

Welcome to BIOL 1500 – Introduction to Biology

BIOL1500 is an introductory course exploring underlying theories of biology and the unity and diversity of life. Topics include evolution, cell theory, introductory biochemistry, inheritance, biodiversity, and ecology.

BIOL1500 may not be taken by any student who has taken or is currently taking another university course in biology.

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Discuss the process of evolution and apply the theory of evolution to explain the unity and diversity of life.
- Describe the properties and processes of life and the differing scales at which life is studied.
- Discuss the process of science and biological inquiry.
- Describe the chemical nature of life and how biological macromolecules interact at a cellular level.
- Describe the major cellular processes of replication, metabolism and communication (with other cells and the environment), relating form and function in multiple cell types (animal, plant, prokaryote).
- Discuss the role of genetic information and the environment in shaping an organism's phenotype.
- Relate genetic principles to population structure, speciation and evolution of organisms.
- Describe the evolution of biological diversity and identify major features and properties of prokaryotes, protists, fungi, invertebrates and vertebrates.
- Describe the biosphere and identify defining features of aquatic and terrestrial biomes.
- Discuss principles of population ecology, community structure and ecosystem structure, placing them in an evolutionary context and applying them to modern conservation and restoration ecology.
- Work effectively to gather, review, analyse and present biological information.

Textbook: Campbell Biology: Concepts & Connections 7th Edition (**required**)

Class Schedule: MWF, 1:30pm – 2:30pm, LASC

Instructor: Dr. Tanya Da Silva

Office: 118A Farquharson Building

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30-3:30pm; there will generally be time before and after class to ask questions and address concerns. For appointments outside of office hours please email

Course Email: b1500lec@yorku.ca

Email must include your full name and student number and should include a descriptive subject line.

Email is NOT a substitute for office hour attendance. Emails regarding administrative details will be answered by the first year administrative assistant, Dharti Patel. Expect an average response time of 48 hours. Email will not routinely be replied to on weekends or holidays.

Course Website: Moodle is required to access any online material for this course. *Please check Moodle often.*

Accommodations:

York senate policy on **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=68>

“York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations and adaptations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs”

Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances that may interfere with the successful completion of their exams or other course requirements are encouraged to discuss their concerns with Dr. Da Sylva as soon as possible. Students with learning, mental health, physical, sensory and medical disabilities who require accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods should discuss the matter with Counselling and Disability Services (CDS - N110 Bennett Centre; <http://www.yorku.ca/cds/>) and the Course Director (Dr. Da Sylva) early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please note: you are not required to disclose the nature of your condition. If you are registered with CDS, Dr. Da Sylva will work with CDS to ensure all reasonable accommodations are met.

Evaluation:*

Weekly class activities	5%
Peer question bank activity	5%
Quizzes (via Moodle)	5%
Group activity day (October 9, 2013)	5%
Midterm 1 (October 7, 2013)	20%
Midterm 2 (November 11, 2013)	25%
Cumulative Final Exam (TBA)	35%

**Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles*

NOTE: There will be **NO** make-up day for the midterms. If you cannot attend the midterm **AND** you have valid reasons for missing the test(s) your marks will be redistributed to the final exam.

Grading and Policies for Missed Tests

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (for a full description see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – <http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2012-2013/academic/grades/index.htm>)

Missed Midterm/Exam – General Policies: Students must have a documented **urgent reason** for missing a course exam, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by appropriate supporting documentation (e.g., attending physician’s statement).

- Missing a midterm/exam due to weather will be excused **ONLY** if the University closes/cancels classes. In all other cases, **it is YOUR responsibility to get to class on time**. Transit and/or traffic issues are never an excuse to miss exams. Plan to be at exams early.
- You **MUST** contact (email) your course director (b1500lec@yorku.ca) **within TWO days (48hours)** of missing the test (the sooner the better).

- Valid and appropriately detailed documentation supporting the events (typically medical or emergency related) preventing your attendance must be submitted to the Course Director, Dr. Da Sylva, **within ONE week of the missed test.**
- Religious accommodations must be arranged at least 3 weeks prior to the midterm/exam (see general course policies below for guidelines).
- **IMPORTANT:** If you miss a test due to illness, **you MUST see a Physician within 24 hours of the missed test – normally on the same day** - so that the Physician can confirm you are too ill to attend the test based on medical examination. Valid documentation for medical situations consists of an “Attending Physician’s Statement” from the petitions package http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/attend_physician_statement.pdf A note that simply says you were seen in the clinic will not be accepted. Any documentation should cover the date of the missed test.
- Contact your instructor to determine the appropriate documentation required for other circumstances.
- **If appropriate documentation is NOT provided within ONE week, a zero will be earned on the missed test.**
- **NOT all situations will be accommodated**, meaning that a zero will be earned on the missed test.

