

**Introduction to Biology for Biology Majors**  
**Fall 2009 General Course Information**  
**Dr. Ann Sheehy**

**Class** Scheduled meetings M, W, and Friday at 11 AM in O'Neil 123

**Intro. Lab** All intro labs meet in O'Neil 320. Time and date varies by section. Lab is a largely stand-alone parallel to the lecture.

**Office** Swords 235; xt2255

<b>Office Hours</b>	M	3-4:30pm
	T	9:30-11:00am
	W	2-3:00pm
	F	4-5:30 PM

**Review Sessions** We will have unified review sessions (where students from all three intro sections can ask questions) in the early evening (~6PM) about every five classes or as needed

Campbell & Reece, Taylor, Simon & Dickey. © 2008  
***Biology with Mastering Biology***. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Benjamin Cummings. Menlo Park, CA. 1393 pp.

ISBN-10: 0321543254

**Textbook** and ISBN-13: 9780321543257 (Note that there are two different ISBN numbers for the same book with CD and web access.) You may be able to get by with an earlier edition, as I am not sure how different the newest ed. is from previous ones. However, text assignments will probably not be the same in this and older editions. I recommend buying the new edition and keeping it as a reference for at least your four years at Holy Cross.\*

**Course website and CLASS SCHEDULE:**

<http://www.holycross.edu/departments/biology/kprestwi/intro>

(Updated after each class)

**General:** We will consider biological phenomena from the level of molecules to ecosystems. However, *the course is not intended to be a survey of all that is currently known in biology, for such would be an impossible task.* Instead, Introductory Biology is designed to provide the factual, theoretical and methodological overview upon which your continuing studies of biology will build. What unifies biology as an intellectual endeavor and ties it to the other natural (and even social) sciences are broad theoretical constructions. We will focus heavily on these constructs and the methodology used to generate, alter or even falsify them. Secondary goals include helping you to learn how to

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\* I urge you to keep your textbook after the semester is over as it will be an invaluable reference to you in other courses and in preparation for comprehensive examinations, e.g., MCAT and Graduate Record exams.

sift through complex materials, extract the essentials and then use your knowledge to solve problems.

This course and its associated laboratory are required of all biology majors. Together, the course and lab fulfill one course of the College's two-course distribution requirement in the natural and mathematical sciences.

**Note that lab syllabus is separate and will be given to you in lab.**

**Class Format and How to Study for this Course:** Prior to most classes you will have access to a set of class notes and a reading assignment. Both the "handout notes" on the website and readings from the textbook and other sources are important. However, you should put most stress on the "notes" and the study questions for the textbook and other readings that you download from the class website. Before coming to class, it is your responsibility to:

- Do the reading.
- Make notes and jot down questions dealing with material that you do not understand.
- Try to answer the study questions. I recommend that you try to do this first on your own but that you also discuss the answers with your colleagues.
- Formulate additional questions of your own.

Class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Discussion means that I expect you to:

- Ask questions about anything that you did not understand and
- Be prepared to answer the questions assigned for a given class period

During the "lecture" part of the class period, I will explain areas that students typically find difficult. You should take notes from these lectures. Two important hints:

- Something does not have to be on the board or a slide to be important.
- By the same token, not everything that is said is important -- you need not be a stenographer.

I expect that you will **attend every class**, be **on time** and be **alert** and **ready to learn and participate**, and **not leave the classroom unless you really need to leave**.

**Active cell phones are NOT permitted in class.**

Within a day after each class, you should:

- Go over your notes again
- Review the readings
- Try to learn the material (*i.e.* not just familiarize yourself).

This way you will stay current and any areas of difficulty you have will be evident immediately and can be corrected by consulting with me long before the next exam. Notice that the responsibility is on you to stay current, to learn the material as soon as possible, and to stay current.

**I expect you to spend about THREE HOURS outside of class learning and reviewing the material for each class period.**

Some may need to spend more, some may get by with less, but generally grade performance is well correlated with a steady effort such as I have just described

**Electronic Distribution of Class Handouts:** As alluded to above, handouts will be made available as pdf (Adobe Acrobat) type documents via the course website and occasionally via e-mail. The result will be an archive of materials that will be accessible to all members of the class from campus.

