

# CONTEMPORARY BIOLOGY (BIOL 1408) SPRING 2018

Course Explanation and Syllabus\*

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

Instructor: **Dr. Carmen Montaña-Schalk**  
Office location: Lee Drain Building, room 107  
Email: cgm026@shsu.edu  
Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 3:00 pm  
Wednesday 10:00 – 3:00 pm

## CLASS SECTION/TIME

1408-02 MWF: 12:00 – 12:50 am Room 214 Lee Drain Building

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** BIOL 1408 Contemporary Biology. Presentation for the non-science major of biological concepts and topical subjects related to science methods, organismal development, reproduction, genetics, evolution, human organ systems, disease, and environmental biology.

**COURSE TEXT:** **Biology Now (Core Edition)** by Anne Houtman, *et al.*

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To learn key biological concepts that will help to improve biological literacy.
2. To learn how biology affects everyday life.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

1. **Lecture** will cover the basics of contemporary biology with a focus on organismal diversity and ecology.
2. **Labs** are part of the course and will be included in the final grade. Make sure you attend! **A note about the laboratory:** The lab is conducted as an entirely separate entity from the lecture. I have no role in the material covered, the lab's organization, or the grades assigned to students for the laboratory portion of the course. Any questions or concerns regarding the laboratory should be directed to the lab coordinator.
3. **Attendance** is not mandatory in lecture, **but you will benefit greatly by attending**. I will cover information that is not in your book that you will be responsible for knowing on the exams. See below for missed assignments policy.  
An abbreviated version of Lectures will be posted online.
4. **Online activities** will gauge your progress in the course.
5. **Reading** the assigned chapters and all handouts is necessary for the class. I highly recommend reading the chapter prior to attending class.
6. **Podcasts and videos** related to the week's topics will be assigned. Listening/watching these material is necessary and will be covered by lecture quizzes and exams.
7. **TAKE NOTES!** It is your responsibility to come to class and take notes.

**EVALUATION METHODS:** Your final grade will be averaged from both lecture and lab assignments  
***THERE WILL BE NO MAKE UPS or LATE ACCEPTANCES.***

**Lecture assignments will include:**

1. **Lecture Exams:** There are a total of 4 lecture exams, each one worth 100 points. Exams will be made based on lecture material since the previous exam, the text book, discussions in class, and additional assigned podcasts, videos, and readings. Dr. Montaña will not provide exam reviews or review sessions. Dr. Montana holds onto all exams; tests can be viewed during office hours.
2. **Lecture Quizzes:** There will be a total of 10 lecture quizzes, each one worth 10 points. The lecture quizzes will be posted on Blackboard. Students will have 30 minutes and multiple attempts to complete the quiz.
3. **Final Exam:** There will be an **optional cumulative** final exam. This grade will replace your lowest exam grade. The final exam will be during finals week at the scheduled time **DAY/TIME. Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 01:00 - 03:00 p.m.**
4. **Participation:** An undetermined number of questions/in-class activities will be carried out during lecture using **TopHat** (see information below). Activities will be unannounced. If at least 80% of all activities are completed, students will receive full credit, with a sliding scale after that.
5. **Extra Credit:** Students will have the opportunity to submit a writing assessment on an article for an additional 15 points. Extra credit must be submitted through **Turnitin.com**. Students must write a 700-800 word essay that: 1) summarizes the article, 2) indicates how they feel it's relevant to society and their everyday life, and 3) poses two questions that came to mind while reading the article and a justification for posing those two questions (based on their scientific knowledge). **Due date: March 9, 2018. THE EXTRA CREDIT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DUE DATE.**

**As all students have the opportunity to replace the lowest Exam grade, THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS PROVIDED FOR ANY REASON.** The only exception is for exams if the absence is planned and approved by the instructor ***at least 15 days prior to the date of absence.*** In this case an alternative exam will be given before the absence.

