

Course Syllabus: Invertebrate Zoology Lab: BIOL 3401-01L

Spring 2025, Texas A&M University-San Antonio, College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Natural Sciences

Lab Meeting Times: Thursdays 11:00 AM - 1:45 PM

Lab Meeting Location: CAB 310

Graduate Instructor: Sarah Palmeri

Instructor of Record: Dr. Megan Wise de Valdez

E-mail: spalmeri@jaguar.tamu.edu

Office hours: Mondays 2:00 PM- 3:00PM or by request

Required Material

Laboratory instruction handouts provided on Blackboard. You are also **HIGHLY** encouraged to work off of a **computer or laptop** for your pre-/post-lab coursework. If you need a computer or wi-fi, please contact IT directly for assistance. IT contact information can be found in the Table of Contents in Blackboard as well as the University website. Furthermore, computer labs on campus are open and available to you! Finally, it is up to the student to have a **stable internet/browser connection** when conducting any online coursework.

- Signed safety agreement prior to start of second lab period.
- **Lab coats must be purchased and worn in the lab every week.** Lab coats must be purchased and worn in the lab every week. If you forget your coat, you will be required to rent one for \$2 or leave the lab for the day and take a zero. Renting is **dependent on lab coat availability.**
- **You must wear closed toed shoes and pants to lab each week. Students not in proper attire will be asked to leave.**
- Students must log-in regularly to both the Blackboard site and to their TAMUSA email account to keep updated on information related to the class.
- Lab Notebook - Optional

Course Design

This course combines a lecture and laboratory section. These two sections will have different weight in your final grade for the course. The lecture section will be worth **75%** of your course grade. The laboratory section will be worth **25%** of your grade.

Grading Scheme

Performance in this course is based on your efforts in the following.

Assessment Type	Point Value
Laboratory Quizzes (9 out of 10 at 10 pts each)	90
Lab Participation (12 at 5 pts each)	60
Group Presentations (2 at 25 pts each)	50
Total	200

Late work: I do not accept late work unless it is due to a university approved and documented absence or an unavoidable situation. If such circumstances arise, you are required to communicate with me **within 24 hours of the due date** for the assignment in question. If you do not, you will receive a zero. It is at my discretion whether I will deduct points for approved late work.

Attendance

- Mandatory. However, if a student misses more than 3 laboratory classes in a regular semester then the student will automatically fail the course. Please see a more detailed description in the **Laboratory Attendance Policy**.

Lab Handouts

- Will be posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for printing out and bringing to lab, as needed.

LAB INSTRUCTIONS

Laboratory Quizzes (90 points):

- There will be a weekly quizzes *either at the beginning, during, or end of every in-person lab (see syllabus schedule for dates)*. Quizzes will include practical examinations when appropriate.
- There will be no provisions for making up in-person laboratory quizzes due to the nature of the quizzes (setting up specimen, etc...). **Cell-phone clocks all read the same time...**
- You may drop your lowest lab quiz IF you have not missed any of the quizzes. Alternatively, you can view this as missing one quiz without penalty (i.e. if some unforeseen circumstance arises and you cannot attend lab).

Lab Experimentation & Group Presentations (50 points):

- There will be two labs in which you will design and perform an experiment on invertebrate behavior.
- Instructions for the lab presentations will be posted on Blackboard and covered during lab sessions.
- The following week, you will present your research in a powerpoint format in teams of 2-3.
- Presentation schedule is found in the syllabus schedule. ***See late work on the previous page.***

Lab Participation Points (60 points):

- **Lab starts promptly at 11:00 AM.** *If you miss the first 10 minutes of class, the lab instructor has the discretion to not allow you in the lab as many safety instructions and other instructions will have already been given. *Cell-phone clocks all read the same time...**
- **You must actually participate in lab activities**, not sit back and let your lab-mates do all the work while you simply copy down all the results. If you do not actually participate, I will not give you credit for the lab participation points that day. For example, if I figure that you put in 50% effort on a lab activity, you will receive no more than 50% of the available points.

