Syllabus: Introduction to Biology: Organisms and the Environment
NS 1021 B Fall 2008 4 Credits

Instructor: Rich Grumbine Office: FAB 412 Phone Extension: 1665
Email: rgrumbine@landmark.edu

Class Meeting Times: M-W-FR 10:00 - 11:15 AM and TU 10:30- 12:45 PM
Office Hours: Thursdays 10:30 - Noon and by appointment


Course Description:
This course investigates the biological world with the goal of enhancing student’s biological and scientific literacy. The course satisfies the core natural science requirement at Landmark College. The content emphasis will be on the study of ecology, evolution, and genetics.

Content Course Goals:
1) to gain an understanding of key concepts in the study of evolution, genetics and ecology
2) to understand and apply the process of scientific inquiry and scientific thinking
3) to gain a strong understanding of a selected biology topic through a long-term research project

Other General Course Goals:
1) to attend class regularly
2) to participate actively during class by: discussing text readings and offering comments and questions during the various kinds of in-class course work
3) to complete regularly and with depth review questions that are based on text and course content

Academic Success in Introductory Biology
The following student habits usually lead to a successful experience in this course:
1) keeping an organized course notebook
2) reading actively the text as assigned
3) working with other students in the course to study outside of class
4) visiting the instructor during office hours
5) using the science course work support center as needed
Course Topics

We will study the following areas of biology in this order:

- Overview of Scientific Inquiry and Biology Unit
- Ecology Unit
- Evolution Unit
- Genes and Inheritance Unit

Summary of Course Assessment and Grade Weights

Tests 30%

Tests will be given throughout the semester on key course topics. There will probably be 4 tests by the end of the course (one per unit). Their format will generally be short answer.

Lab Writing Assignments 20%

You will be assigned 4 tasks that will require lab report style writing. They will have specific due dates and a late policy will apply to them.
Project 15%

You will choose a project topic and carry out some form of lab or field research during the course of the semester (About 7 weeks in duration). Your project will be presented at a poster fair in on November 20. We will begin this project during Week 4. Projects have two graded components: a written progress report midway through the semester (5%) and the poster product itself which will be displayed at the poster session (10%).

Class Participation 10%

Your class participation grade has two components. Text Discussion (5%) and General In-Class Participation (5%). For Text Discussion, I will assess your ability and consistency in discussing assigned text readings and other HW assignments. I will give you a handout that suggests ways to participate effectively in these discussions. For General In-Class Participation, I will assess your ability to contribute productively to all the other sorts of class activities such as small group work, lectures, hands-on activities, videos, labs, etc. In general, regularly offering comments and questions during these activities will show excellent participation. Important note: If you are not present for a particular class, you can not earn the participation point for that class. These participation grades will be recorded three times on ISIS during the semester (Week 4, Week 9, Week 14)

Review Questions 10%

I regularly assign review questions that usually originate from the textbook. They are listed on the weekly plan each week. These are meant to help you cue in on and practice writing about the key content of a particular text reading assignment. I plan to collect them 4 times over the semester and assess them according to a rubric.

Attendance 5%

Landmark College expects each student to attend each class session. Missing class means missing notes, discussion, field trips, directions and guidelines for assignments. Perhaps most importantly, missing class affects the “culture” and “chemistry” of the class. Your presence and participation helps make this course a valuable learning experience for everyone. The attendance grade is based on the following:

0 absences = 100
1 absence = 95
2 absences = 90
3 absences = 85
4 absences = 80
6 absences = 70
7 absences = 65
8 absences = 60
9 absences = 55
and so on....
5 absences = 75

If you know you are going to be absent, I would appreciate a phone message, or email alerting me. Please use ISIS to keep track of your attendance.

If you miss class, you are responsible for getting materials, assignments, directions, handouts, etc. from your classmates, the course shared folder or me as soon as possible.

ISIS will automatically email you and your advisor regarding absences throughout the semester. If attendance becomes an issue in this course, I will offer support in trying to meet the attendance policies of the course and school. If these efforts do not improve your attendance and class performance and 8 absences have accumulated, I may pursue “administrative withdrawal” and withdraw you from the course.

**Final Exam 10%**

The comprehensive final exam is a take home exercise that will be given out the last day of class (Dec 5th) and due on Dec 11th.

**Other Important Course Details**

Exceptions to Weekly Course Schedule

First Week: We will meet WED TH (10:30) and FR this week. No office hours on TH.

Week 7 (October 13-17)): We will meet WED TH (10:30) and FR this week. No office hours on TH.

**Tardiness to Class**

Chronic tardiness to class can disrupt the proceedings and culture of the class. I usually go over the agenda for the day and orient the class to assignments and announcements at the beginning of class. Missing this can severely hamper your management of the class. Chronic tardiness will also affect your attendance grade in this class: 8 tardies will earn one absence added on to your attendance record and 5% points will be deducted from your attendance grade. If I have started going over the daily agenda before you walk in to class, then you are late.

**Course Notebook Set Up**

I suggest you organize your course notebook into 7 sections:
-- Weekly Plans (I distribute these on Monday each week of the course)
-- General Course Info (syllabus, policies, etc)
-- Bio. Overview
-- Ecology
-- Evolution
-- Genetics
-- Project

When filing, any course document that has to do with evolution, for instance, would go in the evolution section, whether it is a handout, lab, test or notes.

