

Midwestern State University Department of Biology

Course Syllabus for

BIOL 1023: Introduction to Global Biology

Description:

Introduction to basic principles in evolution, ecology and environmental biology for non-science majors. Topics include evidence and mechanisms of evolution, diversity of living organisms, plant biology and photosynthesis, interactions between living organisms and their environment, and biological aspects of current environmental issues. **Concurrent lab participation required.** This course meets the general education requirement for a science course in the core curriculum. It is not intended for Biology majors or minors. There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Bob Brennan

Office: Bolin Science Hall Room 138

Phone: (940) 397-4198

Email: robert.brennan@msutexas.edu

Office Hours: Mon 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; or by appointment; virtual office hours by appointment on the days and times listed above. To schedule a virtual office visit: Navigate to the course in D2L, then go to the Communication tab, then scroll down to Zoom and click on appointments. Click on the day/time you would like to meet and select Book.

Class day/time and location:

Lecture and Lab are entirely online. It is advisable to review the course calendar and set a schedule for yourself to enable you to cover the assigned material within the allotted time. The deadline for all weekly lab and lecture assignments is 11:59 pm Sundays.

Requirements:

BIOL 1023 is included in the Courseware Access & Affordability Program at MSU Texas. What does this mean?

- BIOL 1023 is included in the above program for the Spring semester. What does this mean?
- You will have access to your course materials on the first day of class. **Your Professor opted to have this course in the program to save you time and money.**
- The money saving charge of \$40.00 + tax has been added to your student account.
- You have the choice to “opt out” of this special pricing and find your material on your own. If you prefer to “opt out”, the instructions will be in your **my.msutexas.edu email** on the second day of class 1/22/25 from Follett/MSU Bookstore).
- The last day to “opt- out” of this content is **02/17/2025**. If you “opt out”, you lose your course material. If you “opt out” by mistake, please contact the bookstore at the email address below and you will be “re-instated” with your course materials.

For questions concerning the program or if you need assistance, please contact the Bookstore at jenny.denning@msutexas.edu.

Lab: This course includes an online lab that uses items that are common in the home and around residential environments. We recognize that cost is an issue for many students, and so we will allow up to two students to work together to share costs.

Other materials: You will need a computer with internet access to complete online assignments.

D2L: This course uses Desire-to-Learn (D2L) extensively. Each student is expected to be familiar with D2L as it will be a primary source of communication regarding assignments, exam materials, and general course information. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact MSU's technical support department by phone at 940-397-4278, or by email at helpdesk@msutexas.edu.

Evaluation procedures:

Lecture counts for 60%, and lab for 40% of the overall grade in this course as follows:

Item in Lecture	Percent of lecture grade	Percent of overall grade (weighted)
Lecture exam average (4 exams total)	70%	42%
Self-checks	13%	8%
Mini-quizzes (one per chapter; taken on D2L)	17%	10%
Total	100%	60% of overall grade

Item in Lab	Percent of lab grade	Percent of overall grade (weighted)
Lab worksheets	70%	28%
Photojournalism project	30%	12%
Total	100%	40% of overall grade

The grading scale is as follows:

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

Final grades are rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounds up, 0.4 rounds down). Grades will not be curved or adjusted for students close to a cutoff between letter grades.

Lecture exams

There will be four multiple-choice exams. No exam grades will be dropped.

If you miss an exam

- In the event that extenuating circumstances prevent you from taking an exam within the allotted time period you must, at the latest, contact the instructor during the business hours *of the same day* that the exam is scheduled.
- Failure to contact the instructor within the accepted time will result in a zero for that exam.

Quizzes

The quizzes are available on D2L at the end of each module and must be completed on time. The deadline dates are in the calendar.

Self-Checks

Self-Checks are questions at **the end of each tile in the Study Plan**. It is a short assessment to check your understanding before you move on to the next tile. Be sure to click “Finish” after completing a self-check so that your participation points can be recorded in the gradebook.

Lab worksheets

At the end of each lab, you will complete a summary worksheet that you will submit to D2L dropbox. **Files *MUST* be submitted as PDF, .doc or JPEG files**. Other formats such as Google Docs and .pages (Apple word processor) and HEIC (Apple image files) **cannot be opened** by our systems and will result in an ungraded assignment.

Academic honesty

Integrity is expected from all students. If a student is suspected of cheating that assignment will be scored as zero for all students involved and/or you may be dropped from the course. I may report you for academic dishonesty.

Any action suspicious of cheating, attempting to cheat, or helping someone cheat on an exam, copying or otherwise plagiarizing lab work will result in a grade of zero. These actions include collaborating with or communicating exam content to other students.

