

Fall 2020 Course Syllabus

Biology 1010: The Evolution & Diversity of Life

Department of Biology, College of Science & Mathematics, Valdosta State University

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Student Hours will be in Room 1043 BSC:

MW 11:00-12:00 in 1043 BSC

MW 4:30-5:00 in 1043 BSC

TR 11:00-11:30 in UC Lobby/Cafeteria

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Kearsten Jones – keajones@valdosta.edu

Supplemental Instructor: Mardi Haynes – mbhaynes@valdosta.edu

1. A Very Important Message to Students: I am making a default assumption that you are in college to get an education. Becoming an educated person takes work, and I expect you to make a sincere effort to learn. The most important contribution to your success will be your personal work ethic because the grade will be based on assignments that will be consolidated in your final Electronic Journal. Every assignment has been developed to help you build a deeper understanding of the scientific content that is presented in the class sessions. You are expected to show conceptual knowledge, which requires far more depth than just memorizing factoids. I set the bar high in my courses because I know you can learn science. I want you to learn both the scientific content and the satisfaction of achieving something that took resolve and hard work. You need to take the time to read this document because it spells out important information about the course. If you do not try to apply these guidelines, you are putting yourself behind everyone in the class who does so because they will understand more than you about what to expect within the nontraditional format of the course...

2. Emails: Please Use My Blazeview Email for All Class Matters!!!

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

*To be safe, you need to **Check Your Blazeview Email OFTEN** (several times per week) for updates*

Class emails are not text messages and are expected to be written coherently.

My title is **Dr. Jones** and you should start any email with that included in a greeting.

The first thing you should do is tell me **which of my classes you are in** because I have several.

The next sentence should contain the **reason for your message**.

After you explain yourself, you should close the message properly.

3. Course Format: We will start in the HY-FLEX format with half (A-L) Face-to-Face on Tuesday and the rest remote, on Thursday the other half (M-Z) will be in class and the rest remote. Be prepared if circumstances make it necessary to the entire class move to remote learning. We could move very quickly to Online delivery depending on what happens.

4. Online Etiquette: Given the limits to the VSU bandwidth, if we go online, when you join the class online, please mute your microphone and turn off your camera. If you would like to speak, raise your hand on the Collaborate Ultra program and we will call on you. There will be break out discussions with your classmates where you will be expected to participate and that is a good time to use your camera if you want.

5. Face to Face Class Decorum – You will be expected to behave like an adult in class and I will not tolerate negative behavior. If I have stopped teaching and am looking at you, you are not doing what is expected - Apologize and stop doing whatever it was. Please read the class rules in this document so that you do not have to be embarrassed for violating them.

6. Personal Responsibility – You must keep track of all assignment deadlines because late work will not be accepted!! Your grades will be posted in Blazeview all semester so that you will know where you stand. If that is not the grade you want at the end of the semester, make more effort on the assignments!

BIOL 1010 Course Objectives & Requirements

Essential Questions:

What has made the natural sciences so effective at unraveling some of the mysteries of life & the universe?

How does the Theory of Evolution explain the History of Life, Biological Diversity, & the Interdependence of Living Organisms?

Learning Outcomes - Students will be expected to:

I. Distinguish the unique features of the natural sciences and the characteristics of living organisms.

II. Describe the evolutionary processes that have been influential throughout the history of life.

III. Compare and Contrast the basic characteristics, classification, & ecology of living organisms.

Proof of mastery for each will be demonstrated by the knowledge & skill shown in:

I. Online *Connect* Assignments – Completion of reading for *LearnSmart* before lectures and Practice & Pretests before tests

II. Writing to Learn – Short Essay Papers to solidify understanding that will be submitted and graded in Blazeview

III. Unit Tests & Final Exam - Based on Text, Lectures, Discussions, & Videos

Educational Outcomes: This class is designed to fulfill three of the eleven general education credit hours required in Section DI (Science, Mathematics, and Technology) of the VSU core curriculum as prescribed by the University System of Georgia. The course will address the VSU 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."* According to the VSU Undergraduate Course Catalog, BIOL 1010 is "an introduction to the diversity of life on Earth with a special emphasis on ecological and evolutionary processes and relationships." The BIOL 1020 Biodiversity Lab is a co-requisite that complements this course by covering parallel material.

Instructional Design: Given that the student/instructor ratio is over 150/1 there will be certain constraints, but efforts will be made to make this more than a mundane lecture class. Since memorization will not be enough to succeed in this biology class, active learning will be promoted through your Electronic Journal. We can use class for elaboration of important concepts, explanation of anything that was unclear, and learning activities that are more effective than just sitting and taking notes. There will be Essay assignments for each unit to provide an opportunity for thought and discussion of the relevance of each topic.