**Moodle and this class:** For each of the 3 intro sections, the same basic slides will be used in the lecture. However, there will be some minor differences and any modifications I make to my slides (primarily graphics) will be available on a set posted on the Moodle site *after* class. Moodle will also be used for students who wish to post questions that will then either be covered in the next class or a review session. Students are encouraged to look at Moodle in this regard -- but remember -- use the composite website (internet) for most aspects of the course.

### **Important Notes**

If you don't have your own computer there is a college-run computer lab in O'Neil hall room 111 (adjacent to our classroom) that contains both Macs and PCs. Either will work although the network login procedures are slightly different on each type of box.

**Never attempt to open or print any document that I attach to e-mail by simply double clicking the attachment from within GroupWise.** This feature of the campus mail utility (GroupWise) is notoriously unreliable. Instead, **always save the attached document and then open it from within the appropriate program (i.e., Adobe Acrobat).**

**On occasion people cannot open saved pdf files on college-owned computers.** In the past this has always been the result of corruption of the Acrobat Reader program. I always check files before sending or posting them. Please try again from another machine before contacting me.

**Class PowerPoint Notes:** I will use PowerPoint for most but not all of my classroom presentations. **As much as possible, these notes will be put on-line before class and if any changes are made, they will be updated after class** (and marked as such). On occasion, notes will not be available until after a class. It will be evident when this is the case on the class website. Note that because PowerPoint will contain copyrighted images from the Campbell text, it will only be available on campus (i.e., you will access to the PowerPoint slides through the class www homepage but you will only be able to download these files if you are on campus).

Please do NOT think that studying the PowerPoint notes by themselves is an adequate review for quizzes and exams – it is most certainly NOT so.

**Examinations and Grading:** Your overall course grade will come from your performance in class (77% of the total) and lab (23%). Your lab instructor will discuss grading the in lab.

All of your grade in the class portion of the course will come from various types of examination. These will be a mix of objective type questions (multiple choice and perhaps true or false), short answers, problems (when appropriate), and short essays. I encourage you to answer essays and short essays in outline and pictorial fashion; exams do not provide time for fine writing! More about this as we approach various exams. Tests will be administered in two forms: short (5 min.) quizzes, and exams (during the semester, and a final).

Since most of the students in this class are in their first semester at college, I have found weekly quizzes to be useful in cementing good study habits and in getting familiar with tougher, college type questions. Please remember that I have instituted this policy to help you become a better student. After all, it is more work for me. Please do not blow off quizzes – do the best you can on each as they do definitely affect your grade.

**The exams and announced quizzes are always comprehensive.** What this means in practice is that the vast majority of the tested material will be "new" since the last exam but I can and will ask about anything we have covered so far. This policy is not meant to be mean-spirited. It is designed to encourage you to comprehensively understand and review old material on a regular basis and it is especially designed to get you to review material that you missed on previous exams. Most of the comprehensive type questions will deal with topics where substantial numbers of the class had problems on earlier exams. The final exam has a greater proportion of "comprehensive" materials than the other exams.

Below is an approximate breakdown of the points that you will earn towards a grade in this course:

Measure	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Quizzes	60	9%
Three Semester Exams	300	45%
Comprehensive Final Exam	150	23%
Lab	150	23%
Total	660	100%

The dates for the announced quizzes, semester exams and final exam are listed on the syllabus at the class website. Unannounced quizzes can, of course, be given on any day. They will be worth about 8 points each and take 5 minutes at the very start of class.

**Make-up Policies** Any examination (quiz, semester exams, or final exam) may be made up only if a Dean's excuse is submitted. Excuses may be obtained only in the event of sickness or family emergency or official College-sanctioned activity. I will not excuse you for sleeping late and missing an exam (yes, this has happened many times for this 11 AM class).