For more information about the University Academic Misconduct Policy, see the [2025-2026 MSU Student Handbook](#), PART II, “Academic Dishonesty Policies and Procedures”

For technical problems while doing assignments

If you email an instructor for help with a problem, please document the problem in every way possible (detailed descriptions, the time that the problem occurred, and screenshots are all helpful). Include your name and course information.

- 1) Lab instructions (for example, you do not understand the instructions).
 - a. Check the Lab Help Discussion Board for that lab module on D2L. Your question may have been asked and answered by your classmates or instructor
 - b. If there is no information on D2L contact Dr. Brennan at robert.brennan@msutexas.edu

- 2) An assignment that does not appear to be available on D2L when it should be, or has a grading error.
 - a. Contact Dr. Brennan at robert.brennan@msutexas.edu
- 3) A problem with D2L or MSU's website in general (for example, those websites are not working, or you cannot login).
 - a. Contact MSU's Information Technology (IT) department Help Desk by phone at 940-397-4278
 - b. Contact the help desk by email at helpdesk@msutexas.edu

Email policy

Email is the best way to reach me. I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours to e-mails received during regular school hours (8:00 am – 5:00 pm M-F). Emails sent after business hours or during the weekend will receive a response the following business day.

In your email:

- 1) Tell me what class you're in. Include the subject, day and time. (Or the course number and section if you know it, such as "1023-201")
- 2) Sign the email with your first and last name.
Some students have the same first or last name. If I have both it is easier to look up your information in my records. If you use a nickname you may also want to give your official name as it is in Banner.
- 3) Use email etiquette
 - a. **Start your email with a greeting.** Use salutations that are appropriate for academic/professional communication such as "Dear" "Hello/Hi" etc. ("**Hey**" is **not professional** and should be reserved for use only between close friends)
 - b. Use complete sentences
 - c. Don't type in all caps

Attendance policy

In general

- The only absences that are counted as excused by MSU are those required for MSU organizations or events. All other absences are deemed as excused or unexcused at the instructor's discretion.
- You are responsible for all material, announcements, reminders, and changes to the syllabus (should they occur). Notifications will be made by either email or notifications on the course homepage.
- Attendance in lecture will be recorded by your D2L login. Student attendance for this course is defined by **active participation** in the course. You are required to login no more frequently than daily and at minimum once a week. However, it is not recommended that you attempt to cover a week's worth of assigned material in one day, especially since some lab activities require that you record data over a few days.

Your participation can be documented by any or all of the following methods:

- Submission/completion of assignments
- Communication with the instructor
- Discussions
- Although it will not be used in calculating your grade, failure to login and complete assignments within the allotted time may result in you being instructor-dropped from the course particularly if you are at risk of failing the course. I will contact you by email before I do this.

In lab

While there is not a physical lab classroom to attend, it is expected that you will complete all lab assignments on time.

Inclement weather

This is a fully online course, therefore, in the event of campus closures due to inclement weather activities will continue as scheduled. Any changes to schedule will be announced via D2L mail and D2L news items on the homepage.

Device policy

- Although exams will be online they should be treated with the same honesty as proctored exams. Use of **notes will be allowed during exams** but the use of search engines (Google, Bing etc.) is **not permitted**. Exams will be strictly timed so as to deter the use of external resources. If you spend time searching for answers you may not complete the exam within the allotted timeframe. Lockdown Browser will also be used for online exams to deter the use of the internet to search for answers.

Important university policies

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please provide appropriate documentation and we can work on what is required to accommodate you in class. Please contact the Disability Support Service in Room 168 of Clark Student Center (940) 397-4140 for other support, if needed.

About Campus Carry at MSU

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the university's [campus carry policy](https://msutexas.edu/campus-carry/index.php) at the address <https://msutexas.edu/campus-carry/index.php>

Frequently asked questions

What is my grade in lecture or lab so far?

If you want to calculate your grade by hand, use the tables provided on page 2 to see what each kind of assignment is worth. Multiply your grade or average in each of those categories by the appropriate decimal value. (For example, if exams count for 60% of the lecture grade, multiply your exam average so far by 0.60). Then add each resulting number together for your grade

You can also see your assignment grades (and possibly your average) in the “Grade Book” portion of the D2L page for both lecture and lab.

How do I calculate my overall course grade so far?

By using this formula:

$$[(\text{Lecture average so far}) \times (0.60)] + [(\text{Lab average so far}) \times (0.40)] = \text{Course Grade}$$

Will you round my average?

The grade that you earn by the end of the semester is the grade that you will receive. I will only round up in instances where the average would mathematically round up to the next number (such as in instances of 0.5 and higher). For example, an average of 89.5 will round to a 90).