



West Potomac High School Honors Biology Syllabus

2015-2016

Instructors:

Ms. Eileen Bell	embell@fcps.edu
Mr. Ed Chapman	jchapman1@fcps.edu
Mr. Kevin Chavers	kdchavers@fcps.edu
Mrs. Tania Contreras	tdcontreras@fcps.edu
Ms. Whitney Cook	wrcook@fcps.edu
Ms. Laura Pendleton	lkipendleton@fcps.edu
Ms. Tia Walker	tkwalker@fcps.edu
Dr. Michelle Weech	mcweech@fcps.edu
Ms. Kara Weiner	kaweiner@fcps.edu

To contact any of the course instructors, please email or call the main office at 703-718-2500. We will return your call or e-mail within 48 hours.

Back to School Night: October 7, 2015

1. Course Description and Sequence

Biology at WPHS is the introductory science course for most incoming freshman, and is designed to address the eight standards of the Virginia Standards of Learning. Biology students receive instruction addressing:

- BIO.1 Planning and Conducting Investigations
- BIO.2 Chemistry of Life
- BIO.3 Cell Structure and Function
- BIO.4 Life Functions of Archaea, Bacteria, and Eukarya
- BIO.5 Inheritance
- BIO.6 Classification
- BIO.7 Evolution (Changes in populations over time)
- BIO.8 Population, Community, and Ecosystem Dynamic Equilibria

There are 10 units of study in the course that emphasize content, thinking and writing skills in equal measure. There is a period of review and preparation for SOL test. Students receive a study guide for each unit. Electronic copies of all course and class handouts as well as assignments are posted on the course Blackboard site. The time frames outlined here are subject to change as circumstances (for example, snow days) warrant.

All students registered for this course will take the SOL exam in May of 2016. Students will receive their scores within a few days. The test has 600 points. A score of 400 is passing, a score above 375 is eligible for an expedited retake. A score above 500 is an advanced pass.

First Quarter

- Unit 1: Survey of Life
- Unit 2: Ecology
- Unit 3: Cells

Second Quarter

- Unit 4: Biochemistry
- Unit 5: Energy: Cellular Respiration and Photosynthesis
- Unit 6: Cell Membrane
- Unit 7: Cell Cycle

Third Quarter

- Unit 8: DNA
- Unit 9: Genetics and Meiosis
- Unit 10: Evolution

Fourth Quarter

- Unit 11: Classification
- SOL Preparation, SOL Exam & End of the Year Activities (May-June)
- FLE

2. Course Readings

Each student will have access to a copy of *Biology. Miller and Levine (dragonfly on cover)*. Hard copy textbooks are available to students with specialized accommodations by signout with teacher. The cost to replace a lost and/or damaged book is \$137.00 dollars. A variety of primary and other secondary sources will be used throughout the course, sometimes in lieu of chapters in the textbook. Hard copies of these readings will be available to students in class, and students will have access to an electronic copy of alternate textbook(s) on the course's Blackboard site.

3. Supplies

Students are requested to have the following basic items in class on a daily basis:

- A three ring binder with at least 8 dividers
- A pen and pencil
- Lined notebook paper
- Other supplies and materials specified by their teacher

If you have any concerns about acquiring these supplies, please speak to the teacher as soon as possible to make arrangements to support learning in the course.

4. Assessment & Grading

The focus of assessment is to provide feedback on a students' learning process and to measure students' level of mastery. Information generated through assessments is used by the teacher and students to reflect and then make adjustments to the learning process to increase student achievement over time. In order to preserve assessment security and data integrity, tests will not be released to students to take home. Students may come in and review test materials with their teacher. Grades are assigned according to the FCPS Grading Scale below:

A (93-100) = 4.0

A- (90-92) = 3.7

B+ (87-89) = 3.3

B (83-86) = 3.0

B- (80-82) = 2.7

C+ (77-79) = 2.3

C (73-76) = 2.0

C- (70-72) = 1.7

D+ (67-69) = 1.3

D (64-66) = 1.0

F (below 64) = 0.0

Grades will be calculated using a Total Points System. The quarter grade is determined by the total number of points accumulated during the grading period divided by the number of points possible. Grades will fall into the following categories:

1. Tests (90-100 pts each) and Quizzes (5-20 pts each)
2. Laboratory Assignments (points vary)
3. Homework Assignments (points vary)
4. Projects (points vary)

$$\text{Grade} = \frac{\# \text{ of points accumulated}}{\# \text{ of points possible}}$$

$$\text{Example: } \frac{282}{300} = .94 = 94\% = A$$

Late Work: We acknowledge that students sometimes need flexibility to meet deadlines as a result of extracurricular activities, technological failures or other kinds of last minute interruptions. Late work will be accepted at teacher discretion on a case by case basis. However, students may not submit work for a grade after a unit has been completed. Late work is due before the end of the unit and will receive a grade no higher than a “C” provided that the graded assignment has not be returned to the class. Students are encouraged to manage their time wisely and not wait until the last minute to begin multi-part assignments that require printing, revision, or input from others in a group setting.

