Midwestern State University Department of Biology
Course Syllabus for
BIOL 1023.X20: 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. Marcy Brown Marsden
Office: Bolin Science Hall Room 111
Phone: (940) 397-4253
Email: margaret.brownmarsden@msutexas.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 4:30-5 pm or by appointment

Class day/time and location:
Lecture and Lab are online. The deadline for all weekly assignments is 11:59pm Sundays. Since this section is fully online you have the flexibility to schedule what time works best for you to cover the material. It is recommended that you schedule two 50 minute sessions per week for lectures (PowerPoint slides with notes) in addition to the time required to complete the Mastering Biology exercises and additional readings.

Requirements:

Textbook: Mastering Biology with eText – Standalone Access Card for Biology: Science for Life, Belk, 6th ed. ISBN-10: 9780134819518, Pearson ($121.50 in the MSU Bookstore)
This option gives you a code to access the eBook and required online homework materials

Lab kit: This course includes an online lab that requires an at-home lab kit. This kit is available from Carolina Biological Supply at a cost of $100.50 (before taxes and shipping). You will need to have the lab kit by February 4th and it is available online at the link to the Carolina lab kit

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

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@mwsu.edu.

Evaluation procedures:
I expect integrity from all students. If I suspect that a student is cheating I may choose to record a zero for that assignment for all students involved and/or drop you from the course. I may also choose to report you for academic dishonesty.

Any action suspicious of cheating, attempting to cheat, or helping someone cheat on an exam will result in termination of your exam and 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 2017-2018 MSU Student Handbook, Appendix E, "Academic Dishonesty Policies and Procedures"

Lecture counts for 60%, and your lab for 40% of your grade in this course. Each includes the following items:

Item in Lecture	**Percent of lecture grade**	**Percent of overall grade (weighted)**
Lecture exam average (4 exams total)	70%	42%
Mastering homework DSMs (one homework per chapter)	30%	18%
Total	100%	60% of overall grade

Item in Lab	**Percent of lab grade**	**Percent of overall grade (weighted)**
Lab worksheets	70%	28%
Team 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.

- You will have 24 hours within which to **login** to D2L to take the exam, however, once you have begun the exam will be timed.
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If you miss an exam

- Since you have 24 hours within which to take an exam there will be **no make-up** exams. In the event that extenuating circumstances prevent you from taking an exam within the allotted time period you must 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.

Mastering homework DSMs

"Mastering" is a website provided by your textbook. You will access Mastering Biology through the course in D2L. A link to the Pearson MyLab and Mastering website is on the main page of our course site in D2L. After setting up an account with this site, you will be automatically logged in to it if you are logged in to D2L.

The DSM, or Dynamic Study Module, is an assignment available through MyLab and Mastering.

- They are graded based on whether or not you completed them by the due date, not whether you got questions right on the first try
- Are "adaptive", which means the program will begin to tailor the assignment based on how you did on previous questions
- Will probably take you about 20-30 minutes, but the more questions you miss, the longer it will take. You do not have to complete the entire assignment in one sitting.
- All due dates are on the assignment calendar posted on D2L.

Lab worksheets

At the end of each lab you will complete a summary worksheet that you will submit to D2L dropbox. These assignments are described in greater detail in the lab syllabus.

Team photojournalism project

You will work with a team to complete a project that involves photographing and identifying organisms, biological processes and ecological structures found in an area. This is a semester-long project and you will be evaluated both as a team and individually. This project is described in greater detail in the lab syllabus.

For technical problems while doing assignments

It is important to do labs and assignments early so that problems will not prevent you from completing the homework before the deadline is up. Since you have at least one week to complete all assignments, *due dates are firm* and will not be moved due to technical problems.

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 your classmates or instructor
    b. If there is no information on D2L contact Dr. Brown Marsden (margaret.brownmarsden@msutexas.edu)

2) An assignment that does not appear to be available on D2L when it should be, or has a grading error.
    a. For Lab D2L: Dr. Brown Marsden (margaret.brownmarsden@msutexas.edu)
    b. For Lecture D2L: Dr. Brown Marsden (margaret.brownmarsden@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@mwsu.edu

4) A problem with your Mastering account or the Mastering website (for example, the website appears to be down, malfunctioning, or you can't access your account), try the link to the Mastering Biology Student Help Page

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.X20")

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.
   b. Use complete sentences
   c. Don't type in all caps

Attendance policy

<u>In general</u>

Student attendance for this online 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

The student is solely responsible for checking updates related to the course. If a student fails to meet the attendance requirements, he or she may be recommended for withdrawal from the course. I will email you before making this decision.

<u>In lab</u>
While there is not a physical lab classroom to attend, it is expected that you will complete all lab assignments. Missing more than two labs can result in an F in the entire course or being dropped by the instructor from the entire course.

Devices during exams

Although exams will be administered online, treat them as though you were in a proctored classroom setting. That means not looking up answers online or in your notes. If you spend time searching for answers you may not complete the exam within the allotted timeframe.

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

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 0.20). 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:
[(Lecture average so far) x (0.60)] + [(Lab average so far) x (0.40)] = 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).