If you must miss an exam or quiz due to participation in a College-sanctioned activity, you must make arrangements with me at least a week prior to the exam. Normally the exam or quiz will be taken early and as close as possible to the scheduled time for the rest of the class. While I do understand the additional demands imposed on students who engage in athletics, I also realize that others have other extracurricular demands placed on them. Navigating life successfully includes prioritizing your

commitments. Students are best served when everyone remains on the same schedule. My position is designed to do the best for the class and frankly for each individual student (in the long run and hopefully the short run). Please also understand that I oppose the recent tendency of some coaches to pull students out of class for special meals and meetings and am likely to make trouble if that is the basis for an excuse.

About late arrival at quizzes and exams: if you arrive late you must turn in the quiz or exam at the same time as everyone else.

**Important Notes:** having other exams on the same day or near days does not constitute a valid reason for missing an exam that everyone else takes!

Please do not come and ask me to allow you to take an examination late. If you are having problems keeping up, go and see your class dean and she or he will inform me and we can work together. Otherwise, it is important that you view the exam schedule as a commitment associated with this class.

Note that plane tickets etc are not a legitimate excuse to take the final exam or the second semester exam (just before Thanksgiving break) early.

**Failure to take a test as scheduled without a legitimate reason (listed above) will result in a test score of zero.**

I apologize for being so legalistic, but the increasing tendency of some individuals to attempt to miss exams for their own advantage and with no regard for others in the class or for my schedule has moved me to spell out the rules above.

**Grading Scale:** Grades are based on a scale, not a curve. I use the following scale: above 93 = A, 93 to 90 = A-, 89 to 87 = B+, 86 to 83 = B, 82 to 80 = B-, 79 to 77 = B+, 76 to 73 = B, 72 to 70 = C-, 69 to 67 = D+ and 66 to 60 = D. Any average below 60 fails. Thus to earn an A in this course you will need at least 572 points ( $615 * 0.93$ ). Similar calculations can be made for other grades.

**There is absolutely no extra credit in this course. Please do not ask.**

**Academic Honesty:** I have seldom encountered dishonest behavior by Holy Cross students. Honesty is the foundation of the academic and scientific enterprise. If we are assured of an honest environment, class morale tends to be good and the trust allows for a high degree of respect. Therefore dishonesty in the form of cheating on exams, quizzes (taking, receiving, or intentionally giving aid) or falsifying an excuse in order to miss an exam will not be tolerated. ANYONE WHOM I HAVE SUFFICIENT REASON TO BELIEVE HAS CHEATED OR HAS ATTEMPTED TO CHEAT on an exam or quiz **or** WHO HAS LIED to obtain an excuse from sitting at an exam or quiz at the scheduled time will be confronted and a report sent to the class dean. Normally, the result is a grade of zero for the exam or quiz and a notation in the student's records.

I know that it presently is a habit of many to write themselves messages on their hands. Please do NOT come to class with writing on your hands arms or clothes (you get the idea) on the day of a quiz or exam as I might ask to "read you".

**Office Hours and Review Sessions:** We (the intro staff) will hold review sessions every

one to two weeks, depending on demand. Since the mid-term exams are all on Fridays, the final review session before each exam will be on Tuesday or Thursday. This should give you the weekend to polish your knowledge.

Attend if at all possible and not just the sessions nearest the next exam. Most students find that questions are asked that they hadn't thought about. I hope that you will also get a better feel for what we believe to be most important. The way review sessions work is that you should come with questions to ask us. We may also ask you some questions.

Office hours are also times when you can come and ask me questions or just discuss biology.

You should also feel free to ask me questions after class (especially since office hours follow quickly!). However, **please do not come by immediately before class**, as I will be preparing for class.

**E-mail:** Please feel free to contact me by email. I will respond if I have time. **Please do not ask for explanations of material via email unless the answer would seem to be short.** But certainly ask if you are unsure – I can always ask you to come to my office.

**FINAL IMPORTANT NOTE: There are three sections of intro and all will be taught more or less in tandem. Nevertheless, there will be differences in the individual sections and so you should attend your section. You may not take an exam or quiz in a different section except by permission of both instructors -- this will only be allowed under the most unusual of circumstances.**