 

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a study of life and the interactions of living organisms with each other and their environment. The emphasis of the course is on the modern and practical aspects within the field of Biology. We will examine the fundamental principles of Biology and then discuss how they apply to modern day life. Lastly, there will also be an emphasis on the scientific process and its practical applications.

**COURSE MISSION**

To provide our students with meaningful, challenging, and thought provoking learning experiences. Additionally, we seek to produce motivated, efficient, and independent learners equipped with the reasoning and critical thinking skills necessary for success in our competitive society.

**THE INSTRUCTOR BELIEVES:**

* That all students can learn and is committed to ensuring that learning occurs.
* That successful learning results from positive and trusting partnerships between students, teachers, and parents.
* That students learn best when they are involved in the process of learning.
* That assessments should be used to measure student learning and not to differentiate students.
* That educational research and student achievement data should guide our instructional practices.
* That reading, writing, and mathematics are critical to a student’s future and therefore seek to incorporate these aspects into our Biology course.

**THE INSTRUCTOR VALUES:**

* A flexible and open minded environment which is receptive to student input.
* The importance of the content we teach and its relevance to our lives.
* Learning………….regardless of ***when***  it takes place.
* The differences in learning styles of our students.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

*The Living World 2nd Edition* (The Course Textbook)

By George B. Johnson

\*\*It is also strongly suggested, but not required, that students have access to our course website at home. There are many additional supplements found at our weebly website, embedded in the link below, to assist with comprehension of course concepts.\*\*

/a/ipsd.org/2015-2016-honors-biology-mrs-back/

**STUDENT EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT** The students will earn credit in the following manner:

1. **Unit objective sheets**: Each unit will consist of multiple benchmarks for which the students will be expected to attain mastery. These benchmarks will be based upon biological concepts and academic skills learned in class. The purpose of the objective sheet is to clearly indicate the learning expectations for the unit as well as provide guidance for self- assessment. Additionally, this document will list resources to aid in student learning and test readiness. Student mastery will be assessed each unit with periodic quizzes, projects/lab reports, and unit exams.
2. **CUMULATIVE SEMESTER EXAMS**: Each semester will conclude with a cumulative exam. This

 common assessment will be taken by all Honors Biology students and will consist of all content

 covered during the previous instructional semester.

1. **EXTRA CREDIT**: Extensive and challenging extra credit assignments will be offered once a semester. Students producing outstanding products can earn up to 2% points towards their final semester score. The extra credit assignments will be posted on blackboard.
2. **GRADING CRITERIA**: At the end of each semester students will be assigned a grade as follows:
* Course work will be 80% of the semester grade and will be based on the following:
	+ 50% unit exams
	+ 20% labs/projects
	+ 10% mastery assessments ( proficiency quizzes)
* Final exam will be 20% of semester grade
* Extra credit is added to the semester grade percentage ***afte***r all calculations have been made. EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY IF STUDENTS HAVE NO MISSING ASSIGNMENTS!!

**THE EXPECTATION OF HONESTY**

 Collaboration is an essential component of success in this course. We encourage student partnerships and seek to teach our students how to get the most out of their interactions with peers. However, we expect that students use these collaborative experiences in a manner which contributes to each individual’s learning and is representative of their own work. Any product which is not an accurate reflection of the individual student’s learning is a violation of the honesty policy. Violations of our school’s honesty code will be dealt with under the provisions listed in the student handbook.

**EXPECTATION OF LEARNING**

Students will be expected to learn and master course concepts. Additionally, students will be expected to improve their reading, writing, and ability to apply mathematics to practical situations during this school year.

\*\*The Academic Resource Room (ARC) in room H114 is available to all students. All students should plan to use academic resource or seek out help from instructors to help with comprehension of difficult course concepts.\*\*

\*\*The instructors are available during office hours or by appointment to assist students who cannot

attend academic resource. All students should feel free to seek assistance from instructors outside of class.\*\*

**ATTENDANCE**

***Everyday attendance is crucial to success in this course***. Extended absences limit a student's exposure to course concepts and prevent them from attaining full mastery of unit benchmarks. Additionally, this course is highly collaborative in manner. Extended absences prevent students from efficiently and cooperatively completing unit assignments. Lastly this course is lab based. Extended absences cause students to miss

valuable lab experiences that many times cannot be replicated on additional class days. When students must be absent it is expected that they be as proactive as possible in checking with the instructor for information, also:

1. Make contact with group members and the instructor when their absence falls on a due

date for major group projects. It is expected that students complete group projects **before** leaving on anticipated absences.

1. Make arrangements with the instructor to make up all course assignments before leaving on

 anticipated absences or after returning from illness.

**Late Work**

Students are expected to do homework for this class every night. Assignments are frequently used in class and students who are not prepared miss out on in-class activities. If a student is absent due to illness, he/she will receive additional time to complete assignments.

***\*\*\* If a student does not have a completed assignment, he/she can turn the assignment the following grade to receive 50% credit. No credit will be given if the assignment is turned in on subsequent days.***

**Use of phones in class**

Phone use in the classroom is prohibited unless approved by the instructor. Phones should not be seen in the classroom for any reason. Students using phones will be disciplined according to the student handbook.