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Biology 131 – General Biology

<http://personal.jccmi.edu/irelandjohn/Bio131>

Text: *Biology, Life on Earth* (Custom Core Edition-JCC, 2005) Audesirk, Audesirk, Byers

Lab Manual: *Bio131 Lab Manual*, JCC

Both the text and lab manual are required and available at the campus bookstore.

CONTENT

This course is a basic overview of organismal and cellular biology. It is the goal of this course to provide you with a general understanding of the breadth and diversity of the biological sciences. Through out the semester we will look at various topics including:

- The basic chemistry of life
- The ways organisms reproduce and inherit traits
- An overview of evolutionary theory and its role in modern biology
- The behavior and ecology of animals

The following Associate Degree Outcomes (ADO) will be addressed in the class.

ADO 4: Demonstrate Scientific Reasoning
 ADO 7: Think Critically

GRADING

The Final Grade for this class will be based on the following distribution.

Lecture Exams/Lecture Quizzes	500 pts
Final Exam	100 pts
Lab Reports	100 pts
Formal Lab Report	50 pts
Lab Quizzes	100 pts
Participation and Technique	100 pts
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE	1000 pts

MAKE-UP WORK

Given the amount of leeway inherent in the grading scheme (dropped grades) **there will be no make-up exams, quizzes, or labs.** Therefore it is in your best interest to try your hardest on every assignment so that you can save those drop grades for a time when you really need them.

LECTURE QUIZZES & ASSIGNMENTS

I find that lecturing before or after an exam is of little use to the students, so all of my exams are for the full class period (though I doubt they will take that long). This necessitates that I give fewer exams during the semester, with each covering more material (so as not to lose too much lecture time). To balance against this I give lecture quizzes (10 pts) at the beginning of a class or out of class assignments (10-20 pts). The quizzes are announced and the questions will be very similar to the types of things you will see on the exams. These grades are taken as a total for the semester, and **counted as a single test grade that replaces your lowest test grade (EVEN IF IT IS LOWER THAN YOUR LOWEST TEST GRADE).** On the positive side, the total number of points available in the semester will be greater than 125, so if you do well on the quizzes and assignments it is possible to improve your test average.

EXAMS

My exam philosophy is simple; they are designed to demonstrate that you know the material and can explain it back to me. First the bad news, I do not give multiple choice tests. My exams are typically divided into three parts. The first part is a fairly simple recall exercise (multiple choice, matching, series order, etc.) that is worth between 20-30% of the test value. The second part is an application section where I will want something like a drawing or translating a genetic sequence (again, worth 20-30%). The remaining fraction of the test (40-60%) is short answer. Short answers can be as simple as a word or two (much like fill in the blank) up to a simple paragraph. Even if there is an essay on the test (meaning a paragraph or two), you will be able to do well on the test without it. There will be four tests during the semester and you will drop your lowest score, replacing it with your quiz/assignment score.

FORMAL LAB REPORT

During the semester you will be asked to generate one written formal lab report. The layout for the report is in the lab manual and represents a significant amount of work if you have never done a similar report in the past. The reports will be graded for scientific understanding, presentation, and proper format. Always remember that it is usually only acceptable to turn in a "rough draft" in English, this report should be professional and polished.

FINAL EXAM

The Final Exam will be a cumulative exam that covers the entire semester's material. Do not stress during the semester about the Final, it does not represent an inordinate amount of your final grade and it is possible to perform well in the class despite a poor performance on the final. The purpose of the Final Exam is to highlight the key concepts for the semester and will be multiple-choice in nature (50 questions).

LAB REPORTS

Some labs will have a required report. These reports will be collected at the end of the laboratory period and graded for completeness and correctness. Please turn in all reports, as no credit will be given for late work. The lowest lab report score will be dropped.

LAB QUIZZES

There are five (5) laboratory quizzes that will test knowledge and application of common procedure used during the semester. The lowest score will be dropped when calculating the average.

