

General Biology I – Attributes of Living Systems

BIOL 1306-003, 3 credits

Texas A&M University San Antonio, College of Arts and Sciences

Spring 2026 Syllabus

Instructor Contact Information

Name: Rebbekah Watson

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Office Hours: Fridays 10:00am-12:00pm via Zoom

Class Meeting Times and Location

Lecture: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30pm-4:45pm

Location: SciTech 242

Contacting Your Instructor

I will typically respond to emails from students within 24 hours. However, over the weekend and holiday periods responses may be delayed.

Course Description and Prerequisites

This course examines the fundamental molecular, cellular, and genetic principles characterizing living organisms including the role of the scientific method in the discovery of these principles. Specific concepts include the chemical basis for life, energy transformations, cell structure and function, the metabolic processes of respiration and photosynthesis, cell reproduction, and basic concepts of heredity and genetics. This course is designed for students majoring in science fields. This course meets the standards for the life and physical Sciences category of courses under the core curriculum.

Required Textbook

Biology, 13th edition, Raven et al., McGraw-Hill

IMPORTANT: The course materials listed below are being provided to you. You will have access to the course materials through Blackboard on or before the first day of class.

- Access to the textbook comes with an eBook. An actual hard copy of the textbook is **NOT** required, although can be purchased through the publisher.

Other Required Materials

To complete the work in this course, you will also need:

- Lab: **MUST BE ENROLLED IN BIOL 1106 LAB CONCURRENTLY** (unless already taken)
- Blackboard – this is where you will go for lectures, grades, and weekly announcements
 - Google slide decks of lectures will be posted on Blackboard
 - Announcements regarding lectures may be posted on Blackboard
 - Grades for individual assignments will be posted on Blackboard.
- On-Line Learning System Components
 - We will be using “McGraw Hill Connect” which is an on-line tool for learning and studying modules. You will have access to this via Blackboard. It will require a one-time set-up.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will develop critical thinking skills, communication skills, and empirical and quantitative skills.
2. Students will understand and apply the scientific method to novel questions in order to develop a strategy to answer those questions.
3. Students will understand the role of the scientific method in scientific discovery.
4. Students will summarize the laws of matter and energy as they apply to living organisms
5. Students will classify the organic and inorganic components that make up living organisms
6. Students will explain the role of water in the fitness of the environment
7. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the differences between eukaryotic and prokaryotic cells.
8. Students will identify components of plant and animal cells, including the structure and function of cell organelles.
9. Students will understand cellular membranes as they relate to transportation of molecules into and out of cells.
10. Students will understand the energy transforming principles of photosynthesis and cellular respiration.
11. Students will understand the cellular cycles of mitosis and meiosis
12. Students will understand the basic principles of gene to protein
13. Students will apply the principles of Mendelian genetics to solution of basic genetics problems to better understand inheritance patterns and be able to discuss how they can contribute to the solution of medical and social dilemmas.
14. Students will be able to discuss recent advances in modern genetics considering the medical, social, and economic impacts of the new findings.

Graded Work

The table below provides a summary of the graded work in this course.

Summary of Graded Work

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Lecture Exams	50%
Cumulative Final Exam	10%
In-Class Activities or Homework	10%
Connect Chapter Assignments	15%
SmartBook Assignments	15%
Total Percent	100%

Calculating Current Grade

Your current grade can be calculated by 1) adding all of your points, 2) adding the points you would have received if you had made perfect scores on the same assignments, 3) dividing the number earned by the points possible, then 4) multiplying by 100.

A = 90 - 100% B = 80 - 89% C = 70 - 79% D = 60 - 69% F = below 60

You can also find your current grade in the Grade Center on Blackboard.