Academic Honesty: Members of the class are expected to maintain high standards of integrity which specifically means doing your own homework. This course will use the VSU Handbook Code of Ethics as a basic standard as well as the Biology Department Plagiarism Policy posted at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/arts-sciences/biology/documents/resources/PlagiarismPolicy.pdf> Students are required to present a VSU ID card prior to any exam in the course. Evidence of dishonest conduct or cheating will result in no credit for the assignment and depending on the case, a grade of "F" for the course. Do not expect lenience for claims on the grounds of not knowing better. You will be reported to the Dean of Students and the incident will be on your record. Employers such as school systems do call that office at VSU to check on whether you have a record of such infractions.

Statement of Student Support: I support all students regardless of immigration status or country of origin. As a Dreamer Ally, I support Dreamer students and promote their sense of belonging and safety as they pursue their higher education goals. For more information and resources visit a website for another university until we have something this on our VSU website: https://international.uoregon.edu/immigration_faq. I commit to not sharing your status with anyone if you reveal it to me. I also remind you that **when interacting with faculty, staff, and offices around campus you are never required to reveal your immigration status.**

Access Statement: Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The Access Office is located in Farbar Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871 (VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY). For more information, please visit VSU's Access Office or email: access@valdosta.edu.

Title IX Statement: Valdosta State University (VSU) is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. VSU is dedicated to creating an environment where all campus community members feel valued, respected, and included. Valdosta State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including pregnancy status, sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, in the University's programs and activities as required by applicable laws and regulations such as Title IX. The individual designated with responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies is the University's Title IX Coordinator: Maggie Viverette, Director of the Office of Social Equity, titleix@valdosta.edu, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia 31608, 333-5463.

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

Personal Electronic Journal (eJ) Requirements

The reason you are creating these eJs is to articulate what you are learning in a way that is a radical alternative to the usual science tests. To ensure that you stay up to date with what we are doing in class there will be due dates for assignments that are submitted in Blazeview on a regular basis. The grades on these assignments will be an indication of how well you are doing. All it takes to pass this course is a solid work ethic and willingness to learn the science. If you do not remember much from your K-12 science classes, it does not matter. As long as you are willing to make an effort to do the work, you can succeed in this class.

Each session constitutes one lesson and after the classes you need to ask yourself if you understand the subject we covered. If you do not feel confident that you grasp the scientific content, it is your responsibility to ask for help and work harder on this topic for your eJ entries. You will do well in the class if you keep up with the science and think about what and how you are learning it as we go along. Since there are no tests, you must document what you have learned from class, through web research, discussions with your classmates, or by asking one of the instructors.

The eJ document will be one continuous PowerPoint that is constructed in Office 365. The first thing you want to do is set up that file and submit the link to your file to the Blazeview dropbox in the course content section. These must be in landscape orientation and the widescreen (16:9) slide size format. The background colors should not detract from the images you display. You may select any reasonable, serif or sans serif font and should use only one for all captions throughout the entire presentation (unless you are doing something creative on a particular page). You may vary the size of the font in different places if it is fairly consistent, especially in the headings. Any long sections of text must be black type on a white background, with left-justification. Anything over 2-3 lines should not be centered. You can compose longer narratives in Word and insert them as text boxes on your slides. These must follow the Writing Guidelines that are in this syllabus.

You must have clear divisions for the different sections of the course and each of them should have both a photographic Cover Page followed by a one page (600-800 word) Summary that is written after the lessons for the unit evaluation. That summary should employ the new vocabulary words you have learned in defining sentences that are composed in your own words. Nothing needs to be cited in the text because it is all general information.

The electronic format will give you a great deal of creative freedom. Slides should include substantial scientific terminology and show what you learned in the form of cell phone pictures or photos and diagrams from the web. Any image must be explained with a statement in your own words. We are going to evaluate your pedagogical content knowledge in these entries, so use first person and discuss teaching strategies related to the lessons. Read the page about writing in this syllabus carefully. If you are not a strong writer, get help from someone by asking them to read over what you have written.

Electronic Journal Grading:

Analytic Short Assignment Scores: These 10 point grades will always depend partially on the effort you make and partially on the accuracy of the science. 10 = Excellent, 8-9 = Good, 7 = Adequate, <5 = Incomplete and Seriously Deficient 12 = Exceptionally Good

Holistic Evaluation: Every time you are required to submit your complete journal, the overall quality will be rated.

60's- Poor -Needed substantially more effort, thought, & synthesis - Lacking vocabulary, and/or scientific information

70's – Adequate – Every weekly summary revised & included - More depth of thinking to show mastery of content

80's- Good Work – Substantial visual record of lab activities with detailed explanations

90's+ Great Effort – Polished consistent presentation throughout

125% - Above and beyond my expectations!!!

Serious Deficiencies:

0 – Any assigned slides missing or a sloppy overall presentation lacking effort

50's – Insufficient - Needs much more effort

Writing Assignments

Objectives: In order to encourage you to see the relevance of the topics covered in this course, there will be seven essays required as part of the course content. These assignments also have been designed to help you to learn, outside the classroom, through your own writing. Writing is an important 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 seek more information about a subject. Papers are also an opportunity to display your knowledge through more than just exams. These assignments also allow you to pursue the connections between your own personal interests and what we cover in class, so you should take pride in them. **If you do not follow the following guidelines, your grade will be reduced.**

Focus: Well-crafted writing always has a specific purpose. Decide on a thesis for the assigned topic and a specific case you want to make before you start writing. 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 or do some reading to get ideas. Look over these thoughts for ideas that go together in the form of a thesis. Then create an original title.