PARTICIPATION AND TECHNIQUE

Active participation in the lecture and laboratory class is necessary for a student's success. This part of your final grade is determined by your actions. Each student begins with the full one hundred (100) points, and adjustments are made for negative actions. Actions that would impact this score are things such as (but not limited to): not cleaning a lab area after your work is done, not attending a lecture period, failure to follow directions, and tardiness.

GRADE SCALE

4.0:	1000 – 930 pts	1.5:	699 – 650 pts
3.5:	929 – 860 pts	1.0:	649 – 600 pts
3.0:	859 – 800 pts	0.5:	599 – 550 pts
2.5:	799 – 750 pts	0.0:	< 550 pts
2.0:	749 – 700 pts		

CHEATING

Any students found cheating and/or plagiarizing will receive a grade of 0.0 for the particular exam or assignment. A second offense will result in a grade of 0.0 for the course. ALL INCIDENTS CAN BE REPORTED TO THE ACADEMIC DEAN

The JCC Catalog states, “Academic honesty is expected of all students. It is the ethical behavior that includes producing their own work and not representing others’ work as their own, either by plagiarism, or by cheating, or by helping others to do so...Faculty members who suspect a student of academic dishonesty may penalize the student by taking appropriate action to and including assigning a failing grade for the paper, project, report, exam, or the course itself. Instructors should document instances of academic dishonesty in writing to the Academic Dean.”

WITHDRAWAL AND INCOMPLETE

It is your responsibility as a student to take charge of your academic decisions. If you wish to withdraw from the course, please pay attention to the academic schedule available online (*E-services*). You **may** be automatically removed from the class roster if you stop attending class, **but ultimately you are responsible for your own academic decisions.**

An Incomplete mark is only given if you have preformed satisfactorily before the request is made. The Incomplete mark is subject to the conditions outlined in the Jackson Community College catalog.

CLASS CONDUCT

Please recognize that all students have an equal right to a quality classroom experience. Behavior that would adversely affect the rights of another student (i.e. side conversations, disruptive actions, etc.) will result in those responsible being asked to leave for the remainder of the period and losing credit for any work that is missed.

LECTURE NOTES

I provide chapter outlines on the class website for your use. These would enable a well prepared student (i.e. someone with a background in biology and chemistry) to get through this class with the minimum of external aid. However, **these notes are by no means exhaustive and should not be seen as such.** As the old saying goes, “the devil is in the details.” I suggest that you use these notes as a supplement to your own or as a tool to make sure you didn’t miss something during a lecture. You are responsible for all topics covered in lecture and any reading material assigned. I do not intentionally write trick questions or dredge obscure factoids out of the text; but I do count all topics as fair game. Prior to each exam I provide a study guide for your use in preparing for the test.

STUDENT SUCCESS

The Foundation Studies Department includes the Center for Student Success, located at 123/125 Bert Walker Hall (796-8415). CSS can help students who require special assistance (including those affected by the Americans with Disabilities Act) as well as those interested in tutoring help or other free services.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICAL THINKING

Both Basic English Composition and Pre-Algebra are prerequisites for this course. You will be held accountable for that knowledge base. The ability to effectively communicate and think critically (a skill developed in mathematics) are essential to your success through out your career. With this in mind, any assignments that are completed outside of class must be typed, in proper grammatical form and spell-checked. Any work completed during class (exams, quizzes, etc.) will have a less rigorous standard, but it is expected that you will convey your answers clearly, concisely, and completely. I can only grade what you specifically answer for a question, not what you “meant” in your answer.

ABSENTEEISM AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

One hallmark of being a professional is when you can take responsibility for your own actions. When you signed up for this class you entered into an agreement that we would meet during the designated times for the class and cover the material outlined in the catalog. If you need to be absent from my class it is courteous for your to notify me prior to the class. You are responsible for any material during the class you missed and any changes to the schedule that may have occurred during that class (i.e. change of test date). As in the professional world, class goes on in your absence. I am responsive to family tragedies but there is already plenty of leeway in the grading scheme to accommodate a few needed absences. I am not responsive to unnecessary absences (such as vacations during semester) and will be unsympathetic to problems that arise from these.