Description of Graded Work

Type	Description
Lecture Exams	Lecture Exams (5) are composed of questions covering lecture material. Each exam will have questions ranging from multiple choice, short answer, true/false, drawing, matching, fill-in-the-blank, etc. Not all types of questions will be on every exam.
Cumulative Final Exam	A comprehensive final exam will be given on a specific day during finals week. This will be a multiple choice, true/false exam.
Connect Chapter Assignments	For each chapter, you will complete an activity that is designed to reinforce your knowledge of the chapter material. This will consist of a variety of questions, such as video questions, interactive modules, fill-in-the-blank composition, among others. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no time limit for this activity.• You will be allowed unlimited attempts.• Your lowest grade will be dropped.• 10% late penalty for each day late
In-Class Activities or Homework	There will be hands-on activities or homework given throughout the semester that will help demonstrate concepts, practice word problems, and reinforce concepts that you will be responsible for completing in class. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance is required for these in-class activities and cannot be made up if absent. If you are absent, you cannot receive points for that day's activity.• These in-class activities should help assess where you are in terms of the concepts being taught. If you struggle with these activities, this should help identify where you need to focus your studying or where you need to ask for more help.
SmartBook Assignments	SmartBook Assignments are to be completed BEFORE the associated lecture (per the deadlines listed). These are designed to help students prepare for the upcoming lecture. Late work is not accepted on the SmartBook assignments. Your lowest grade will be dropped.

Make-up and Late Work Policy

Exams:

You may make up an exam only if:

- you contact me within one day (24 hours) of the scheduled exam
- your absence is one approved by TAMUSA policies (illness, death in the family, other immediate-family emergencies). Documentation will be required.
- Again – if I do not hear from you within 24 hours of the scheduled exam, you have forfeited the right to make up the exam.

Homework Assignments:

Because these are on-line and because they will be open and available for more than one day, you should have ample opportunity to complete these.

- There are no make-ups.
- There is a 5-day grace period for turning in these assignments; however, you will lose points (10%) per day late.
- Your lowest grade will be dropped.

- If there is an emergency that is considered a university-excused reason that prevents you from completing the assignment in the allotted timeframe, you must contact me within one day of the due date. If I do not hear from you within that time period, you have forfeited the right to make up the assignment or quiz.

In-class activities or Homework:

As mentioned above, any hands-on activities we conduct in class cannot be made up as they require your presence and will usually be conducted as a group.

- However, if you miss for an excused reason, we can discuss the reason why and then you will be exempt from the points given in class.

SmartBook Assignments:

Since these assignments are designed to prepare you for the upcoming lecture, there will be no make-ups or late work accepted.

- Your lowest grade will be dropped.

Attendance Policy and Participation

Lecture Attendance:

Attendance will be taken daily; however, you will not be assessed points. Keep in mind that in-class activities are completed during many lectures, and these are not announced beforehand. See the make-up policy above regarding missed in-class activities.

- If you must miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining what you missed (announcements, class notes, handouts, etc...) from a fellow classmate.

Exam Day Attendance:

Attendance on exam day is mandatory. If you arrive late, you have only until the end of the period to take it. See the make-up policy above regarding missed exams.

Time Commitment & Individual Accountability

In college, it is expected that for every credit hour you spend in class, you spend 3 hours working on that material at home. Thus, in the class, it is expected that in addition to coming to class every Tuesday and Thursday, you also spend 9 hours a week on outside school pertaining to this class. This of course takes time-management skills. Please take this into consideration when planning your semester activities.

Other Course Policies

Do's and Do not's

- Do come to class regularly and on time – it affects your grade, not because of points assessed, but because of understanding the material.
- Do take notes, either on the print outs of my lectures or in a separate notebook.
- Do ask questions in class.
- Do seek out help from me and your peers.
- Do NOT have your cell phone out during class unless asked to do so.
- Do NOT check social media sites on your laptop during my lecture feigning that you are taking notes.
- Do NOT leave early without talking to me prior to class beginning

Contacting Instructor

When sending an e-mail to me, you must include your full name, class and section number, and the problem or issue you are having. If your email does not include these items, I may not respond back.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty (cheating) will not be tolerated in this course. If cheating is observed, points for that activity will be disallowed, and grades of zero given for cheating will not be dropped.

Academic dishonesty/ violations are considered (but not limited to): activities such as copying answers from other students, collaboration with students who have completed lecture exams, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, and/or using outside resources during the exams. These are considered cheating and will result in a ZERO for that exam/ assignment. Grades of zero given for cheating will not be dropped.

Please see Blackboard for Texas A&M University San Antonio Important Policies and Resources.