

# BIOL 1100: Biology Freshman Seminar

## Spring 2015 Course Syllabus, Valdosta State University

Dr. Leslie S. Jones    1096 Bailey Science Center    219-1337

**Email:** Please use Blazeview email for course matters and [lesliesj@valdosta.edu](mailto:lesliesj@valdosta.edu) only if it is urgent.

**Office Hours:** Monday 2:00-3:00 & Wednesday 11:00-12:00

Please feel free to call my office or use VSU email to schedule a convenient time for an appointment.

I would be more than happy to speak to students anytime the office doors are open.

**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.

**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:

This class is a requirement in your major and it also addresses the Outcome of Section D1 (Science, Mathematics, and Technology) of the VSU core curriculum as prescribed by the University System of Georgia. The Learning Outcome that states: *"Students will demonstrate understanding of the physical universe and the nature of science, and they will use scientific methods and/or mathematical concepts and reasoning to solve problems."*

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

1. Recognize the rigorous nature of this field of study and the skills and discipline needed to be successful.
2. Connect the requirements of the Biology major to the foundations of Life Science and possible careers.
3. Write a paper based on research conducted in primary scientific journals.

**Academic Honesty:** Members of the class are expected to maintain high standards of integrity. Always cite any source of original information. Never copy text from a classmate, book, or website and represent it as personal work. The VSU Biology Department Statement on Plagiarism is included as part of this syllabus to clarify common types of academic misconduct. Students are expected to read this carefully and sign the Student Information Sheet to indicate that this is understood. Dishonesty will not be tolerated; evidence of cheating will result in no credit for the assignment or depending on the case, a grade of "F" for the course and a report will be sent to the Dean of Students. By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see SafeAssign for Students (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml>).

**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 1115, 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.

## Course Requirements for BIOL 1100

### Expectation:

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

**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).

**Online Activities:** We will be using the course site on VSU Blazeview and that email for all class communication. Be prepared to participate in discussions that will be required assignments.

**Class Notes:** Throughout the term, you will be expected to take notes, especially to ensure that you understand all assignments.

**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.

**Deportment:** Active participation is expected of all students. Everyone should be involved in the discussions that are part of this course. Failure to become involved, thoughtless/rude behavior, or anything that detracts from the learning experiences of other students will hurt your grade. No disruptive behavior of any kind will be tolerated. Students should restrict talking and sidebar discussions toward the instructor. Any student disrupting class meetings will be required to leave the classroom and considered absent. Use of cellular telephones, pagers, or any similar remote communication device is prohibited during class time.

### Assessments:

Attendance	40%
Assignments	30%
Paper	30%

**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](http://www.valdosta.edu/ssc) or call 333-7570 to make an appointment.

## BIOL 1100 Tentative Class Schedule

(Subject to Change)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
Jan 12	Nature of Science	Student Information Sheet
19	No Class in Honor of the Memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.	
26	Who's Who on the Faculty	Short Biography
Feb 2		
9		
16		
23		
Mar 2	Meet @ the Library (back entrance) Tour & Online Searching	3 Scientific Papers
Mar 1	Midterm: Last day to drop a class without failing	
9		
16		
23 - 27	SPRING BREAK – No Classes	
30		
Apr 6		
13		
20	Meet @ the Student Success Center	Introduction & Conclusion
27	The Evolution/Creationism Controversy	Full Paper Due
May 4		
May 8	Final Exam 12:30-2:30	

## 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.

### Focus

Well-crafted writing always has a specific purpose. Every composition should have a distinct thesis or central idea, even if it is only a paragraph. Your thesis should directly address the nature of the writing assignment. Decide on the topic and a specific case you want to make before you start writing. Write the thesis down and check throughout the writing process to be certain that the work supports it.

### 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 lines of a paragraph or paragraphs of a paper. Start paper with something catchy to interest the reader. Make it perfectly clear, in this introductory 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 an effective way to support and indicate the organization of longer papers. Any paper over 3 pages probably needs subheadings. 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 cover. ONE SENTENCE IS NEVER AN ENTIRE PARAGRAPH because there should be at least 3 sentences elaborating any significant idea.

### Format

Your papers are to be typed using something comparable to 12-point Times New Roman type, single-spacing, and reasonable (1-1.5 inch) margins. Other professors often expect double-spacing, but I prefer to read single-spacing. 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), your name, the title, and 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

Each paper should have a creative title identifying the approach to the assignment. For long papers, the title is centered on the title page and followed by the student’s name, ID number, and full course information. That course information should include the name, number, instructor, and the university. For short papers, your name & the date should be in the upper right corner and the title should be centered on the first line. Number all pages starting with the first page of the text, but do not number the title page. Staple your papers, do not fold the corner or use a paper clip. If the assignment is electronic, submit the single page on Blazeview without a title page.

### References

Be very careful about giving appropriate credit to the sources of any outside information that you use. You should have properly formatted references at the end of the paper that include: Author (Last name, Initials), Year (In parentheses), Title, Place & Name of Publisher, Pages. Use the APA or American Psychological Association style. For WWWeb sources, use as much information about the author or site along with the WWWeb address. When you include information that is general knowledge, it does not require a citation in the text. If you can find the same information in 2 or 3 books, it does not require a citation in the text. Be sure to reword or paraphrase text from 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.

### Grading

Short papers will each be worth 10 points and longer assignments will be 100 points. Assignments will be described in detail in class, so listen carefully and be sure that you know what is expected or ask about anything that is unclear. 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 our impression of the quality of your presentation. 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 extent of your coverage of the topic and the clarity in your presentation of the material. Be sure to support general statements and do not use hypothetical examples.