

Course Syllabus
BIOLOGY 15L – Laboratory Investigations in Biology
Fall 2009

Contact information:

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Course Information:

Laboratory: (Sequoia 104) Wednesday 1:00-3:50pm

Description: Introductory laboratory investigation of the major principles of biology, including properties of all living things, the unity and diversity of organisms, structure and function of cells, energy and metabolism, genetics, ecology, evolution, and the scientific methods of investigation employed by biologists.

Prerequisites or corequisites: BIO 9, 10, or 20

Text: Biology 15L Laboratory Manual. Available online at:
www.csus.edu/indiv/r/rechsa/manual.htm

Course Format/Requirements: This 1-unit laboratory course will meet once a week for three hours. Students will work in groups to complete laboratory exercises to gain an understanding of the underlying biology. This course employs a hands-on approach to learning about biology, and participation by each student is required. Students are also required to come prepared to each lab. Before coming to class, students are expected to have a basic understanding of the biological concepts and procedures for that week's lab by reading the lab manual. At the beginning of each lab the instructor will present an overview of the lab in order to clarify and build upon these biological concepts and procedures.

Evaluation: Student grades will be based on points earned from quizzes, worksheets, homework assignments, attendance and participation.

At the start of each lab (except the first one) a 15-point quiz will be given to test students understand of the material from the current week as well as the previous week. Questions covering the current week will be based strictly from the concepts and materials found in the laboratory manual, while questions covering the previous week will ask students to integrate and apply the concepts explored in the previous lab.

Worksheets found in the laboratory manual will accompany each lab. These worksheets will be used by the students to make predictions, record observations, as well as answer questions about the underlying biology of the lab. A total of 140 points will come from worksheets.

Throughout the course writing assignments will be given worth a variable number of points, depending on how many are assigned. Additionally, 40 attendance/participation points will be given to each student at the end of the course. These points will be deducted if a student shows poor participation in laboratory exercises, is consistently late or unprepared for labs, improperly cleans up their lab bench, etc.

Grading: Final letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90-100%	Outstanding achievement
B	80-89%	Excellent performance; clearly exceeds course requirements
C	70-79%	Meets course requirements
D	60-69%	Passed, but not at average achievement standards
F	< 60%	Failure to meet course requirements

Breaking points for plus and minus grades will be decided at the end of the semester. If the class average is relatively low a curve will be used to determine the letter grades.

Attendance: It is mandatory that you attend the laboratories. *Missing two laboratories will result in a WU grade.*

Drops or Incompletes:

Students may drop the course on their own during the first two weeks of class for any reason. Dropping after that requires signatures of myself, the Biological Sciences Department Chair, and possibly the Dean.

Academic Misconduct: Any type of communication between students on an exam is considered cheating and will not be tolerated. Students who fail to comply will be given a zero for that quiz, the incident will be reported to the Biology Department Chair and the Dean of Students.

All work submitted by the student must be their own work. Failure to do so will be considered plagiarism. This includes using someone else's words or work without giving credit to that person. Plagiarized work will receive no credit and may be reported to the Biology Department Chair.

The most frequent cases of plagiarism that occur in this class are when lab mates turn in a homework assignment that has exactly the same wording for some or all of the answers. You may work together but **make sure you write your answers in your own words**. If you are turning in a graph or figure, make sure that YOU made it and it is not just a copy from someone else. Other cases of plagiarism usually involve written work where some of the information is gathered from the internet and then copied and pasted into the student's work without the student putting quotes around it or citing it. If you are in doubt about whether or not what you intend to do is plagiarism or not, feel free to ask.