

COURSE DESCRIPTION

During our year in **Honors Biology** we will be challenged by many diverse topics that are best explored utilizing a variety of different instructional tools, including-but not limited to: class hands-on activities, interactive computer-based technology, laboratory explorations, active class discussion, extensive analysis and application of current literature, and independent research. This course explores the common characteristics that all living organisms share in the context of several underlying themes: interdependence, structure and function, universality versus diversity, change over time, and the connections between micro and the macro living world.

I. Major Units to be covered this year

1. Evolution
2. Genetics
3. Cellular organization and Cellular processes
4. Ecology
5. Bioethical contemporary issues

II. Scientific processing: Scientific Method

- Observation and experimental design
- Data collection and processing
- Data analysis and interpretation

The primary goal of the biology program is to cultivate an interest in science in general. A secondary goal is to successfully complete EOC (End of Course Exam) administered in April 2026 by the state of Missouri, based on NGSS (New Generation Science Standards) and to inspire motivated students to apply for entry into IB Biology program, a challenging and rewarding course of study that begins in the junior year.

Class GOAL: All students will achieve 80% mastery of power-standards.

AIMS:

- To provide students with challenging and creative scientific curriculum through story lines.
- To provide students with a body of knowledge that characterizes science and technology within a global context.
- To provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge of science and technology.
- To enable students to develop their abilities to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.
- To provide opportunities for students to engage in scientific investigations that are both thought provoking and relevant.
- To foster an awareness of the importance of communication, and collaboration during scientific investigations.

OBJECTIVES

Demonstrate both an **understanding (content)** of – and ability to apply the following:

- Scientific facts and concepts, investigative methods, and techniques (process)
- Relevant scientific terminology
- Effective methods of communicating scientific knowledge

Demonstrate an **ability (process)** to construct, analyze and evaluate:

- Hypothesis, research question, and predictions
- Phenomenon by applying evidential reasoning
- Investigative strategies and techniques to collect authentic data
- Explanations and conclusions derived from scientific explorations with modeling

GRADE

Your grade is based primarily on standard mastery. For passing grade you have to master **ALL** required standards. Mastery level is set to 80% for each individual standard.

Mastery of the standards : 80% of your grade (15% Vocabulary Quizzes; 25% Content Quizzes; 40% Unit Tests)

Quizzes and tests are graded on accuracy. There will be a minimum 2(+) quizzes and one test per Unit.

Participation : 20% of your grade (10% Classwork; 10% Homework-Lab/project part of CW/HW)

Participation grade will be mainly based on completion and sometimes on accuracy. This will be communicated to students at the time assignments are assigned. Students must be aware that their authentic work and completion of classwork, homework and lab/project are learning activities that will lead to successful standard mastery which is assessed through quizzes and tests.

Although certain aspects of participation are not directly factored in the overall grade, they will indirectly affect your class performance and include daily attendance, do now/reflections, active participation in daily school work/activities/projects, homework, and class behavior.

Standard mastery scale:

1	(F) =	0-69
2	(C) =	70-79
3	(B) =	80-89
4	(A) =	90-100.

Assessments

- You may expect each time we meet as a class to have a mini 3-5 question quiz in which you will be assessed understandings from the previous class (will drop one lowest score at the end of each quarter). **Unannounced** quizzes for understanding from the class time may take place at the end of the block. If you actively participated in learning activities for the day, you should not have a problem of scoring all points.
- You will have at least **2 longer (announced) quizzes per quarter** (timing will differ due to difference in content length being taught, however you will be informed in time so you can prepare).
- **One test will be administered per quarter** to assess standard mastery. District assessed.

Re-quizzing/Test corrections

If a student scores less than 70% on any given quiz, they will have an opportunity to re-quiz. If they score higher on a re-quiz, new, higher grade I will replace lower score by higher grade. If the attempt to re-quiz does not result in a higher new grade, I will hold a higher % grade in SIS. Limit, three re-quiz attempts. Re-quiz has to be taken before the official end of the grading cycle.

If a student scores less than 70% on the Unit test, they will be able to earn half points back for test corrections, and a new re-calculated grade will be entered in SIS as a separate test grade to buffer the initial low score. This applies only to students who score less than 70% (fail) on the Unit test.