Laboratory Notebook (no points; optional):

- Laboratory notebooks are highly recommended but they will not be graded.
- *You are quizzed weekly over the exercises and specimens you did the week prior and/or during the present lab*, therefore, you will need some means by which to record what you do in order to prepare for your weekly quiz. Some quizzes may allow you to use your notebook.
- *You may also be quizzed over the main objectives of the upcoming lab to ensure your preparedness.*

Laboratory Attendance Policy - Laboratory courses are unique to your education in that they will provide you with hands-on opportunities to gain the skills and critical thinking processes inherent to the study of biology. For these reasons, we have a strict departmental attendance policy:

- Attendance is **mandatory**.
- **If you miss more than 3 labs for whatever reason (excused or not), the maximum score you can earn for the laboratory section of a course is 50%.**
- If you miss a lab section for a university excused absence, you may attempt to make up the lab in another lab section if the following criteria are met and directions followed: *a) the absence is considered a university excused absence and was determined to be one by your primary instructor, b) you must contact via e-mail both your instructor and the instructor of the section you would like to attend, and c) you must receive written confirmation that you are able to make up the lab. If you do not receive written confirmation, you will not be allowed to make up the lab.*

Tardiness is not acceptable. I will start class exactly on time. If you arrive late, *you are responsible for the material that you have missed*, and you will not be disruptive so that the other students are distracted from learning the material. Additionally, it will be up to my discretion whether to allow you the opportunity to complete any assignments that have already been administered.

Course Requirements

During lab hours, you may check your phone if you are waiting for an important call or text, and you make take important calls outside the lab room, but you are in lab to complete important tasks. You must keep outside communication to a minimum.

Professional and respectful conduct is expected and appreciated from everyone involved in our course. If you choose to conduct yourself professionally and respectfully, you are allowing your classmates to learn in an enjoyable and peaceful environment, and I appreciate your efforts and acknowledge that you are a respectful member of our classroom. Respectful conduct includes, but is not limited to, participating, avoiding text messaging, not talking disruptively (e.g., when either I am lecturing or a fellow classmate is asking or answering a question), and arriving on time and staying through to the end of lecture.

If you choose to conduct yourself disrespectfully, I reserve the right to deduct points from your grade, disqualify you from earning extra credit points or resort to any other suitable form of penalty. You and I will discuss any perceived disrespectful conduct and potential penalty before it is enacted.

Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

NOTE: Guidance for how to cite AI-generators, like ChatGPT, can be found here <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Tentative Schedule: Every effort will be made to keep with the following schedule.

All labs will meet in-person on campus in CAB 310.

****All quizzes & assignments outlined in the Due Dates column count toward your final grade****

LAB	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE (During the current week's lab meeting, unless noted)
-	Thursday, 1/23	No Lab Meeting the First Full Week of Classes	-
1	Thursday, 1/30	Introduction, Microscope Use & Expectations, Lab Safety, Discussions of Presentations, Constructing Cladograms (Activity)	Lab Safety Agreement; Quiz 1 (during class)
2	Thursday, 2/6	The Protists	Quiz 2 (during class)
3	Thursday, 2/13	Flatworm Behavior / Planning Worksheet	Quiz 3 (during class)
4	Thursday, 2/20	Group Presentations #1	<u>Group Presentation 1</u> (during class)
5	Thursday, 2/27	Phylum Porifera & Phylum Cnidaria	Quiz 4 (during class time)
6	Thursday, 3/6	Phylum Platyhelminthes	Quiz 5 (during class)
-	Thursday, 3/13	No Lab Meeting – Spring Break	-
7	Thursday, 3/20	Phylum Mollusca	Quiz 6 (during class)
8	Thursday, 3/27	Phylum Annelida	Quiz 7 (during class)
9	Thursday, 4/3	Pseudocoelomates Lab: Nematodes, Nematomorphs, Rotifers, Acanthocephalans, & Gastrotrichs	Quiz 8 (during class)
10	Thursday, 4/10	Pill Bug Behavior / Planning Worksheet	-
11	Thursday, 4/17	Group Presentations #2	<u>Group Presentation 2</u> (during class time)
12	Thursday, 4/24	Arthropods: Chelicerata & Crustaceans	Quiz 9 (during class)
13	Thursday, 5/1	Phylum Echinodermata	Quiz 10 (during class)

Important Dates:

January 21	First day of class
February 5	Census Date
March 10-15	Spring Break
April 18	Study Day – No Classes
April 21	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
April 28	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
May 5	Last day of scheduled classes
May 6	Study Day – No classes
May 7-13	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

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 located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> 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 disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

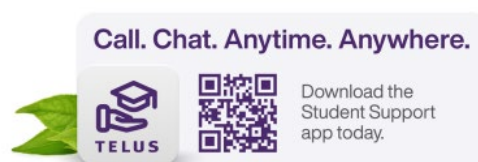
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *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.

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, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

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. For more information on SCC services visit tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, 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. 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 Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>.

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 the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend 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.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. 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. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

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 referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to 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 diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work 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 within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should 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, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

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- or gender-based discrimination or harassment,

including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, 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 strongly encourages 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 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.

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, and 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, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, 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, and 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 comply with them, as well as 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, sexual orientation, 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, which 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 as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).