

BIOL 1100: Biology Freshman Seminar

Spring 2016 Course Syllabus, Valdosta State University

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 My VSU email lesliesj@valdosta.edu should only be used only if it is urgent.

Office Hours: Tues 11:30-12:30 & Wed 2:00-3:00 or By Appointment. Please feel free to call the office or email to schedule a more convenient time. Anytime I am in my office, you are welcome to stop in to ask questions.

Course Description: BIOL 1100 is required as a co-requisite for all incoming freshmen biology majors before or during enrollment in BIOL 1107. This is an introduction to college-level biological science with an emphasis on skills that will be needed for success in upper level courses including: note-taking, learning for conceptual understanding, exam preparation, scientific writing, basics oral presentation skills, use of primary literature, and professional ethics. Other topics will include: the nature of science, sub-disciplines within the life sciences, potential professional careers, and the structure of the biology degree programs.

Text: *How to Study Science Workbook – 4th Edition (2003) By Drewes & Milligan. Published by McGraw Hill*
 Only you can decide to polish your skills enough to be as successful as you can be in the Biology major. This text was chosen because it contains information and practice exercises that can help you improve your own tools for academic success. It will only be worth the money you paid, if you complete it thoughtfully. **The earlier in the semester you at least read the book, the more it can help you get off to a good start in your current courses. Do not even bother doing the exercises until you are ready to do them carefully because you will only get credit for a good effort, and you will find yourself redoing them to pass the course. The other reward for early completion is no homework for several weeks.**

General Course Objectives: BIOL 1100 will address parts of the following departmental & university goals:

From the Department of Biology's Educational Outcome #1:

1. ...present the results and conclusions in both written and oral formats used in peer-reviewed journals and at scientific meetings.

From VSU General Education Outcomes #3, 5, 7, & 8:

3. Students will use computer and information technology... They will be able to find information using computer searching tools.

5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of scientific principles... They will understand the basic concepts and principles underlying scientific methodology, learn a body of scientific knowledge, and be able to judge the merits of arguments about scientific issues.

7. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make inferences from oral, written, and visual materials. They will be able to acquire and evaluate relevant information, analyze arguments, and synthesize facts and information.

8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of principles of ethics... They will recognize and understand issues in applied ethics, understand their own value systems in relation to other value systems, and judge values and practices in a variety of disciplines.

Specific Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will:

1. Have completed a series of exercises that are designed to refine study skills that are useful in the sciences.

2. Connect the requirements of the Biology major to the foundations of Life Science and possible careers.

3. Recognize the rigorous nature of this field of study and the skills and discipline needed to be successful.

Academic Honesty: Class members are expected to maintain high standards of integrity. This course will use the VSU Handbook Code of Ethics as a basic standard of behavior. Everyone in the class is required to read the Biology Plagiarism Policy: <http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/arts-sciences/biology/documents/resources/PlagiarismPolicy.pdf> Dishonesty will not be tolerated and any student misconduct will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Evidence of cheating will result in no credit for the assignment or depending on the case, a grade of "F" for the course. Never copy text from a book or website and represent it as your own work. Always paraphrase information from resources, cite the author in your text, and include a full reference (APA style) at the end of your paper.

Special Services: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need at the beginning of the semester. Students should contact the Access Office in Farber Hall III5, 245-2498.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act: Grades cannot be posted by Name, Social Security Number, or other Personal Identifiers. Grades and student work will not be given over the telephone, by email or to another student.

BIOL 1100 Tentative Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

Date	Class Topic	Assignment	Workbook Exercises
1. Jan	14 – Introduction	Read the Syllabus	
2.	21 – The Point of Writing	Read Mythos & Logos Paper	Chapter 2
3.	28- Answering Test Questions	Come in for Grade on 2, 8, &14	Chapters 8 & 14
4. Feb	4- Self-Evaluation & Active Learning		Chapters 4 & 5
5.	11 –Taking Notes		Chapters 6 & 7
6.	18 – Using a Textbook		Chapters 12 & 15
7.	25 – Reading Comprehension		Chapters 1 & 3
8. Mar	3 – Advising		Chapters 9 & 10
Mar 3rd = Midterm			
9.	10 – The Sciences	Workbooks Due for Final Grade	Chapter 11 & 13
March 14-18 SPRING BREAK			
10.	24 – Scientific Method & Reading a Scientific Paper		
11.	31 – Student Success Center Visit	Who Is Whom Slide is Due	
12. Apr	7- Who is whom?		
13.	14 – Library Meeting in Room 3270		
14.	21 – Evolution/Creationism Controversy	Biology Career Slide Is Due	
15.	28- Biology Careers		
Comprehensive Final Exam (for anyone without an A average in the class) Thursday, May 5th – 12:30-2:30			

Course Requirements for BIOL 1100

Expectation: Come to Class Prepared - Read the Syllabus to Know What & Where the Lesson Will Be

Attendance: Each absence will reduce the attendance grade by 25% unless a make-up assignment is approved by the instructor. These will only be allowed when class is missed for a good reason. These will be 1 single-spaced page (500-600 words) with 2 properly cited references. Entering a classroom late on more than one occasion is unacceptable. Each student is responsible for all material missed regardless of the reason for absences. Do not call or email and ask if you missed anything important. Assume that you did! This information should be obtained from another student.