Sources

- Handouts and assignments provided by the district and Mrs. Selimovic-Milo (all NGSS standard based).
- AP **or** older version of IB Biology Textbook (District did not adopt a new textbook for use in Honors Biology class.) We will assign you this book as a supplemental resource.

Requirements/Materials

- 2" (includes 4 section dividers for four quarters):
students will collect handouts/notes/other paperwork
- Pen/pencils/colored pencils/highlighters
- Paper for the binder or notebook for note taking (keep in the binder)
- **Laptop**

Classwork: Learning activities including cooperative learning, and hands-on **lab activities** that do not require a formal report. Should be completed in class, sometimes at home. Expectation is that you will complete unfinished classwork before the next class meets. If not, zero will be entered in SIS as a placeholder while late points (10%) will be lost from overall grade for each class period assignment is late. After an assignment is one week late, students can earn a maximum of 50%. This policy will become active in the second quarter of first semester, week 11, after students have had time to adjust to our class norms and expectations. **Not all assigned classwork will be entered in SIS.** Classwork has a purpose of fostering student learning. *In our Teams daily agenda, students will be informed if an assignment will be graded and entered into the gradebook.*

Homework: There will be homework nearly every class. Homework assignments are due at the beginning of our next class. Homework is graded on effort, completion, and sometimes correctness. Zero is recorded if the assignment is simply not done. Students should correct their work as needed during the homework discussion and ask questions if anything remains unclear. Late homework will be accepted until the beginning of class on your test date for each unit test. Each class time homework is late you will lose 10% from overall grade earned. This policy will become active week 6 of starting school, after students have had time to adjust to our class norms and expectations. After an assignment is one week late, students can earn a maximum of 50%. Homework has a purpose of practicing concepts and fostering student learning. **Not all assigned homework will be entered in SIS.** *In our Teams daily agenda, students will be informed if an assignment will be graded and entered into the gradebook.*

After the Unit test, late work for the section will not be accepted, and in SIS zero will remain for missing assignments.

Fair warning: Not doing the homework assignments with your best effort is the quickest way to sabotage your grade. Homework is more about building understanding than practicing a simple

exercise. It is a learning tool. Just like walking, riding a bike or doing any sport, learning biology must be learned by doing.

Absences and Tardies: When you have an excused absence, you are exempted from the Do Now, Exit Slip, and anything else beyond your control for that day. Regardless of the reason for the absence, you are still responsible for completing the homework (due upon return to class for full credit), classwork, laboratory experiments/projects or tests in a timely fashion. **Quizzes and Tests must be made up on the first day upon returning to school after being absent.** Students must talk to me/the teacher and arrange the make-up quiz/test. You are also expected to obtain a copy of the notes from a classmate and to check teams to download the classroom materials from the day. I will post a daily agenda with a description of the work for the day, **every class period**. This means, in the case of absence, refer to our Biology Team to see what you are missing and what you need to complete. If additional clarification is needed, please email me.

All makeup or late work needs to be completed by the end of the corresponding unit. **The grade for any work still missing will become a permanent zero score on the unit test day.** If you are tardy, you are responsible for all missed work. There are no exemptions for tardiness. The school policy on tardiness will be enforced.

Personal Electronic Devices

In accordance with school policy, cell phones, personal computers, airpods/earbuds, headphones, portable gaming devices, etc. are not allowed in class from the beginning of the class time until the end. This includes the removal of airpods/earbuds/headphones from ears/around the head or neck.

If any piece of technology is seen OR heard during class, regardless of whether or not it is in use, it will be confiscated in accordance with school policy turned in to the school administration. Students are asked to keep PEDs put away in PED's provided space, not their pockets, during class and in their backpacks during transitional time.

Phones are supposed to be placed in your assigned Cell Phone Lot Pocket for the duration of the class.

I am aware that many students have smartwatches or apple watches; they will also be subject to the SLPS and Metro HS personal electronic device policy.

If a student requires access to a PED as part of an IEP, 504, or health care plan, please email reach out to school administration (Dr. Hamilton; Dr. Cooper)

However... We will use phones in class on occasions and you will be informed at that particular time about phone use.