Organization: Before you begin to write, think through how you plan to develop your thesis and use an outline to structure your thoughts with a sequence that makes sense. An Introduction and Conclusion will be the first and last paragraphs, but they can actually be written last. 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 in the middle will be the Body of your text. Quotations & Subheadings are not to be used in these 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: For these assignments, you should have 3 paragraphs, single-spaced on no more than one side of one page of 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 have an original title on your paper, centered at the top of the page. Think of something that summarizes the unique slant you are taking because we have to read many of these. It should catch our 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. 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 or no less than 800 words.

Grading: These short papers will each be worth 10 points. Outstanding papers will receive an additional 2 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 by other people who write well or even a visit to the SSC can also make a difference. You do not need a science tutor to read these papers. Ask for an English or Writing tutor at the SSC. Proofread your own work to avoid careless errors. Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar do effect the quality of your work and your grade. These papers will be graded on Effort, Quality, Organization, Content, and whether or not you followed these directions. We will look specifically at your coverage of the topic and the clarity and thoughtfulness of your presentation. Do not complain about your grade because it is very unlikely that it will be changed. Instead, learn from the feedback and improve your next paper.

Automatic Grade Reductions:

- Missing a clear thesis or title
- Lack of Organization (Equal Introduction & Conclusion) Solid Body with logical flow
- Poor paragraph structure - no topic sentences, uneven lengths, no transitions
- Lack of focus, failure to compile a convincing argument, or make a good case
- Inaccurate or deficient scientific content
- Typographical Errors & Grammar, Spelling, & Punctuation (GSP) Mistakes
- Not the assigned length which will be from ½ to 2 pages, but is usually limited to 1 page (which is no less than 3/4)
- Failure to follow these instructions

Requirements for Submission:

Submit your work on Blazeview in the designated assignment box as a PDF because this will ensure that the formatting will be preserved. The due date will be announced in class, is posted on the class schedule, and listed in Blazeview. If you fail to submit your work by the time the box closes, it will not be accepted FOR ANY REASON, so that is the reason to turn assignments in early. If you miss the final deadline, accept your penalty and do better next time!

Top Ten” Strategies for Success in Biology 1010

(You can even count up by reading from the bottom if you are a David Letterman fan)

If you want to earn an “A” and or do well in this course, you need to think about your own approach to studying. You will not even pass unless you work hard so (before you waste your time and someone’s tuition money) consider the following:

- #1. **Decide that You Plan to Succeed and Work Consistently for a Good Grade** – It is your choice! **Start Working Hard at the Beginning of the Semester** – Do not fool around and suddenly decide to work after you get behind and need to dig yourself out of a big hole.
- #2. **Pre-Read the Modules** before class when the lectures will begin covering the specific topic. This is so that you will come in knowing how to spell words and have some familiarity with key ideas.
- #3. **Attend Class and Take Detailed Notes** – The information in class sessions will not be identical to the online modules. The scientific topics will be explained differently and additional information will be covered. Think as we go along, and if you do not understand - ask questions. **Keep an Orderly Notebook** – If you use a spiral for class notes, have another folder where you can assemble all of your papers and outside information.
- #4. **Reread Your Notes after Class** – Think about the information covered to be sure that you understand it all. If not, read up on the subject in your text or on the Web or come in for help on anything you do not understand. If you miss something in lecture, leave a space in your notes where you can look it up on the web or come to office hours for an explanation. Find Websites on the topic for more information. If you know you need to work hard for good grades, reread the class modules to reinforce the concepts.
- #5. **Get to Know Someone in the Class** – Make contact with a student that sits next to you in class. This is so that you can ask if you do not understand assignments. Check on the specifics of assignments by phone or email.
- #6. **Make a Vocabulary List of Important Terminology** – Construct a list of the terms you do not know, define them in your own words, and use them on your eJ slides. If any are particularly troublesome, try writing a sentence that uses the term. You must understand the “language of biology” and there is plenty of it!
- #7. **Use the Assignments to Be Certain You Know the Content** –The *Blazeview* papers prompt you to think outside of the box and will reinforce the content. Also, be sure to keep up with the assignments (which are not accepted if they are late).
- #8. **Get Additional Help** –My Student Hours are on the first page. I will be happy to make appointments at other times. If you do not ask, I can’t help you! We have a **SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTOR** for the class who will be supplementing lectures & doing test reviews. There are also Biology tutors in the Student Success Center who can help.
- #9. **Plan Ahead for Assignments** – Write the dates in your calendar, then count back one week to remind yourself to start preparing. If you do not get a good grade, redo these right away for your final journal.
- #10. **Attend the Regular Class Study Sessions Online** –Our embedded tutor will be holding regular discussions of the course material. Her whole focus is how to understand the content and what you need to do in your eJ.