**Final grades for BIOL 1408 will be determined by the following formula:**

$$75\% (\text{FINAL LECTURE GRADE}) + 25\% (\text{FINAL LAB GRADE})$$

**LECTURE GRADES:**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Description</b>
Exams	4	400	100 points each; final is optional and replaces lowest score
Lecture Quizzes	10	100	10 points each
Participation	TBA	50	Full credit if participated in >80% activities
<b>Total</b>		<b>550</b>	

**Grading scale:** Grades will be calculated to the nearest tenth of a point (00.0%).

**79.5% earns a C, not a B.** *To clarify, I will not round grades upward.* You can track your score throughout the semester by checking your scores on BlackBoard.

<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>LETTER GRADE</b>
100.0-90.0	<b>A</b>
89.9-80.0	<b>B</b>
79.9-70.0	<b>C</b>
69.9-60.0	<b>D</b>
59.9 and below	<b>F</b>

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>CHAPTER –TOPICS</b>	<b>READING SUGGESTED</b>	<b>EXAMS</b>
w-1 (1/17)	Syllabus; what is life? (Ch-1)		
w-2 (1/22)	The scientific method & chemistry of life (Ch-1 & 2)	Chapter 1, Page 3-16	
w-3 (1/29)	Life is cellular (Ch- 3)	Chapter 3, Page 38-52	
w-4 (2/5)	How cells work, Life & energy (Ch- 4)		February 9– Exam 1
w-5 (2/12)	Cell division (Ch- 5)	Video	
w-6 (2/19)	Patterns of inheritance (Ch- 6)		
w-7 (2/26)	Chromosomes & human genetics (Ch- 7)	Video	
w-8 (3/5)	Gene structure & function (Ch- 8 & 9)		March 9– Exam 2
w-9 (3/12)	Evidence for evolution (Ch-10 & 11)	Chapter 10, Page 162-177	
w-10 (3/19)	Adaptation & species (Ch- 12)		
W-11 (3/26)	History of life (Ch- 13)	Video	
W-12 (4/2)	Human evolution (Ch- 14)	Video	April 6 – Exam 3
W-13 (4/9)	Introduction to ecology & population ecology (Ch-15 & 16)		
W-14 (4/16)	Community ecology (Ch 17)		
W-15 (4/23)	Ecosystem ecology (Ch 18)		
w-16 (4/30)	TBD		Exam 4 – May 4

**Friday January 26**→ no class, professor in a conference

**Monday-Friday, March 12-16, 2018**→ Spring break for Faculty and students

**PARTICULARS (also see Sam Houston State University student handbook and appendix)**

1. Be courteous and respectful to your classmates and myself
2. Note your attendance in the roster
3. You make use laptops to take your notes only

**Violations against the Sam Houston State University Code of Student Conduct will be taken very seriously and, if necessary, pursuit of all available options in the event of a violation will occur.** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The university and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

**Grades cannot be discussed via e-mail at any time,** due to university policy and federal law. I will speak to you in person instead during my office hours. DO NOT involve a third-party who is not affiliated in an official capacity with SHSU (e.g., friend, roommate, and/or parent) in any matters pertaining to your enrollment in this course. Your instructor is legally prohibited from discussing most course/grade-related issues with third parties according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

**CLASS POLICIES:**

1. **An abbreviate version of the Lecture notes will be posted on Blackboard:** Dr. Montaña will post the lecture notes for each week on Monday and the notes will remain open on Blackboard until the following Sunday at 11:59pm. I highly recommend printing the notes early in the week and come to class having read the notes. Also, I highly recommend coming to lecture and taking notes.
2. **Attendance, reading, taking notes:** You are expected to read your book and attend class to take notes.
3. **Completing assignments:** It is your responsibility to complete assignments independently and in a timely manner. I will not entertain students expressing difficulty unless you make it your priority to study. Studying includes understanding concepts, memorizing facts, and applying these to practical or fictional examples. I emphasize the study skills outlined here: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/counseling/study-skills.html>
4. **Top Hat:** We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system. An email invitation has been sent to you by email, but if you did not receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/807886>: our Course Join Code is 807886. Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: [www.tophat.com/pricing](http://www.tophat.com/pricing). Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

