

A circular collage of biology-related illustrations. At the top center is a brain. To its left is a dog. Below the dog is a DNA double helix. To the right of the brain is a molecular structure labeled 'genetics'. Below that is a diagram labeled 'ANATOMY' showing a branching structure. In the center, the word 'BIOLOGY' is written in large, colorful, block letters. Below 'BIOLOGY' is a microscope. To the right of the microscope is a heart and a bird. Below the bird is a fish. At the bottom center is a tree with the word 'EVOLUTION' written below it. To the left of the tree is a beaker with bubbles and the chemical formula $C_{10}H_{12}N_2O$. To the left of the beaker is a test tube rack with three test tubes. At the bottom left is a starburst shape with the word 'LIFE' inside. The entire collage is surrounded by various small decorative elements like circles, triangles, and swirls.

Welcome to ACP Biology! I am thrilled to begin the 2026–2027 school year with you. This course is designed not just to teach biology, but to *experience* it – through hands-on investigations, problem solving, and connections to the world around us.

This year, expect less “knowing about” and more **“figuring out.”** Of course, we’ll cover plenty of important biology content, but equally important are the skills students will build:

- These skills will be practiced in an engaging, hands-on classroom where students are expected to participate actively, take thoughtful notes, and ask questions whenever curiosity (or confusion!) arises.

Extra Help:

- I can't wait to get started on this academic adventure with you. Together, we'll explore how biology shapes life on Earth and why it matters to each of us. This year promises to be both rigorous and engaging as we explore biology through investigation and discovery!

Carolyn "Beanie" Spangler

Wellesley High School Course Overview and Expectations

ACP Biology - Ms. Spangler

Textbook: [OpenStax](#)
Teacher Email: spanglerc@wellesleyps.org
Classroom: Room 339
Office/Classroom: Room 358 & 341

I. Materials

- ❖ A 3-ring binder with loose-leaf paper - We'll be taking notes, completing labs, and doing assignments that you'll want to keep organized for tests and quizzes.
- ❖ Fully Charged Laptop - We'll use our laptops for some of our daily activities, so it's essential to have them ready to go!
- ❖ Pen/Pencil
- ❖ Headphones - for specific activities (not general use)
- ❖ Calculator

II. Canvas

All course curriculum will be posted on Canvas. You'll find assignments, important announcements, slides, and resources here. I highly recommend that you download the Canvas app and enable push notifications so you don't miss any updates. There will be a running Daily Agenda on Canvas which will have links to classroom activities, classwork, homework assignments and dates for upcoming tests. The announcement feature will be used for timely updates, so please allow for push notifications.

III. Classroom Expectations

Our classroom is a community of learners. To ensure a productive and respectful environment for everyone, we'll adhere to the WHS core values:

- Academic excellence: Always strive for your best work
- Cooperative and caring relationships: Include others; be kind; show empathy
- Respect for human differences: Learn from diverse perspectives; be open; respect others
- Commitment to community: Contribute positively to our classroom environment; actively engage

Please remember that the **WHS Student Handbook** policies apply to our classroom at all times.

IV. Academic Honesty/Integrity

Academic honesty is a cornerstone of our classroom and a crucial life skill. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty is unfair both to your learning and to your friends and classmates. I expect all students to complete their own work. **Cheating includes the sharing/copying of completed assignments and using internet sources/AI tools without permission and/or citation.** Dishonesty such as these examples "undercuts efforts to become a person of principle" writes Dr. Adam Grant, a NYT columnist and organizational psychologist at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Grant continues "The heart of integrity is recognizing that the ends don't justify the means. What we achieve may define our successes. How we achieve it determines our character."¹

Unless specifically designated as a group assignment, assume all work is original and individual and that you may NOT use LLMs/AI tools unless specifically indicated in the assignment. If a violation should occur, guidelines outlined in the student handbook will be followed (parents and the appropriate assistant principals will be contacted, notation will be made in the student file, and appropriate consequences will be assessed)

¹ Grant, Adam. "Opinion | There's Really Only One Way to Stop Students From Cheating." *Nytimes*, The New York Times, 26 Aug. 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/26/opinion/students-cheating-ai.html>. Accessed 28 Aug. 2026.

V. Attendance/Tardies

It is essential that you are in your seats and ready to work when the bell rings (phones in the cubbies and notebooks out before the bell rings!). This is particularly important on lab days (**7:30 am start time**) which often begin with crucial safety instructions and background information.

If you know in advance that you will be absent or tardy from class, please let me know. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on any missed work. Please reach out to me as soon as possible to get a plan in place. The best place to check for assignments and homework and links is the Daily Agenda in Canvas. Canvas is updated daily and all classwork and due dates will be posted there.

Policy on attendance and tardies outlined in the student handbook will be followed, including appropriate consequences.

If I ever need to be absent, I will make every effort to let you know beforehand via a Canvas Announcement. Links to any substitute work will be in Canvas and linked to the announcement.

VI. Evaluation

Students will earn *term grades* based on the quality and accuracy of their work, weighted as follows:

Assessments (Tests/Quizzes): 50% Assignments (Classwork, HW, Labs, Projects): 50%

Year Grades are weighted by term as indicated below:.

