

BIOL 2121-Microbiology LAB-Fall2026
Syllabus

Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Dr. Alba Chavez

Office: SciTech 311D

Office hours: Mondays and Fridays 11:00-2:00.
(Other hours available by appt.)



Class Meeting Time and Location

Lab 01L Tuesday 3:00-5:15, CAB 302

Lab 02L Wednesday 11:00-1:45, CAB 302

Lab 03L Wednesday 3:00-5:45, CAB 302

Learning objectives

The student will learn the basic techniques for studying microbial organisms, including but not limited to microscopy, sterile technique, different culturing methods, slide preparation, and staining. The laboratory portion of the course will provide hands-on experience with experimental scientific principles and illustrate and enhance concepts covered in the lecture course. This course includes a classroom undergraduate research experience that will give students exposure to an authentic research experience.

Expectations

1. You are expected to arrive on time and be ready to work.
2. You are expected to have read the lab handout **prior to class** in enough depth to understand the experiment for the day. If it becomes apparent that students are not preparing for class, pre-lab quizzes or writing assignments may be instituted.
3. You are expected to print out the lab handouts posted on Blackboard and bring them to the lab. Each student will keep a 3-ring binder with the lab handouts in order.
4. You will also have to write up your experiments each week in an online notebook. This will be checked for participation points. You must write up your work after each session.
5. You are expected to wear a lab coat each week unless otherwise instructed. You will also be required to have long pants and closed-toed shoes, or you will be asked to leave.
6. You are expected to remain in the lab for **the full period** and actively participate.

Required Materials

- Blackboard access: Students are expected to access Blackboard daily.
 - Lab information and handouts will be posted on Blackboard.
 - Important announcements may be posted on Blackboard and are considered equivalent to items announced in class.
 - Grades will be posted on Blackboard for information purposes. (Calculations are done offline in Excel.)
- Jaguar email account: Students are expected to access their Jaguar email accounts routinely as that account will be another main method for me to communicate with

you. I cannot respond to emails containing any private information to your personal account, as it is a violation of university policy.

- The university laboratory safety agreement must be signed before the start of the second lab session.
- LAB COAT policy: You will be provided with a disposable lab coat that will remain in the microbiology lab. You are responsible for keeping it uncontaminated and in good shape for the semester. If you contaminate the coat, you are required to let us know so that we can decontaminate it with bleach, ethanol, or by autoclaving as appropriate. You will be shown how to remove your coat properly, fold it, and place it in a storage bag with your name on it. Bins will be provided for the storage bags. If we determine that your coat is too damaged to be used safely, you will be required to purchase a replacement for \$5.
- A scientific calculator is highly recommended. For safety reasons, phones are not to be used in class without permission.
- A 3-ring binder for handouts.

Communication

As stated above, all students are expected to access Blackboard for updates on the course and to find the course materials. I am available during office hours if you need clarification on the material in this course, and I will post a notice on Blackboard or on my door if I am pulled away into a meeting during a scheduled office hour. I may also be down the hall in the lab and will leave a note for you to come to find me there. I am available to make appointments at other times as well. Please use the email function on Blackboard to contact me. I will respond as soon as possible.

If you are having a significant crisis in your life, please come talk to me sooner rather than later. If I can help you early in the semester, it is much better than trying to salvage things at the end of the semester.

Grading

Laboratory Exercises and Grades

- Your lab grade will consist of the following:
 - Attend and actively participate each week and complete the **worksheets (50% of your grade)**
 - You may miss one lab period without penalty. (There are 15 lab weeks.) I do not need you to provide an excuse for your one allowed absence.
 - If you miss an additional lab period but have an approved excuse and documentation, you will not be penalized. Acceptance of the excuse is at my discretion.
 - If a student misses 4 lab periods for any reason, the student will automatically fail the lab portion of the course. Attendance in the lab is required; there is no substitute for hands-on work.
 - **No makeup work** will be given for missed labs. If you miss labs early in the semester, we will discuss maintaining attendance for the rest of the semester to earn back partial credit for the lab.
 - **Quizzes (20% of your grade)** announced in your calendar.

- You will have to write a **digital lab notebook (20% of your grade, two submissions -10% of your grade each submission-)** for your research project and generate a poster. A template will be provided. **Poster (10% of your grade, the poster is mandatory to pass the lab)**
- I reserve the right to institute pre-lab quizzes if I feel that students are coming to the lab unprepared. This will change the total point availability above and grade percentages accordingly.
- Note that if you are late for a quiz or leave the lab period prior to completing the assigned lab, you will **not** be able to make up those points. You are expected to stay the entire lab period unless there is a documented emergency.
- Late assignments will only be accepted within 24 hrs. of the due date, and 10% will be automatically deducted. Again, this does not apply to online pre-lab assignments.

