**ABOUT THE COURSE**

Nerdlings, welcome to AP Biology. AP Biology is an exciting, challenging, and rigorous course, with a great deal of independent work. It is a college level course, and I teach my class with the same high expectations and grading policies that students will encounter when they go to college. AP biology covers the same information as semesters 1 and 2 of introductory college biology for biology majors. It is a verychallenging course where success is measured by both intellectual ability and self-motivation. Be prepared to work hard. The most important qualities you must possess and utilize to be successful are a good work ethic, self-motivation, time management and organization (especially of your time). You are expected to put in 1-2 hours a night for this course. Students are expected to come to class having already read the material to be covered, take notes while in class and participate in classroom discussions. Students should review their notes on a daily basis and be prepared to ask questions the following day. Students need to participate in all laboratory activities, and turn in all assignments complete and on time. There will be some essay writing assignments along with lab work, case studies, debates, video lecture notes, book chapter notes and other assignments.

All students will take the AP biology exam in May, 2017 for college credit, and all students are expected to pass the exam. (kind of like the STAAR exam but for AP biology). Each student will need to pay $25 for the exam and fees will be collected in early March. There will be 3 mandatory district review sessions for AP biology students.  The dates for the sessions will be given to you as soon as the district makes them available. Please put the review session dates in your Phone calendars, let your parents, JROTC instructors, Band instructors, choir instructors, orchestra directors, and coaches know that these dates are set in stone and are **MANDATORY** for the college course you have decided to take.

**CLASS EXPECTATIONS:**

1. This is a college level course! Therefore I expect college level work habits from my students. This means that you are expected to put in time at home to take notes over chapters, answer questions, make vocabulary cards, and study for this course. You should be spending 1-2 hours per night of work in this class.
2. Your main goal should be to pass the AP exam in May with a 4 or higher. **If you do not have the desire to pass the AP exam in May or work ethic to put in the required time (1-2 hours per night) to be successful in this course, perhaps you should look at other course options**.
3. The summer assignment is due Friday August 26th, no exceptions will be made as you will have had over 2 months to complete your assignment. Pace yourselves and do not wait until the night before to start.

**Class grades:**

Each grading period you will most likely have 2 to 3 major tests, 2-3 AP lab activities or case studies, 4-6 Free response essay questions, weekly video lecture notes, and weekly book chapter notes that will count for grades. You will also be required to read the chapters in advance and may be asked to complete preliminary questions or study guides that are needed for comprehension of the material.

**Grade breakdown**:

Your grades in AP Biology fit into two categories: daily work (quizzes, homework, labs, case studies) and tests/free response essays. For each unit there will be a multiple-choice test consisting of 32 multiple choice questions and 3 math-based grid-in questions. You will also have an essay test consisting of one long free response question and 3 short free response questions.

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| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Percent of Grade (weight)** |
| MC Tests/FRQs | 70% |
| Labs/case studies/daily work/video lectures/chapter notes | 30% |

**Late Work Grading Policy:**

In college late work is not accepted and it is not accepted in my classroom either. There is a **ZERO LATE WORK POLICY** for AP biology. Keep in mind this is a CollegeBoard approved course and I teach it as such. This means you have to be responsible and bring your work to class not leave it at home or in your locker. Unless you have an excused absence you will receive a zero for whatever you missed. You will be allowed to turn in **one late assignment PER SEMESTER** for full credit if, and only if it is turned in the day after it is due. Once you use your one late work pass for the semester you will receive a zero for any other work not turned in on time. If you have any type of school activity you are required to take any exams that are being given the day you will be absent before you leave. **It is up to you to notify me in advance if you are going to be gone for an exam.**  If you wait until the day you are leaving to notify me you will be given the choice of receiving a zero and participating in your school activity, or taking the test and missing your activity. Keep this in mind as I know many of you are involved in band, orchestra, ROTC, Choir, sports etc. Of course there are always extenuating circumstances if you have something going on at home or you just have a really bad day and broke up with your girlfriend or boyfriend let me know and I will work with you. I am not a monster, but I do have high expectations and my goal is to get you prepared for college so you are successful and know how to attack and pass your college courses.

**What do I learn in AP biology?**

AP biology centers around four big ideas which are as follows:

* Big Idea 1 – The process of evolution drives the diversity and unity of life.
* Big Idea 2 – Biological Systems utilize free energy and molecular building blocks to grow, to reproduce, and to maintain homeostasis.
* Big Idea 3 – Living systems store, retrieve, transmit and respond to information essential to life processes.
* Big Idea 4 – Biological systems interact, and these systems and their interactions possess complex properties

**What are the time requirements for this course?**

This is a fast-paced rigorous college course and I teach it as such. You are expected to keep up with all assignments and video lectures throughout the year. You should be reviewing notes, video lectures, completing assignments and studying on a nightly basis. You should be putting in around 1 hour a night on slow weeks and on testing weeks or weeks with multiple assignments you will be putting in 2 hours a night. It is extremely important not to fall behind in the course because it moves at such a fast pace and it is very hard to catch up if you fall behind.