Midterms: There will be no make-up midterms. Students with acceptable documentation will have the weight of the midterm added to their final exam. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

Final Exam: *It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you are available to sit for examinations during the entire exam period.*

- If you miss the final exam for a valid reason (e.g. medical emergency, death of an immediate family member) **you must request deferred standing and notify the course director within 48 hours of missing the exam.**
 - See <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/exams/deferred/index.htm> for additional information.
- To request deferred standing **you must complete and submit a Deferred Standing Agreement Form** (see <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/services/forms.htm>) **along with supporting documentation** to your Course Director **within ONE week of the missed exam.**
 - **Requests submitted after this time will be denied and the student must formally petition**
- Doctor’s notes are NOT sufficient for missed final exams; **you MUST have your doctor fill out the Attending Physician’s Statement** included in the petitions package (please make sure you are using the current version of the Attending Physician’s statement form – no other versions will be accepted). (http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/petitions/petition_package.pdf).

- If the Course Director approves the deferred standing request the date and time of the deferred exam is at the discretion of the course director. Students who miss the deferred exam will have to formally petition.
- If the Course Director denies the deferred standing request you must submit a petition to the Faculty through the Office of the Registrar. An academic committee will decide whether or not permission to write will be granted based on the situation and evidence presented. Denied petitions will result in a zero on the final exam.
See <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/petitions/academic/> for information regarding academic petitions.

Incomplete/Late Course Work Policies:

Extensions on course work deadlines (class activities, group day, peer question bank and quizzes) **will not be granted.**

- Class activities will be completed on the Wednesday or Friday of every week – Your activities mark will be calculated out of 10 points. Each student starts out with 2 points, and completion of the activity is worth 1 point per lecture, to a maximum of 10 points.
- There will be a group activity day immediately following the 1st midterm (October 9, 2013). **Attendance this day is required.** If you do not attend you must follow the procedures outlined for midterms, above – with appropriate documentation your marks will be redistributed to the final exam.
- Peer question bank creation and participation will be graded as outlined and due in two parts – question creation due Nov. 18th and question participation/completion due by Dec. 1st. Students who fail to complete the assignment will receive a zero grade. Partial marks may be given for partial completion at the discretion of the course director.
- Ten quizzes will be completed through Moodle and due on the dates indicated at 11:59 pm. Quizzes will not be open past this time and all missed quizzes will receive a mark of zero. All students will have their lowest grade dropped from the calculation of their mark.

Academic Honesty

York's policy on Academic Honesty can be found here:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

Any suspected violations of academic honesty will be taken seriously and immediately referred to the Dean's Office.

York has numerous resources on academic honesty that you should read and be familiar with. Before completing any course work I suggest taking the academic integrity tutorial found at http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/.

Before submitting any assignment (such as your peer question bank submission) you must read the Academic Integrity Checklist and ensure your assignment meets the standards outlined http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/Alform.pdf

Additional Information:

- 1) You will be responsible for material presented in class and associated textbook sections. The textbook is your resource and will help you understand this material. It contains many of the visuals presented in the lectures. Pay careful attention to the Figures and to the questions and guidelines for study at the end of each chapter.
- 2) Audio recording (ONLY audio) of the lecture is permitted. Recordings can only be shared with students enrolled in the course and section the recording was made of. Therefore recordings CANNOT be uploaded to public websites or otherwise shared publicly. Students in violation of these policies may have legal action taken against them.
- 3) The midterms will consist predominantly of multiple choice but may include short answer, fill-in, matching, calculating and drawing type questions.
- 4) Your comprehensive final will be given in a three hour block during the Fall exam period and will have the same type of questions as the midterm and may have essay questions. **It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you are available to sit for examinations during the entire exam period.** Under no circumstances will makeup exams (midterm or final) be provided because of conflict with vacation plans or work conflicts.
- 5) All assignment/test grades will be posted to Moodle when available. Do not email asking when grades will be posted or for your grade; these emails will not be responded to.
- 6) It is your responsibility to earn your grade. Individually adjusting a student's grade without academic merit is unethical. All requests for grade "bumping" will be ignored.

General course policies for students

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee webpage (Policies, procedures and regulations) - <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/index-policies.html> and all students should read the following <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/ascp/documents/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust2012.pdf>

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics review process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities
- Student conduct standards
- Religious observance accommodation