Attendance Policy

- **Quiz Day Attendance:** Mandatory. No quiz make-up. If you miss a quiz, it will be the one you drop. If you arrive after the quiz, you will not be allowed to take it.
- **Lab Attendance:** Mandatory (no make-up allowed.) There will be **no provisions made for you to make up a lab** as these require hands-on participation and materials are only available for that week.
- Because life happens and sometimes the ability to make it to the lab is impossible, you will be allowed to miss one lab without penalty. Use this excused absence wisely for a true illness or emergency. You will still be responsible for the material on any quizzes and should obtain the information from a classmate.
- Any student who has **missed more than 3 lab periods will fail the laboratory portion of the course.** (See above.)

Classroom Behavior

The bottom line is respect for your peers who are trying to learn, and for me and my time as the instructor.

- Disruptions are to be kept to an absolute minimum—if you have a habit of getting up during class routinely, I will ask you to leave for the day. An occasional trip to the restroom is fine. In the lab, you **MUST** always wash your hands before leaving the room. I will deduct points if I see you leave without washing your hands.
- A well-timed question is **always** encouraged and is not considered a disruption.
- Earbuds and headphones may **NEVER** be worn during class/lab periods.
- Phones must be on vibrate or turned OFF for the entirety of the class/lab period. Phones must be kept in the lab cubbies.
 - If you must take a call during class, answer the call quickly (if it is not disruptive) and leave the room before beginning a conversation. Tell the person you are in the lab and need to wash your hands before continuing the conversation. Keep these disruptions to an absolute minimum, and only for emergencies. If the phone rings a second time and you must take the call, you should go deal with the emergency. Please do not return to class that day.
- Do not text during lab instruction time. It is distracting to everyone and disrespectful of the academic environment. If you are in a waiting step during an experiment, limited texting for necessary purposes is usually okay.

- During quizzes, ALL electronic devices (phones, music players, iPods, laptops, etc.) must be stored in the lab cubbies. Attempts to cheat on quizzes and exams will cause a maximum penalty (see below). You will not be allowed to leave the classroom during a quiz. Phones may not be used as a calculator for an exam or quiz.
- We may discuss controversial topics occasionally. Please abide by common courtesy and listen with respect to the opinions of your peers during class. If a student becomes abusive or disrespectful, he/she will be asked to leave the class, or further action must be taken.
- Only students enrolled in the course are allowed in the laboratory classroom. Children are not allowed in the lab.
- If you have a preferred nickname or gender pronoun, please indicate that to me in whatever method is most comfortable for you: after class, via email, during office hours etc.
- If you are a veteran or military-related student with special concerns (deployment, disability accommodations, etc.), please let me know. You may also contact the Office of Military Affairs at 210-784-1174.
- No food or drink is allowed in the laboratory unless it is in a sealed container in your backpack in a cubby. If you need to step out of the lab during a break, you must WASH HANDS, get the sealed container or water bottle from your backpack, and take it outside to eat or drink in the hallway. No open drink cups are allowed.

Please see your lecture syllabus for all the university policies regarding financial aid, disability services, student misconduct, etc. All stated policies apply to the lab portion of the course as well.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via University email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#), or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodations with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after-hours and weekend assistance.

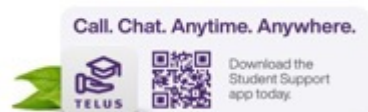
While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

	Appointments available	Walk-in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources, including 24/7/365 support for in-the-moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message,

email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information about the Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found [here](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges and faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as ePortfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The Writing Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in real-time with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#). The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a [CARE report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any questions involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or contact the

Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or coursework requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231, passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university urges all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB

439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources. Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas. There shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and

pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law. This will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to follow them, and with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act or attempt that gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures, please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Laboratory Schedule

Week	Dates	Tuesday & Wednesday Labs
Week 1	Aug. 25 & 26	Handwashing Lab
Week 2	Sept. 1 & 2	Pipetting Techniques
Week 3	Sept. 8 & 9	Simple Stains & Streaking
Week 4	Sept. 15 & 16	Gram Stain
Week 5	Sept. 22 & 23	Selective Growth & Aerobic/Anaerobic Growth
Week 6	Sept. 29 & 30	Biochemical Testing & Fermentation
Week 7	Oct. 6 & 7	Tiny Earth Begins: Soil Collection
Week 8	Oct. 13 & 14	Soil Sample Dilution
Week 9	Oct. 20 & 21	Master Plate Preparation
Week 10	Oct. 27 & 28	Patching Colonies (<i>seeking antibiotic resistance</i>)
Week 11	Nov. 3 & 4	Soil Prep (<i>boiling</i>) & PCR Setup
Week 12	Nov. 10 & 11	Agarose Gel Electrophoresis for PCR
Week 13	Nov. 17 & 18	Microbial/Agar Art (Edvotek kits) & BLAST Analysis (<i>computer-based</i>)
Week 14	Nov. 24 & 25	No Class – Thanksgiving
Week 15	Dec. 1 & 2	Poster Presentations