What Is a Relevancy Class??

We will be utilizing a novel approach to learning this semester both in format and content presentation. This class is designed so you, the student, can learn biology through a topic-based online text. We will use multiple forms of learning exploration to expand on the content you have learned from the text and its accompanying resources. You will be responsible for dedicating time, the recommendation is at least 6 or more hours a week, to learn the material.

Online This course is designed so you can complete reading and study work online. Our “textbook” is all online and based on themes or big ideas in biology to help you see the relevancy of the material as you learn. Students are expected to dedicate time to prepare for the exams—such as reading, taking notes, completing the adaptive pre-work assignment, and completing the labs. A good working knowledge of web-based applications and ample access to a computer with Internet access is essential for this class.

Requirements

Text: Connect Master 2.0: Why Biology?  
Author: Michael Windelspecht

The “textbook” for this course is fully online. The online access includes the online text, pre-work assignments, homework, virtual labs, and assessment tools.

We will be accessing all the materials through the Connect Learning system of McGraw-Hill. Please only use BrightSpace by D2L to access the McGraw-Hill Connect to ensure you are working in the correct course. If possible, set up your Connect account before the first day of class. All students must be registered and active on the McGraw-Hill Campus website within 3 days of the first class meeting. Access to McGraw-Hill Campus Module is on the D2L page for this class. You can register for the materials under courtesy access for 14 days and then you will have to pay for the materials.
Access to and usage of BrightSpace by D2L is also required for this course. Class readings, pre-work assignments, homework, virtual labs, exams, grades, and announcements will all be posted via D2L. Please make sure you are familiar with this program.

If you are having technical issues with Brightspace by D2L, please call the student helpline at 936-468-1919 or e-mail at d2l@sfasu.edu; live support is available from 8 am CST to 5 pm CST, Monday through Friday. For general technical issues, you may call the Technical Help Desk at 936-468-4357; they are available M – F from 8 am to 5 pm. https://www.sfactl.com/tech-support

#### Course Description & Topics

Essentials of Biology is a course designed to help the student gain knowledge in a wide array of fundamental biological principles. By using the scientific method and problem-solving, students will explore biological concepts and how they interconnect with daily life. Topics of study this semester will be Energy Drinks, Cancer, Genetic Diseases, Genetically Modified Organisms, and Climate Change. The major goal of this course is to help the student learn the fundamentals of biology and how it relates to life outside the classroom. Through this course, students will extend their scientific learning beyond the classroom. See Course Timeline/Calendar for topics and schedule of due dates.

#### Assessments & Grading

Pre-work assignments, homework, virtual labs, and exams will all be used to determine your final grade. Remember, you earn your grade; I don’t give it to you.

All online assessments are due at the time posted. It is your responsibility to complete the work on time and submit it. Remember, all electronic communication is time-stamped. For class work, there will be no late work accepted without prior approval (if warranted). Cell phones, tablets, and computers cannot be used during exams or quizzes in class. Online exams and quizzes must be completed by the due date and time indicated, or a 0 score will be given. The anticipated number of points available is shown below. This is subject to change and the usual and customary 90.0%, 80.0%, 70.0%, and 60.0% grading scale will be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Work</th>
<th>Breakdown</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Exams</td>
<td>100 pts x 5</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prework &amp; Connect Homework</td>
<td>See Connect Gradebook</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>20 pts x 5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulated Lab Exercises</td>
<td>number varies (~17)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1420 pts</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>Final %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A = 1420 to 1278 pts</td>
<td>100–90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 1277 to 1136 pts</td>
<td>89.99–80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = 1135 to 994 pts</td>
<td>79.99–70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = 993 to 852 pts</td>
<td>69.99–60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F = 851 pts and below</td>
<td>59.99% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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If you need any assistance with Connect please call, e-mail, or chat any issues.

Phone: (800) 331-5094
Hours of Operation:
Sunday: 12:00 PM to 12:00 AM EST
Monday–Thursday: 24 hours
Friday: 12:00 AM to 9:00 PM EST
Saturday: 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM EST
Percentages are not round-up at the end of the semester (an 89.99 is still a ‘B’). The time to be concerned about points is each day of the semester while you are preparing for the exams. Extra credit is not available to improve your grade.

A = 100 - 90.0%; B = 89.99 - 80.0%; C = 79.99 - 70.0%; D = 69.99 - 60.0%; F= 59.99% or below

**Unit Exams.** All exams will be online and completed on a published day and time. Exams will be 50 multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions. Each exam will have a time limit of 50 minutes.

**Discussion Questions** - An area where you post your answers to questions posted for each module by your professor. The discussion area is located at the end of the module. Your answer to the posed discussion question must be a substantive one. Use complete sentences and do not simply make a list of thoughts. You may need to do some research outside of your textbook in most cases using reputable and professional sources.