**Office Hours and Science Coursework Support**

Regular office hours are Thursdays from 10:30- Noon and by appointment. I am widely available at many other times of the day. Please do not schedule regular appointments for other academic needs (advising,) during this course's regularly scheduled office hours. If you are not doing well in the course, I may require you to meet with me.

The Science Coursework Support Center will be staffed by a science faculty, probably two evenings a week. I will give you that schedule when it is available.

**Grading**

Letter grades for the course are associated with the following percentage ranges:

- **A** = 93-100%
- **A-** = 90-93%
- **B+** = 87-90%
- **B** = 83-87%
- **B-** = 80-83%
- **C+** = 77-80%
- **C** = 73-77%
- **C-** = 70-73%
- **D+** = 67-70%
- **D** = 63-67%
- **D-** = 60-63%
- **F** = 59% or less

**ISIS Gradebook** - You can check your course grade over the semester any time you wish. It takes me roughly a week to enter a grade in ISIS after the submission of an assignment. Usually the grade is entered before you receive the assignment back.

**The Power of Zero** - Assignments not submitted at all receive a grade of 0%. This can have powerful grade consequences. For example, say the total course grade was based on two lab reports. The first report you submitted and earned a 100%. The second was not submitted at all and received a 0%. An A+ and an F averaged together is not a C as one might think. The final grade for the course would in reality be a 50% or F. The point:
Please turn your assignments in, completed or partially completed or the power of 0 may haunt you.

How Hard Is This Course?

The following table summarizes the grade distributions in this course for the past five semesters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Number (out of 62 students)</th>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Learning Style and Accommodations

I encourage you to keep exploring how you learn best. Feel free to discuss your learning style with me from the start. And please consult with me so I can accommodate your specific learning needs.

E Mail

Email is an important communication tool that I use in this course. You are therefore accountable for checking, reading and following the instructions of email messages from me.

Student Code of Conduct

All students and staff of Landmark College are members of a unique educational community, whose goal is to enable each student to tap his or her full potential for success. Such a challenging goal requires tremendous individual effort on the part of each student and cooperative effort on the part of each member of the Landmark community. The guiding principles of the Landmark community include hard work, respect for others and oneself, honesty, personal accountability, and careful organization of time and
materials. The following standards of conduct are examples and general expectations for all student members of the Landmark College community:

1. Honesty in academic endeavors and in all aspects of campus life.
2. Commitment to a safe, clean, congenial, and productive learning environment.
3. Commitment to an understanding of one’s own strengths and weaknesses, and to academic and personal growth.
4. Respect for the feelings, time, efforts, and physical well-being of others, and for their capacity for growth.
5. Respect for the property and materials of Landmark College and all members of the Landmark community.

Graded Assignment Late Policy

Since time and assignment management is such an essential skill to master in order to succeed in college and beyond, I have implemented a late assignment policy.

1) Turn graded assignments in on time and you will never have to worry about this policy.

2) Late Fees: For each day of lateness after a due date for any given assignment, three percentage points will be deducted from the assignment grade. For example, a lab report that would have scored an 85% if turned in on time would get a 79% if turned in two days late.

3) Assignments not submitted after one week will have an automatic 20% deducted from their overall grade if and when they are submitted up until two weeks after the original due date. At that point, late work will not be accepted and that particular assignment will earn a 0.

4) If you are absent on the due date and fail to get your assignments in that day, the policy still applies. (Unless there are extenuating circumstances that you have alerted me to and I sign off on)

5) This applies to all graded assignments. You will know which assignments will be graded ahead of time.

6) Weekend days count as days! You can email and attach assignments to me over weekend days and their submission time and date will be recorded by the computer.
7) The latest “due time” on a due date is 10 AM. For example, if an assignment is due Monday Feb 4, then it will be one day late starting at 10 AM that day.

**What does it mean if my work is partially done by the due date?**

Partially completed assignments will be accepted and can be turned in on the due date to avoid the “late fee”. Partially completed is defined as an assignment that is at least half completed. (Ex. At least two completed sections of a four section lab report) An assignment that is less than half done on the due date will be considered late and should be completed ASAP to prevent further late fees. This incomplete work will then need to be submitted within two weeks of the original due date. At that point any revisions will not be accepted and the original incomplete work will be graded as is.

If you have work completion difficulties, please be sure to talk to me early on so we can begin to address this challenge.

**Revision Policy**

Written assignments that have been submitted according to the above guidelines can be revised for a better grade if you choose to do so. They can be revised more than once until you receive a grade you are satisfied with. Assignments that are late can be revised but will receive only the highest grade attainable for their lateness. No revisions of any sort will be accepted after Monday Dec 8.

**Test Corrections Policy**

You have the opportunity to correct the errors on your course tests. In order to take advantage of this policy, you must:

1) Submit a “Test Self Analysis Form” (no corrections accepted unless this is also submitted) The form is in the shared folder under general course info.
2) Submit the original test as it is.
3) Resubmit answers to each question where no or partial credit was given. This needs to be done on a separate piece of paper, not the original test form.

The corrections will be averaged with the original test to arrive at a new grade. For example, an original test grade of 70% could be improved to an 85% if all errors were accurately corrected.
## Summary Table of Course Objectives and Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Tests</th>
<th>Lab Writing</th>
<th>Project</th>
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