**Supplies for AP Biology:**

1. **A composition notebook** . You will use it to take detailed notes over chapters in your biology book and answer section questions and to take notes and answer questions over online lectures as well as notes during class. You will also use this to take preliminary data during your labs. You will be required to keep a running table of contents so please leave the first two pages black and fill them in appropriately. I will be checking these so keep up with them.
2. **Pencils, blue or black pens**, **highlighters, and note cards for vocabulary**
3. **Access to a computer** **and the internet** to view online lectures. If you do not have a computer with internet access at home you are responsible for coming in before or after school, during lunches (you can go to the cafeteria, grab your lunch, and eat it in my room while you work), or during your success time to use computers in my room or the library, no exceptions or excuses for not viewing lectures or taking online quizzes. If you waited until the night before video lectures are due and your internet goes out that is on you. I always give an entire week for video and chapter notes to be done as I know most of you are involved in extracurricular activities and will have to manage your time differently on different days. As stated many times, this is a college class, in college you find a way to get whatever needs to be done, done.
4. **Barrons AP Biology Review Book.**  You can purchase this book online or at Barnes and Nobel.

**Lab Supplies to be brought to class the first week of school:**

1. **2 rolls of paper towels**
2. **1 package of white copy paper**

**Rules:**

This is a college course, and I expect you to act like a college student there for I treat you like an adult. If you have to go to the bathroom grab a pass, write it down yourself and go, you do not need to ask for my permission or interrupt class to use the restroom. However, if you choose to leave class do not come back in and ask me what you missed.

**Failed test make-ups:**

If you fail a test you will have one week from the date your test is graded and returned to you to correct it ( you may not re-take it). If you do all your corrections properly you will receive a 20 point curve. For example, if you made an 80 on a test, and you do your test corrections you will make a 100. If you make a 100 on the test and do your corrections you will received a 120. If you choose to correct your test you will need to do the following for every single question you missed. You may not pick and choose what questions you want to correct. All of this is to be done on a separate sheet of paper in my classroom then stapled to your test.

1. Write down the correct answer and explain why it is correct in a minimum of 2 sentences
2. In one sentence explain where you found the information to obtain the correct answer
3. Write one sentence for each wrong answer explaining why that answer was wrong.

If you choose not to correct your test, you will not receive a 20 point curve and will be given the grade you earned. Keep in mind tests account for 70% of your grade in my class so I strongly encourage you to do test corrections.

**I Have a Flipped Classroom:**

You will notice that homework will involve watching video podcasts that will contain lectures about the content we are learning in class.  My classroom is what is commonly referred to as a "flipped" or "inverted" classroom.  What this means is that students receive the content outside of class, usually in a 10-20 minute podcast created by myself or Mr. Anderson, which they are able to do at their leisure, provided it is completed by the due date.    
  
The flipped classroom does **not** mean that students do not ever receive direct instruction from me; in fact, it is quite the opposite.  Because students are getting the content delivered outside of class in a smaller amount of time,  I now have class time to elaborate on the concepts learned, to clarify any muddy points students may have, to provide enrichment, and to assess what students have learned before moving on to more challenging work.  In our classroom, this looks like:

* designing and conducting lab experiments
* conducting case studies
* practicing free response questions as a part of exam prep
* answering short answer questions about content learned the night before
* solving problem sets
* debating controversial topics in the realm of biology
* using rubrics to grade FRQs

The inverted classroom model allows me to differentiate instruction more effectively for the different learners in my classroom, which the direct teach model does not allow.  Because all lectures are pre-recorded and posted to my website, [www.nerdlingscience.com](http://www.nerdlingscience.com), and my youtube channel students can pause them when needed and watch them as many times as they want. Something that could not be done in a traditional lecture. I am also able to assess more frequently what students do and do not understand, which helps me to ensure they are learning what needs to be learned in order to meet the learning objectives of the course. I assess using free responses, unit exams, as well as open questioning in class.

**ARE THERE ANY OTHER WEBSITES I SHOULD JOIN OR SOCIAL MEDIA AFFILIATED WITH YOU OR YOUR COURSE?**

1. Yes! I have a twitter and Instagram account as well as a youtube station and a website.
2. WEBSITE: [www.nerdlingscience.com](http://www.nerdlingscience.com)
3. My Twitter and instagram is: @Queen\_Nerdling
4. My Youtube channel is: queen nerdling You can find my channel by typing in “Queen Nerdling” in the search field or by following this link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCO7OfGz2T5UNcAbIFiBDD\_g . This is where all my video lectures are posted and where I posted video blogs documenting my experience in New Zealand.

**Student/Parent Agreement form: NAME:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please read over the syllabus and course information. Turn this form in to Mrs. Butcher signed by yourself and your legal guardian before summer break.**

I understand that I have decided to take a college course titled AP Biology. I understand that this course is taught at a 4 year university college level and will require 7-14 hours a week of my time put in at home. I also understand that I will be held responsible for turning all assignments in on time, doing test corrections when I receive my tests back, and that I must attend all review session dates. I understand there is a **zero late work** policy as this is an AP college level class and I will not be allowed to turn in late work for a grade or make up missing work. I understand review sessions are mandatory and I am required to attend these sessions and need to schedule other activities around them. I understand failure to complete any of these requirements may result in failing the course. By signing below **I agree to do all my work and turn it in on time, spend the appropriate amount of time studying for this course, take the AP exam, and attend mandatory review sessions**.

Student Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my son/daughter has chosen to take a college level course titled AP Biology. I understand my son/daughter must put in extensive time at home as this course is taught at a 4 year university level. I also understand my son/daughter will be held responsible for turning all assignments in on time, and doing test corrections to increase their test grade. I understand there is a **zero late work** policy as this is an AP college level class and that no late work will be accepted for a grade unless there are extenuating circumstances which does not include the time demands of extracurricular activities such as band, sports, choir, JROTC etc. I understand that my son/daughter is required to attend the 3 mandatory review session dates and must pay for and take the AP biology exam in May. **I understand these terms and will support my son/daughter and will help monitor them at home to ensure they are completing assignments and putting in adequate time studying for this course.**

Parent Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_