A substantive post adds to the discussion and encourages a response from your fellow students. Here are some guidelines to help you earn credit for your discussion posts: Do explain why you agree or disagree, and add some examples to support your belief.

Think of these posts as a mini-essay, in which you want to have a single central argument and clear evidence to support that argument. It is important to keep length requirements in mind, limiting the scope of your response, so it will remain clear, focused, and relevant to the topic at hand.

Posting and participating in the discussion questions in a timely manner is important. Your grade is in part determined by posting in a timely manner. If you wait until after the midpoint of the assignment or the last days before the discussions and replies are due, there is a penalty for doing so. See the grading rubric for the details of the point assignment for each RUBRIC.

**Policies**

**Participation** is vital in this course. Playing an active role in the course both online and in class will help each student get the most from peer-based interaction and assignments, as well as the more traditional learning from notes and the text. Students are required to read and complete all online. Announcements, online lectures, discussions, assignments, etc. will all be through online media. I recommend that you log in at least 3–4 times per week so that you do not miss important announcements, deadlines, e-mails, or course changes.

**Instructor Feedback & E-mail Responses**

Your SFA email account is your official account for which all communications will be transmitted, read here. Please send all e-mails to dgravatt@sfasu.edu (please don't email through Brightspace by D2L) instead, use your SFA email account. Messages sent through Brightspace may or may not be answered. When emailing please indicate class, section #, and your CID. Follow standard business email format with salutations, your message using standard English and grammar, followed by a closing phrase. All Emails lacking any of the information listed above will be ignored. No emails will be answered after 5 p.m. and/or during weekends. Grades will not be discussed over an e-mail, only through one-on-one meetings either in person or on a Zoom call.

It is your responsibility to check your e-mail regularly and, if you have your student account forwarded to some secondary account, be certain that this is not full and can receive any messages (the relevant University policy
can be read here). I will respond to e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends (after 5 pm Friday to Monday 8 am). Please put your name in the subject line so I know whom the e-mail is coming from. Assignments are open for several days, if not weeks. Waiting until the due date to complete everything is not recommended. Please see the appropriate section in the START HERE section for proper email formatting and etiquette.

Attendance Policy and Administrative Withdrawals
You can find SFA’s official policy regarding absences here. Below is a relevant excerpt:

“At the discretion of the instructor, students may be excused from attendance for reasons such as health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. When possible, students should notify their instructors in advance about absences. Students are responsible for providing documentation in a timely manner to the instructor for each absence. The instructor determines whether such documentation is satisfactory. Students with accepted excuses may be permitted to make up work for absences equaling no more than 15% of the scheduled course meeting time for the term, depending on the nature of the missed work.”

If you miss an exam due to one of the above, described circumstances: You must notify your instructor within 24 hours of a missed exam. I will ask for documentation to validate your absence. This may include a note indicating you visited a medical facility, a letter from a family member indicating a family emergency, etc. Unless such documentation can be provided, no make-up exam will be allowed. When a make-up exam is warranted, it will be made available at the instructor’s earliest convenience. McGraw Hill Connect Biology homework assignments are open for some period, at least 7 days, before being due. If you know you are going to be absent on a due date for a university-sponsored outing, complete the assignment early. Being ill on the day an assignment is due is not an excused absence, as you had many days to complete the assignment. Don’t wait till the last minute to turn in assignments. Due dates are firm and won’t, except in the case of a natural disaster or school closing, be extended. You will be permitted to make up a maximum of 15% of GRADED ASSIGNMENTS (as per the policy above). Missed work beyond this will be recorded as “0”s

Make-Up Work:
Make-ups for missed quizzes will only be allowed in the case of a university-approved absence (illness with a doctor’s note, a family crisis, or a religious holiday). It is your responsibility to inform me that you missed the exam and why as soon as possible. YOU MUST NOTIFY ME WITHIN 24 HOURS OF A MISSED EXAM TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A MAKEUP QUIZ. Written documentation must be submitted that thoroughly supports you missing an exam.

Credit Hour Justification
Below is the expected time commitment that the average student should expect to complete during the semester for this course.

Lecture
48 hours in Connect reading
48 hours homework
28 hours of exam studying plus exam completion (5 exams)
124 hours

Lab
30-35 hours online, virtual labs
General Education Core Curriculum

By enrolling in BIOL 1308 you are also enrolling in a Core Curriculum Course that fulfills the core requirements as determined by the THECB.

Texas State Core Curriculum Objectives (COs) addressed by this course are:

- CO 1. Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- CO 2. Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- CO 3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills: to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.
- CO 4. Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Objective</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How the Core Objective Will be Addressed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
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<td>TBA</td>
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<td>Communication Skills</td>
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<td>Empirical and Quantitative Skills</td>
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<td>To include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Academic Integrity

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of
the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**Student Wellness and Well-Being**
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)  
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents  
936.468.7249  
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202  
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp  
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**General Lecture Schedule**

*For specific dates and deadlines please consult the Course Timeline posted in D2L*