famine, ecological disasters) As you go through your journey to becoming an educated person, biology will be one of those subjects that you will return to again and again.

A little about the class:

First and foremost, be sure that you review the syllabus for this class. It is your responsibility to know all of the policies for this class and what is required of you to get the grade that you are hoping for. I will not accept "I didn't know" as a reason for a missed assignment etc. if it is in the syllabus.

The book for this class is Campbell's "Essential Biology" 3rd edition. I know this may sound strange, but this is one of the best textbooks that I have ever read (and I have read a lot of textbooks!) The only problem with this book is the cost! The book is available at the bookstore but you also may look at getting the book on-line at Amazon.com. Another option available to you is to purchase an on-line version of the text. To purchase the book on-line goto www.Campbellbiology.com. The book (plus the on-line content which is included) costs \$66.00 plus tax but the downside is that you will not have a hard copy of the book and you can't re-sell it (the cost, however is significantly lower on-line). You

will need to read the chapters for each of the topics that we cover in class. This will increase your understanding of the topics covered in class and you will be more successful over-all. Plus since this is an on-line class more of your learning will come from the textbook than an traditional lecture class.

There will also be a Blackboard site for the class. (Goto www.SierraCollege.edu and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Blackboard access) On this site you will find announcements for the class and handouts for each lecture. Those handouts will be very detailed and include pictures from the text that are important for you to focus on. I will also post the PowerPoints for each lecture as well for review. Beware: do not let these things function as replacements for reading your textbook! Also, on the Blackboard site will be topics for weekly discussion. You will be required to participate in those discussions (refer to the syllabus for details) each week. What you post on those discussion boards should be well thought out, to the point, non-confrontational and non-demeaning. I will monitor those sites and add my own input from time to time.

We will meet once a week for lab. This will be a nice opportunity for you to get to know your fellow students and form study groups. Lab is also a fantastic way to increase your understanding of the topics that are covered in the on-line portion of the class. I guarantee you that regularly missing lab will lead to a massive reduction in your overall grade.

This class will cover the basics of biology from cells to ecosystems and may even spark your interest in some other biology classes. We have lots to choose from! One of the cool things about Biology is that all of the topics build upon each other but this class will require quite a lot of work on your part. The average biology class has as many new words in it as a foreign language class. I will do my best to help you to learn them but how well you learn them will be up to you. The average student may need up to 12 hours per week to study for this class and some may even need more, so make sure that you budget your time wisely. Also, do not wait until the last minute to cram for an exam. Studies show that reviewing your notes nightly will increase your understanding as much as 90%! This is especially true of an on-line class. Do not wait until the week of the exam to review the lectures. That is a sure way to fail!!!

I expect each of you to work hard and to do your own work. I can be a fairly understanding person except when people try to take advantage of me or if they try to claim another person's work as their own (refer to Board Policy #5515 in your Student Handbook to review the College's Academic Honesty Policy). You also need to be aware that there are no make-ups for any of the exams in class but since life happens, you are welcome to drop one exam score for the semester (Note: if you are caught cheating on an exam, you may not drop that score).

Some stuff about me:

Yes, as you read above, I was not the best student in class and it did take me 7 years to finish my bachelor's degree but I love Biology and will try to help you love it too. When I first switched my major to Biology I thought of going to veterinary school but quickly realized that wasn't the right path for me and settled on wildlife ecology. That path has

enabled me to work with wildlife without ever having to put an animal to sleep (as a vet might have to do). My main area is in mammals but I have spent a couple of years working with the Department of Fish and Game with salmon. Over the years I have worked with salmon and many other species of fish, Aleutian Canada Geese, California Ground Squirrels, Dusky-Footed Woodrats, many species of bats, striped skunks, rats and mice, and even one badger. I went back to school after I graduated and got my M.S. from CSUS in Conservation Biology by doing a thesis on spotted skunks, yes, I said skunks, and yes I have been sprayed...at least 30 times. I'll tell you all about it if you are interested. I sort of fell into teaching and have been in love with it ever since.

I hope that you will enjoy this class and remember that I am always available to you if you are struggling with this or any other class (or just want to discuss Lost theories or Harry Potter). I can't help you if you don't tell me that you need help.

Enjoy the class...Keely