# Honors: 9th Grade Biology

Worcester Technical High School (2020-2021)

## Instructor Information

Teacher: Mr. Pacheco
Email: st.pachecop@worcesterschools.net

Teacher: Mrs. Coughlin
Email: coughlinj@worcesterschools.net

## Course Materials

There are no required textbooks for this class, and I have worked hard to ensure that all materials used in this class are freely available to you. That said, if something in this class fascinates you and you'd like to learn more, please let me know, and I will happily recommend additional readings!

## General Grading Policies

### Grade categories

- Weekly Digital Notebook – 25%
- Weekly Assessments – 20%
    - Open Responses
        - *You may only drop 1 open response from your final grade*
    - Weekly Projects
    - Quarterly Projects
- Weekly Participation – 35%
    - Participation
- Weekly Assignments (HW & CW) – 20%

**Notes: *Weekly Participation & Weekly Digital Notebooks are "Locked" and will most likely not be adjusted.**
***Weekly Assessments & Weekly Assignments grading weight may be changed at any discretion by Mr. Pacheco or Mrs. Coughlin**

### Grade Breakdown

This course is not graded on a curve.
A = 90-100%
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
D = 65% -69%
F = 0% - 64%

## Special COVID Grading Policy

Suppose you are within 1.5% of the next letter grade (e.g., 78.5%, 88.5%, or above) for the entire course. In that case, I will think deeply about your participation in the class, reread your notebooks to see how substantial and thoughtful they were, and examine whether or not you have done the extra credit. If you have met a high standard of participation and engagement and have completed the extra credit, I will bump you up to the next letter grade. Please do not try to take advantage of this gracious policy by asking me to bump your grade if it is more significant than 1.5% away from the next letter grade (e.g., 88.4%) because the answer will be no. Please do not expect that I will automatically bump you up if you are within that range. I expect a high bar of participation for this policy to be enacted, so if you want to ensure you meet this high bar, please dedicate the appropriate amount of time and energy to this class.

# Assignment Resubmission

Any assignment may be resubmitted once. Further resubmission request is up to the teacher's discretion based on whether a student has demonstrated genuine empathy for their desired grade and the effort to resubmit. After an assignment is re-submitted, it will be re-grade. The final grade you receive on the assignment will be the average score of your re-submitted grade and your initial grade.

**Notes:* Students have seven days after the assignment is graded and returned to resubmit.**
**Note: *For example, if you get an %100 on your resubmission and received an 80% on your initial assignment. Your final grade will be average between 100% and 80% to become a final grade of 90%***

## Second Chance Learning Policy

I decided to adopt a Second Chance Learning (SCL) policy in our classroom because students conceptualize different information and material at different stages in their learning. I also acknowledge that learning and performance are not interrelated. Learning is a complex phenomenon that requires the conceptualization of a creative solution to be someday measured accurately. A student's education should not solely be based on how well they perform on an assessment. **Second chance learning** is a policy that presents additional opportunities for students to **learn**, **reflect**, and **demonstrate** what they know and can do when assessed in a fashion that is more equitable to their needs. Second Chance Learning is a policy I adopted because every student has the right to take ownership of their education.

**SECOND CHANCE LEARNING GUIDELINES**

- Students will have the opportunity to take an alternative assessment within one week of the initial evaluation being graded and returned.
- Students may be given an alternative assignment or assessment to demonstrate their knowledge or skills more accurately.
- Students will be required to arrange relearning or additional assessment opportunities with their teacher before SCL can be enacted.
- Students are advised to attend after-school tutor sessions or watch the review sessions recorded if offered.

- Students must complete and return a re-assessment reflection form to identify gaps in their learning/understanding.
- The assessment of choice will be capped at a grade of **75%**.
- Assessments **will not** be given during class time.
- Assessments **will not** be accepted within three (3) days of when marking period grades are due.
- Assessments **will not** be accepted after ten (10) days of second chance learning activity becoming available to all students / the initial assessment being returned.
- Midterm exams, final exams, or quarterly projects are not eligible for second chance learning.

### Final Note on Grading

Final grades are final. Extra credit opportunities are offered throughout the quarter; therefore, if you fear that your grade will border between two, then it is your responsibility to use the extra credit opportunities to your advantage.