- 1) Students who miss four classes (20%) will receive an automatic failing grade for the course.
- 2) Students who miss 20% (10 minutes) of class on a given day will be counted as absent for that day.
- 3) Students who are late 3 times will be given one unexcused absence.

Class Sessions: Most students come to class to learn and I will not tolerate behavior that disrupts the learning environment. Come to class prepared to concentrate & pay attention. Since some people may not know what is expected in a college classroom, the following rules should make this clear. If I have to stop class and speak to you about a disruption, I will ask to see you after class, and if it happens more than once your participation grade will be impacted negatively.

Class Rules:

1. Attend to your personal needs before class and refrain from getting up during class unless it is urgent.
2. Class will start promptly at 1:00, please have your notebooks open, be ready to pay attention and begin. If you are late, take a seat in the empty row and be sure to check with me after class to have your absence changed to tardy.
3. Once class begins, refrain from side conversations. If you are asking about a word in lecture, make it short & quiet.
4. If a classmate is being rude or distracting you, let them know or say "Shhhhhhhh" loud enough for me to hear.
5. The VSU rules are no eating or drinking in classrooms. Water bottles are fine.
6. You are welcome to have your laptops, pads, & phones in class to record lectures, look up terms, and photograph slides. However, this is not an invitation to skype, take calls, or read & send texts. If anyone is bothering you with such behavior, report them to me after class or by email. There will be grade penalties for this type of disruption.
7. Class will end at 1:50, unless you see "THE END" on a slide before, so do not pack up & rustle your packs before this.

Assignments: Homework is due at the start of class and will not be graded if they are late. NO EXCEPTIONS! Written assignments should be typewritten and single-spaced. Grades will be out of 10 points as (10 = Excellent, 8 = Good, 6 = Adequate, <5 = Deficient). If you miss the description of the assignment in class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate (Do Not Email Me).

Email Manners: There is a certain standard of etiquette in higher education that is very different from the way you interact with your friends while texting. You can assume that almost all of your professors have doctoral degrees so their titles are Dr. (not Miss, Mrs., or Ms.), and you do not use our first names. My title is Dr. Jones and you should start any email with that included in a greeting. The first thing you should do is give context by stating your name and which of my classes you are taking. The next sentence should contain the reason for your message. After you explain yourself, you should close the message properly.

Assessments:

Attendance & Department	25%
Participation (Including Oral Reports)	25%
Workbook & Assignments	50%

Biology Tutoring at the Student Success Center: The SSC is located in Langdale Residence Hall and provides free peer tutoring in core curriculum courses, including biology, chemistry, math, writing, and foreign languages for all VSU students. There is also free professional academic advising and on-campus job information. Visit the website: www.valdosta.edu/ssc or call 333-7570 to make an appointment.

Writing Guidelines from Dr. Leslie S. Jones

During my first semester of college, my English professor asked me "if English was my second language?" That is how badly I wrote because I had gone to a DOD (Department of Defense) high school in Germany and had never been taught how to write properly. Somehow I worked hard and taught myself to write well. Now people compliment me for being a good writer. I tell you this because I am not a "natural writer," but with effort I learned how to do it just like I learned new sports and other skills. I promised myself that I would always try to help my students to become better writers, so this is why I expect you to write well in my classes. Here are some of my tips. You may have to work hard to learn to write, but it is worth the struggle. Always proofread your own work out loud so you can hear your mistakes. Ask friends who are good writers to read your papers and help you revise them. If you need more help, take your papers to the SSC before they are due and get their help with revisions. Take pride in what you do and the good grades will follow. -lsj

Objective

These assignments have been designed help you to learn, outside the classroom, through your own writing. Writing is a way to learn because if you can construct sentences about something, it will organize your understanding in your mind or let you know that you need to look up more information. Papers are also an opportunity to display your knowledge through more than just exams or what you might or might not say in class. These assignments also allow you to show your own style of expression and personal interests, so you should take pride in them. Be sure to think about what is expected for the assignment and address that specifically. **If you do not follow these guidelines, your grade will be reduced.**

Focus

Well-crafted writing always has a specific purpose. Decide on the topic and a specific case you want to make before you start writing. Even if it is only a paragraph, every composition should have a central idea. Your thesis should directly address the nature of the writing assignment. Write the thesis down and check throughout the writing process to be certain that the work supports it. Starting a paper can be the hardest step, so if you feel blocked, try brainstorming. Take a blank sheet of paper without lines, and just write down any ideas you have. Look over the thoughts for ideas that go together.