Q1: 22% Q2: 22% Q3: 22% Q4: 22% E1: 12%*

*E1 = Plant Project, Midterm & Final Exam grades

***Tests & Quizzes:**

Tests will always be announced in advance. You can expect at least two larger assessments and a quiz or two per term. You are expected to take the test on the day that it is scheduled. *Please discuss all accommodations in advance of the scheduled assessment date.*

***Test Corrections:**

It is often so helpful to learn from mistakes and miscues. Test corrections are available for all students after assessments and up to 25% of the total credit lost may be made up and added to the assessment score. This is a great way to improve your understanding and your grade! Corrections are not available for homework or labs.

***Late Work Policy:**

All unit work must be submitted by the due date listed in the Daily Agenda on Canvas. To keep you on track, I'll aim to align due dates with our class periods (so nothing should be due on a drop day). Once I have graded and entered assignments into PowerSchool, late penalties will be applied (approximately a 10% deduction per day).

Please note: All assignments for a unit must be completed and submitted before the Unit Test. Work submitted after the unit test is not able to be evaluated and accepted.

***District Curricular Accommodation Plans:** District accommodations ([DCAP](#)) are available to all students, and in the 26-27 school year, WHS is committed to moving this forward with fidelity. While some accommodations can be offered at the moment, others require advanced notice. For example: Extended time on an in-class assessment is a collaborative decision made by the teacher, student, and family to meet individual student needs. The WHS guideline is up to 25% extra time. This accommodation relies on proactive student communication **prior to the date of the assessment**. The student and teacher must establish how the accommodation will be provided.

VII. Technology (phones/laptops/headphones)

As per the school-wide policy, please turn off your cell phone and place it in the designated cubbies at the front of the classroom. We may occasionally use phones as a tool (for example, the camera is great for data collection during labs!), but they will otherwise remain in the cubbies, including during any bathroom, drink or movement breaks.

Laptops will be used to support our in-class work. Please ensure you are using your laptop for school-related activities only. Engaging in prohibited activities like texting, playing games, or watching videos is distracting and a violation of the district's acceptable use policy. Please use the "Do Not Disturb" feature on your laptop to minimize distractions.

In our collaborative learning environment, being fully present is important. For this reason, **personal headphone use is not permitted** unless I give you explicit permission. There may be times when it's appropriate, but please ask me first.

VIII. Extra Help & Office Hours

I'm here to support you! I have scheduled office hours on **Mondays from 2:30 PM to 3:15 PM in Room 341**. You can also find me in my other classroom, Room 341, or the science office in Room 358. My weekly schedule will be posted outside our classroom door. Drop-ins welcome!

VIV. Communication (Student-teacher and Parent-teacher)

To provide opportunities for students to practice face-to-face communications, students should always try to speak with me in person during class or drop by for office hours before resorting to email.

And Parents/Guardians please feel free to contact me via email at spanglerc@wellesleyhs.org, as email is the best means of communication. Our class syllabus on Canvas is public as well and can be accessed on our teacher page on the school website (under Staff Directory). Please also see the course Syllabus at a Glance on the reverse.

Parent/Guardian- please Sign here: _____

Students- please acknowledge and print and sign:

Student Name (printed): _____

Student: SIGN HERE _____

ACP Biology 2026: Syllabus at a Glance

Water: Where Life Begins / The Chemistry of Survival

Guiding Question: How does chemical bonding and the emergent properties of water support life?

Topics: Properties of Water, Review of Chemistry

Kingdoms: How Life is Organized

Guiding Question: How and why are living things classified?

Topics: Kingdoms, Classification, Taxonomy, Microscopes, Scientific Method, Characteristics of Living Things

Africa, Part 1: The Living Landscape

Guiding Question: How do organisms get what they need to live and survive?

Topics: Ecology, Food Chains, Food Webs, Niche, Trophic Levels

Africa, Part 2: The Big Breakdown

Guiding Question: How and why do organisms access the biomolecules that they need?

Topics: Biomolecules, Enzymes, Digestion

Cells: Life's Smallest Unit

Guiding Question: What properties of cells contribute to their diversity in size, shape, and function?

Topics: Cell Size, Cell Parts and Functions

Disease: Life's Challenges

Guiding Question: How do genetics and infections lead to disease?

Topics: Cell Cycle & Cancer

The Plant Project (Capstone Project)

Guiding Question: How do different factors affect the growth of plants?

Topics: Plant Growth and Development, Scientific Method, Argumentation, Experimental Skills

Energy: Fueling the Circle of Life

Guiding Question: How is energy transferred through ecosystems?

Topics: Cellular Respiration, Photosynthesis

Public Health: Protecting Populations

Guiding Questions: How do communities prevent disease and promote health? What causes disease?

Topics: Bacteria & Viruses, Disease Prevention, Data Analysis

Melanin and the Central Dogma of LIFE!

Guiding Question: Why do some traits become more frequent in populations?

Topics: DNA, Protein Synthesis, Genetics, Evolution