## Learning in the time of COVID

Because these are very uncertain and stressful times, I have done my best to design this class in a way to focus more on your learning and less on your performance (e.g., exams). We will talk more about this difference in this class. I have also lessened the reading load I would normally assign for this class and tried to weave in smaller assignments, tech-free assignments, and other media avenues to reduce the burden of reading off a screen for hours on end. In return, I ask that you show up to class, do the work, and participate to the fullest extent of your ability. That being said, if you need extra time on an assignment, please email me and tell me what's up. We can probably figure things out. My concern will always be for your progress and your health. However, I only ask that you please reach out and communicate with me and do not wait until the end of the term to connect with me.

### This class will observe a modified version of Bayne's Principles for COVID learning.

1. Nobody signed up for this.
    a. Not for the sickness, not for the social distancing, not for the sudden end of our normal lives together on campus
    b. Not for hyperflex learning, not for teaching remotely, not for learning from home, not for mastering new technologies, not for varied access to learning materials

2. The humane option is the best option.
    a. We are going to prioritize supporting each other as humans.
    b. We are going to prioritize simple solutions that make sense.

3. We cannot just do the same thing online.
    a. Some assignments are no longer possible.
    b. Some expectations are no longer reasonable.

    c. Some objectives are no longer valuable.

4. We will foster intellectual nourishment, social connection, and personal accommodation.
    a. Synchronous discussion to learn together and combat isolation
    b. Accessible asynchronous content for diverse access, time zones, and contexts

5. We will remain flexible and adjust to the situation.
    a. Nobody knows how we might need to adapt to this course or adapt to changes in our lives to be open and as flexible as possible.
    b. Everybody needs support and understanding in this unprecedented moment.

### Class Time

This course will take place live during the scheduled times on Google Meet.

### Google Meet Etiquette:

1. Your health and your family's health come first. If you need to miss a class, just let me know, and we will figure out how to best get you caught up.
2. I highly encourage you to turn on your camera and put in as much camera time as you can so I can see your face, and we can better engage with one another. But you can turn your camera off at any time, for any reason. Just please turn it on as much as you can
3. There is no dress code; feel more than free to show up in your pajamas!
4. If you have to eat during class, no problem! I'll probably be eating too.
5. If you need to get up to use the restroom, grab a sweatshirt, refill your water bottle, or whatever, no problem! Just go ahead and mute yourself and turn your video off if you need, and come back when you are ready.
6. Family members, dogs, cats, and tiny humans running around in the background will always be perfectly acceptable. The same goes for messy bedrooms, dining rooms, or whatever space is available for you to use.

## Emails and Office Hours

Emails sent after 5 p.m. most likely will not be responded to until the next day. Emails sent within 24 hours of a due date may not be answered immediately. I try to respond to email over the weekend but cannot guarantee a response. In other words, I am a human, too, so please plan ahead! Keep in mind and email is generally best for quick questions. If you have in-depth questions about the course material, want to review material you missed, or have concerns about the course, I encourage you to stay after class and ask for more intel. I genuinely want to get to know each of you, and I am eager to help you set, achieve, and surpass your short-and long-term goals.

## Diversity Statement:

I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientation, ability—and other visible

and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. Oftentimes we may talk about our own experiences in education and our struggles. Anything discussed in class should be kept to our class and not discussed outside our course.

### Preferred Name/Pronoun Statement

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this early in the course so that I may make appropriate notations in my records!

## Academic Honesty (aka plagiarism and cheating)

Students are expected to be aware of and to adhere to Worcester Technical High Schools Academic Honesty Policy. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, refer to the Student Guide to Academic Integrity at Worcester Technical High School. Academic Honesty Policy will be handled earnestly. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, it is YOUR responsibility to contact your Teacher prior to submitting any assignment or taking an exam/quiz. "Lack of understanding" will not be considered an acceptable excuse for any academic honesty violation. For more information about plagiarism, visit www.plagiarism.org.

****Plagiarism will not be tolerated. ****

### All of the following are considered plagiarism (adapted from www.plagiarism.org):

* turning in someone else's work as your own

Note: this includes information found on the web (e.g., information from Wikipedia), past papers, and your work turned into this class or another class (called self-plagiarism).

* copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
* failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
* giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
* changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit

**Note: Changing 1 or 2 words from an original source (e.g., a sentence) is STILL plagiarism.**