Organization

Before you begin to write, think through how you plan to develop your thesis and use an outline to structure your thoughts. An Introduction and Conclusion will be the first and last paragraphs of a paper or lines of a single paragraph. Start paper with something catchy in the first sentence to interest the reader. Make it perfectly clear, in the introductory statement or section, what your point or central idea will be. Support that concept throughout the body of your paper. Paragraphs or sentences in the middle will be the Body of your text. Subheadings are not to be used on short assignments; let the topic sentences of the paragraphs serve that purpose. Avoid using phrases such as "In this paper I will discuss..." since it is much more sophisticated to avoid this type of "crutch statement."

Paragraphs

Divide the paper by major themes and make each of these a distinct paragraph. You should have at least 2-3 paragraphs on a 1-page paper. The first sentence of each paragraph is a topic sentence that shows what the paragraph covers. **ONE SENTENCE IS NEVER AN ENTIRE PARAGRAPH** because there should be at least 3 sentences elaborating any significant idea.

Format

Always put an original title on your paper. Think of something that summarizes the unique slant you are taking. It should catch my interest. Your papers are to be typed using something comparable to 12-point Times New Roman type, single-spacing, and 1 inch margins. Other professors often expect double-spacing, but I prefer to read single-spacing and require your papers to be single-spaced. The lengths of these papers are stated in the assignments. After a draft, if the paper is too long, go back through and shorten it up by taking out the less important aspects. If it is too short, go back and incorporate more support or add more detail to what you are saying. When I say 1-page that means substantial text (600-800 words) and the references (if required) on a single page. Use the word counting function on your word processor to be sure your text is per assigned page when single-spaced. If I say 1-paragraph, I mean a single well organized assembly of about 300 words.

Requirements for Submission

Submit your work on Blazeview in either a Word or PowerPoint document depending on the assignment. PDFs and other formats will not be accepted. Your name should be on the upper right side of the paper on the line above the title. Use your initials as the first part of the file name, and then add the name of the assignment. The due date will be indicated on the Blazeview Dropbox, and those will close 24 hours after the due date. Late work will be graded down by 10%. If you fail to submit your work by the time the box closes, it will not be accepted, so that is the reason to turn assignments in early.

Grading

Short papers will each be worth 10 points and longer assignments will be worth up to 100 points. Assignments will be described in class, so listen carefully and be sure that you know what is expected or ask about anything that is unclear. There will also be a description on the Dropbox in Blazeview. Focus on the objective of the assignment and address it clearly in thesis of your paper. You can dramatically improve your work if you critique your own rough draft and revise it at least once. Outside feedback can also make a difference. Proofread to avoid careless errors. Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar do effect the quality of your work. These papers will be graded on Effort, Quality, Organization, Content, Proper citations and whether or not you followed these directions. I will look specifically at your coverage of the topic and the thoughtfulness and clarity of your presentation.

Citations

Be very careful about giving appropriate credit to the sources of any outside information or ideas that you use. In science papers, when you include information that is general knowledge (something that could be found in 2 or 3 books), it does not require a citation in the text. Be sure to reword or paraphrase text from any of your sources to avoid plagiarism. Paraphrasing means changing more than 1 word in a sentence. Think about what something says and completely restate it in your own words. Avoid making your paper look like a mosaic of other people's ideas by using as few direct quotes as possible. The best idea is to quote someone only when the wording is extremely original and/or it can't be stated differently. A direct quote always requires a citation in the text with the page where the quote was found.

References

You should have properly formatted references at the bottom of a single page or end of a longer paper. Use the APA or American Psychological Association style. The Purdue Owl website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) is an excellent source of information.

Article: Author, A.A., Author, B.B., Author C.C. (Year). Article title. *Title of Periodical*, Volume Number (Issue), Pages.

Book: Author, A.A. (Year). *Name of Book*. Place: Name of Publisher.

Website: Author, A.A. (Date of Publication). Article Title, Retrieved from URL or doi: 10.XXXXX/XXX

No author: Article title. (Date of Publication). Retrieved from URL or doi: 10.XXXXX/XXXX