“Second Chance” Assessments

- Honors biology teachers acknowledge the importance of a “second chance” when a student earns a grade lower than a “C” (76%) on a major assessment such as a unit test or quarter exam.
- Honors biology teachers also understand that all students must be guided forward through the curriculum. This requires a proactive rather than reactive response to low grades. Students who are constantly looking backwards to “fix” low grades often lose sight of learning currently taking place in the classroom. The goal of every student must be to prepare for and take assessments successfully and avoid developing a routine dependence on or expectation for second chances.
- “Second Chance” Test Policy
 - This option is designed to help students demonstrate mastery on **major assessments** and earn an improved grade on major assessments only. This option is not available for homework, quizzes, and classwork assignments. This option is available only once per quarter.
 - A second chance test may be requested by a student if they receive a grade below C. The teacher may also require a student to complete a second test after consultation with the student’s educational team (e.g. the Individualized Education Plan team or a parent/student/teacher partnership).
 - Students will be expected to complete all missing assignments and meet with their teacher for additional review activities before the second test is presented. These activities may include test corrections, after school or Wolverine Time review with the teacher or peers, and/or other remediation activities created by the teacher or course team.
 - Once the student completes the required review work, then the student must complete the second assessment on the assigned date.
 - The second chance may increase a student’s grade to a “C” (76%) but no higher for this particular assessment grade.
 - The second chance process, including scheduling and taking the second assessment, must be completed before the next regular assessment is given in the class.
 - Second chance assessments are not available during the last week of each quarter to accommodate grade deadlines.

Common Assessments

- The collaborative team model in use at WPHS requires teachers to collect data on student performance across all classes working in the same subject, for example “Biology.” Common assessments are created and used to meet this goal.

- Performance data collected from all classes is used to modify teaching strategies and adjust pacing to accommodate the needs of all students this year and in future years.
- Common assessments may take the form of quizzes, unit exams, projects, quarter exams, and/or final exams.
- In order to preserve common assessment security and data integrity, tests will not be released to students to take home. Students may come in and review test materials with their teacher.

Bonus points and extra credit: Extra credit will not be offered as a replacement for required assignments or a remedy for low grades.

Final Course Grade Calculation: The final course grade reflects students' progress towards mastery from September to June of content knowledge and the development of their skills and ability to use course content. Grades are weighted as follows:

Honors

- 20% for each quarter (total of 80%)
- 10% final exam grade (combination of culminating project and SOL score)
- 10% science fair grade (or independent research project)

5. Progress Updates

Parents will have access to the teachers' online gradebook via their ParentVue account starting 21 September 2015.

6. Independent Research Project (Honors Requirement)

Since science is based on inquiry and research, all biology students are **encouraged** to participate in an independent research project evaluated by others.

All honors biology students are **required** to complete an individual or group-based (limit of three students per group) research project. Students may choose to be evaluated in the Science Fair, Science Olympiad, or other pre-approved science-based competition.

- All honors biology students will receive a grade for their independent research project worth 10% of their final course grade.
- Each competition has its own documentation requirements, meeting attendance and submission deadlines, which students are responsible for meeting to receive a grade.
- Projects must be individualized, not copied.
- Grades for incremental participation, component completion, and participation will be visible as assigned but will only count towards the final science fair grade.
- The final project grade will not appear on progress reports until the 4th quarter.

7. Honor Code/Academic Integrity

There will be absolutely no tolerance for cheating in any form. Cheating is giving or receiving unauthorized aid on any assignment. Students will still be expected to complete the assigned work, or its equivalent, to demonstrate mastery of the skill or knowledge the original assignment is intended to measure. Should an instance of suspected cheating occur, teachers will follow the procedure indicated in the West Potomac High School Honor Code.

8. Student Blackboard and Google Drive Usage Expectations

All students have a Blackboard account and Google Drive account accessible using their student ID number and fcpschools.net email account. Students are expected and parents are encouraged to log in to Blackboard on a regular basis to check

- Announcements of upcoming assignments and tests
- Assignments requiring online resources
- Work missed due to absence
- Electronic copies of handouts/work distributed in class



West Potomac High School: Student Acknowledgement 2015-16

I have read and understand the expectations and procedures described above for **Honors Biology**. Throughout the year I agree to follow and support them, and when I find that I cannot follow and support them, I agree to discuss my concerns with my instructor, or a representative of the Honors Biology team.

Specifically, I understand the "second chance" policy for test re-assessments and understand a second chance requires evidence of review and re-learning. Grade improvement is limited to "C."

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student's e-mail address: _____

Please respond to the following questions.

Do you have convenient access to a computer and reliable internet access? Is your access at home or someplace else? Is your access to the computer limited, for example do you share this computer with anyone else?

What (3) words would you give to describe yourself?

Is there anything else you think the instructor should know about you as a student in this course?



West Potomac High School

Syllabus: Parent/Guardian Signature & Information Sheet

2015-16

I have read the expectations and classroom procedures described above for **Honors Biology** and will support them.

____(initial) *Throughout the year I agree to support them, and if I find I cannot follow and support them, I agree to discuss my concerns with my student's teacher.*

____(initial) *I understand that students are expected to be pro-active regarding their studies, which means getting help before major tests rather than relying on second chances and makeup options.*

____(initial) *I understand that my student will need access to an internet-capable computer either at home or by planning for use of school-based resources.*

____(initial) *I understand that my student's grade in this course will reflect achievement towards learning the details and conceptual frameworks of biology, not the effort expended to achieve whatever grade is earned.*

Name (printed): _____

Relationship to student: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please provide the following information.

Parent/guardian's e-mail address: _____

Phone number (home): _____

Phone number (work): _____

Please respond to the following questions.

What are THREE (3) words/phrases that best describe your son/daughter's personality?

What are TWO (2) words/phrases that best describe your son/daughter academically?

Is there any additional information that you feel the instructor should know about your student in this course?