5. **Entering class late:** Entering a lecture late can qualify as disruptive behavior when the student disturbs me during my lecture or disturbs the students around them while becoming situated. See below for more details.
6. **Missed Exams:** Excusing a student is at the discretion of the faculty (see “SAM POLICY, Class Attendance” below).  
The only exception for an in-class exam is if the absence is planned and approved by the instructor at least 15 days prior to the date of absence. In this case an alternative assignment will be given and turned in before the absence.
7. **Communicating to your Professor:** E-mail will be the primary means of communication for the course. So please, check your email often. *Any correspondence to your professor should follow the following format: to whom (Dr. or Professor xx), statement, thank you, and student’s name. The professor has the right of not answering emails to those students that fail to follow this format.*
8. **Disruptive Behaviors:** Students are to adhere to the Sam Houston University Code of Student Conduct. Violations will be taken very seriously and violation of this code will result in pursuit all available options. If disruptive, I may ask you to leave the classroom and you will forfeit all points associated with the chapter discussed in class. See below, your handbook, or the website <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/StudentGuidelines2013-2016.pdf#page=34> for full details.

Violations include but are not limited to:

- a. talking out of turn in lecture,
- b. obscene language,
- c. reading the newspaper,
- d. completing assignments in lecture other than assigned BIOL1408,
- e. cell phones ringing,
- f. answering cell phones,
- g. text messaging,
- h. cheating,
- i. and plagiarism.

7. **Disruptive behavior policy:** a student may be asked to leave the classroom for any behavior I find disruptive. A first offence will not be penalized; however, further offences may be penalized with reduction in a student’s final grade as follows: 10% for a second offence, 20% for a third offence, etc.
8. **Plagiarism policy:** a first offence will **be penalized with a zero** that cannot be dropped. A second offence will be penalized with an F and/or the option to drop the course.
9. **I reserve the right to assign bonus points at any time.**
10. **I reserve the right to assign in lecture pop-quizzes that count as points towards the final score** at any time.
11. There will be NO PERSONAL extra credit or bonus point opportunities under any circumstance or for any reason.
12. The instructor reserves the right to curve the grading scale downward.

**RESIGNATION NOTE:**

A resignation is when a student drops all of their currently enrolled courses. Students who resign before the 12th class day will not have any indication in their official transcript. Students who resign beginning

the 13th class day until the deadline posted in the academic calendar will have a "**W**" grade. However, if a final exam has been given for any course or lab you will not be permitted to resign.

### **SAM POLICY**

**Academic Honesty:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The university and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

**Visitors in the classroom:** Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

**Students with Disabilities:** It is the policy of the university that no otherwise qualified disabled student shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from participation in, or denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any academic or Student Life program or activity. Disabled students may request help with academically related problems stemming from individual disabilities by contacting their instructor, school/department chair, or by contacting the university Chair of the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students/ Director of Counseling Center (located in Lee Drain Annex, phone 936-294-1720). A student with a disability is encouraged to register with the university Counseling Center, as well as contacting their instructor about assistance needs. Accommodation cannot be made until the student has initiated the request with the Counseling Center. Every semester that the student desires accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to complete a Classroom Accommodation Request Form at the Counseling Center and follow the stated procedure in notifying faculty. Accommodations for disabled students are decided upon documentation and need on a case-by-case basis by the Counseling Center. All requests are handled with confidentiality according to university procedures.

**Religious Holy Days Policy:** Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that the university excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University Policy 861001 provides procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first 15 days of the semester or the first 7 days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

### **Class Attendance**

<http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html>

1. Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University.
2. Each faculty member will keep a record of student attendance.
3. Each faculty member will announce the policies for accepting late work or providing makeup examinations. Students are expected to show appropriate cause for missing or delaying major assignments or examinations.
4. A student shall not be penalized for three or fewer hours of absences when examinations or other assigned class work has not been missed; however, at the discretion of the instructor, a student may be penalized for more than three hours of absences.

5. Each instructor is obligated to clarify in writing to each student enrolled in class at the beginning of the semester or summer session the instructor's classroom policy regarding absences.
6. Class absences will be recorded and counted only from the actual day of enrollment for the individual student in that specific class.

**TopHat participation grading**

Percentage of Questions Completed	Points Assigned
$\geq 80\%$	50
70%	40
60%	30
50%	20
40%	10
$\leq 30\%$	0