All phone devices MUST be placed in the Cell Phone Lot for the duration of any assessment (Quiz or Test) until ALL students are done with the assessment.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Metro has extremely high regard for academic integrity and, as such, has zero tolerance for any and all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, all forms of cheating on any assessments, essays, or assignments (copying, taking pictures, group chats with answers, etc.), plagiarism, and any other unethical academic behavior. Any student in violation will receive no credit (zero/F letter grade), a family meeting will be scheduled, and a notation of the violation will be in the student's school record.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as Chat GPT, has the potential for misuse and often borders on plagiarism. At Metro, we utilize Turnitin to disrupt plagiarism and ensure the integrity of ALL student work. If it is deemed that a student has used any AI tool to complete an assignment, the student will receive no credit (zero/F letter grade), a family meeting will be scheduled, as well as a notation of the violation in the student's school record.

Any academic dishonesty violation will affect recommendations written by the school for any student applying for post-secondary institutions, scholarships, and other educational programs.

SLPS 2024-2025 Student Code of Conduct Handbook**Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use:**

AI can enhance student learning experiences and support the achievement of learning objectives. Student use of AI tools will have a focus on using them to take ownership of their learning and development. We value student agency in SLPS and seek to foster a collaborative learning environment with the use of technology and technology tools and applications.

AI tools will only complement, not replace, human instruction and support. As such, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in St. Louis Public Schools for the following activities:

- ☐ Brainstorming and refining ideas;
- ☐ Fine tuning research questions;
- ☐ Finding information on a topic;
- ☐ Drafting an outline to organize thoughts; and
- ☐ Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- ☐ Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into a formal class assignment/project.
- ☐ Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool, and clearly defined by the instructor which components may use such technology.
- ☐ Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- ☐ Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.

Students are responsible for the information submitted based on an AI query. Student use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited. Any assignment that is found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways will be subject to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to assignment resubmission, assignment failure, or course failure. If in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for instructor clarification.

Teachers play a critical role in facilitating meaningful interactions and providing individualized support to students

using AI tools and must adhere to all district policies and regulations regarding the collection, storage, and use of student data when using AI tools. Protecting student privacy is paramount in the use of technology.

Source: Adapted from Center for the Advancement of Teaching;

<https://teaching.temple.edu/sites/teaching/files/resource/pdf/Chat-GPT%20syllabus%20statement%20guidance.pdf>

General rules and student expectations (in virtual setting or physical classroom)

- You are expected to report to your class **every day** and **on time**.
- You are expected to be an active participant in your learning.
- Respect yourself, your classmates, your teacher and the classroom.
- Raise your hand if you have a question and communicate in a courteous manner.
- **Do not copy any** assignments from your peers! **Practice academic honesty** always.
- You may collaborate on group projects (desired), however **during assessments** it is expected you will do your work **independently**.
- Zero tolerance for academic dishonesty (cheating). **Automatic zero** will be entered in SIS for dishonest attempts without ability to make up the quiz/test.
- **No food or drink in the classroom** except bottled water.
- Unexplained tardiness is unacceptable. 1-3 tardies parents will be informed. Multiple tardies (four or greater) over a 5 week period will be reported to parents and addressed by the administration.

Parent expectations

1. Check Focus/SIS system gradebook (to see if homework is being completed, check on quiz scores, and on current class grade). Periodically check Teams to make sure your student has actually submitted completed assignments.
2. Ensure students are at school and report **on time to school**.
3. Encourage students to be their own self advocate if they need to discuss any assignment and/or quiz (test) grade.

Teacher expectations

1. Provide a standards-based curriculum.
2. Provide a safe, positive & healthy learning environment.
3. Communicate with parents about student progress.
4. Correct and return work in a timely manner.
5. Provide necessary help and support for those struggling with Biological concepts.

Tutoring

After school tutoring will be available for interested students, however **I will strongly recommend/mandate tutoring sessions with me for students who's grade percentage is below 70% and are not mastering concepts.**

Days and times will be determined on individual bases for tutoring sessions.

I am looking forward to a successful and exciting school year for all. I hope you will find the activities interesting, challenging, and educational.

If at any time you have any concerns you would like to bring up, do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail, phone or schedule an appointment to meet after school.

Be prepared and do your best,

Larisa Selimovic-Milosavljevic

e-mail: larisa.selimovic-milosavljevic@slps.org

Student name: _____

Parent name: _____

Signature : _____ Date: _____

In order to best meet ever-evolving student needs, Ms. Selimovic-Milo reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time throughout the school year. Students and parents will be notified of any such changes if they are made