

AP Biology Course Syllabus

Murrieta Mesa High School

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Course Prerequisites:

Successful completion of CP Biology and Chemistry with a grade of B or better.

Course Credit:

Students will receive extra credit on transcripts (grade scale of 5) for successful completion of AP Biology with a grade of C or better provided the College Board AP Exam is taken in the spring. Students experiencing financial hardship may qualify for fee waivers, however must contact Mrs. Beach as soon as possible. Students who do not take the AP Exam will not receive the extra grade credit. AP Students do NOT receive a grade bump in their course grade for scoring well on the CST or AP Exams.

AP Exam College Credit:

Colleges vary in what score they will accept for credit. Generally a student needs to score at least a 4 for credit, but some schools will accept a 3. Check with the schools you are applying to for details.

The AP Exam:

Test Date: Monday, May 14 @ 8:00 a.m. The 2014 exam will follow the new AP format. Make sure any test prep books you purchase are from 2013.

Course Description:

AP Biology is a rigorous and demanding course, which is the equivalent of an introductory college biology course. Content will be covered in more depth and greater expectations will be placed on interpretation and analysis of information than previous biology courses. In addition, statistical analysis of data and modeling of concepts will be expected. A significant amount of studying must be completed at home to allow time for discussion, labs, and inquiry during class time. The College Board has redesigned the curriculum starting in the 2013 school year, and although the amount of material has been reduced, the emphasis on scientific thinking and analytical thinking has increased. The course will be structured differently this year due to the changes and to allow for more class time for labs and discussions. The new AP Biology curriculum encompasses 4 'big ideas', with Essential Knowledge and Process Skills that support each one.

Big Idea 1: Evolution – the process of evolution drives the diversity and unity of life

Big Idea 2: Cellular Processes (Energy and Communication) – Biological systems utilize free energy and molecular building blocks to grow.

Big Idea 3: Genetics and Information Transfer – living systems store, retrieve, transmit, and respond to information essential to life processes

Big Idea 4: Interactions – Biological systems interact and these systems and their interactions possess complex properties.

Class Expectations:

- Come to class prepared - in order to facilitate class discussions and reduce lecture time in favor of labs and knowledge enhancing activities, you must complete all required assignments. AP assignments are not 'busy work'; they are designed to help you learn difficult material.
- Come to class! The work we will be doing during class cannot be replicated at home, labs in particular. You have committed to an advanced class and that requires your presence in the classroom. Missed labs cannot be made up and will receive a score of zero.
- Study at home – the convention for college courses is 3 hours of independent study for each hour of class. In order to have productive class discussion you must review the material at home.
- No whining! This is a college level course. It will be challenging. It will require a significant amount of time outside of class. If you don't like biology, this is not the class for you!
- Yes, you have to write in complete sentences. Yes, you have to show your work. Yes, you have to write out procedures, data tables, and label graphs. Yes, you are expected to show a higher level of understanding on ALL of your assignments. No, you may not write in 'text-speak', abbreviations, or slang.
- Read and sign the contract and lab safety agreement.

Class policies:

1. Bags and jackets will be stored on the shelves, not at your table.
2. Cell phones and other electronics are turned off and stored in bag. There is a zero tolerance policy for electronics, refer to the school handbook for details. During class your brain should be turned on and your phone turned off.
3. Food and drink are prohibited in working science labs and we will follow the same policy. Take care of your metabolic needs before school, during break, and during lunch!
4. **Late work will not be accepted. No exceptions, no excuses.**
5. Do not throw any classwork away. You will need it to review for tests and mistakes do happen occasionally with grade recording.
6. Cheating is unacceptable in any form. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: copying homework, copying lab analysis answers, plagiarizing written assignments, copying test answers, use of electronics to find test answers. If copying occurs all people involved will receive a zero on the assignment and a referral. You are in class to learn and succeed on the spring exam. Cheating DOES NOT help you learn.
7. Most classes will start with a video/homework quiz. If you are late to class (excused or not), or if you have an unexcused absence you will receive a zero. In the case of an excused absence you must come into class the day you return a few minutes early to make up the quiz.
8. You are responsible for your lab station. Keep it clean and organized to make lab breakdown easier at the end of class. Lab groups will not be dismissed until their lab station is cleaned completely.

Grading:

Grades will be assigned based on a straight percentage. Grades will not be rounded up (100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70 = C, 69-60 = D, 59 and below = F). The grade will be broken down into the following categories:

55% - Tests and Quizzes

45% - Labs and Classwork

Material Requirements:

1. Textbook – Campbell’s AP Biology: Eighth Edition
2. Lab book – a 3 section spiral notebook
 - a. Section 1 – Notes (this will mostly be Bozeman video notes)
 - i. Notes should be titled with date taken. Each new set of notes starts on a new page
 - b. Section 2 – Essay Practice Questions
 - i. Short answer and long essay questions will be completed here. These are essays that will be graded in class and are to prepare for the AP Exam as well as review material
 - c. Section 3 – Labs
 - i. Lab protocols and data will be recorded here following a format we will review in the beginning of the semester. Some labs will be completed on handouts, these will go in your 3-ring binder.
3. 3-ring binder – sections for handouts, reading guides, test/quizzes
4. Blue/black pens for labs, pencils, colored pencils
5. Internet access! We will be using several websites to support coursework.
6. AP Biology study books are highly recommended. Make sure you get one that is for the new curriculum. Anything published early than 2013 will not be helpful in preparation for the new test, which was given the first time in 2013.

Labs:

Labs will constitute at least 25% of the course work. The new curriculum includes more emphasis on inquiry based labs, which means you will design your own experimental procedures for a significant number of labs. In order to have as authentic a lab experience as possible, you will keep a lab notebook to record procedures and observations during labs. All labs will be done in pen. If you make a mistake, cross out (do not scribble out) the information and rewrite. In the scientific work, lab notebooks are considered legal documents and all information must be accessible. Formal lab write ups will be completed for some labs. You will turn in the formal write up, but keep your lab notebook. Many labs will be graded in class and notebooks will be checked periodically.

Homework:

Homework should be completed every night. Usually it will consist of reading assignments, viewing lectures (Kahn Academy, Bozeman biology), taking notes, finish labs. Even if a formal assignment is not given, you are expected to spend time reviewing content each night. AP Biology is a challenging class and can’t be just ‘picked up’ during class time. You need to invest the time outside of class to be successful in class. In college classes the recommended study time is 3 hours per hour of class.

Tests/quizzes:

We will have unit tests at the end of each unit (larger units may be split up into 2 smaller tests) which will consist of multiple choice, short answer and long free response. Frequent quizzes will be given over the video lectures and reading assignments. Be prepared for daily quizzes.