

Biology 421: Marine Biology Series

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Course Prep Guide

Tips for Success in Biology

The following information will help you to do well in biology. While each student has different study habits and varying degrees of success, this form should be of some assistance.

- 1) Review lecture notes *daily*. Waiting until the night before to study for a quiz or exam may insure frustration (don't cram).
- 2) It is important that you keep up with the assigned reading. The information from the text will supplement what is covered in lecture. Moreover, in many texts, the summaries and reviews at the end of chapters is especially useful. Review the information to gain more insight about particular lecture topics.
- 3) Emphasize your understanding of the key concepts. Most of the questions on the quiz or midterm are designed to determine what you understand. Focusing on the key concepts and processes will allow you to remember specific details. Know and understand the major, the key concepts as discussed in lecture.
- 4) Attend lecture regularly. I cover the points I consider to be most important during lecture, and a majority of questions are directly related to the topics covered in lecture. Missing lecture only hinders your progress.
- 5) Attend your lab sessions and field trips. Many students don't realize that the lab and field are integral parts of this course. Both Lab and Field sessions help you make the connection with the material covered in lecture. If you do not regularly attend lab (and use that time accordingly), or attend some of the field trips, you run the risk of failing this class.
- 6) Show up to class prepared. Scan (preview) the reading to get an idea of what going to be covered. Be present when your are in class. Participation is one way to insure your success.
- 7) If something is not clear, then *ask questions*. There are only a few questions that really irritate me (I will let you know what those are, should they come up). If you are lost or don't understand a topic *ask*. If you don't ask, I will assume you know. If I assume you know, it will be asked on the quiz or midterm. You have a variety of ways to get in touch with me, including e-mail. I am available to answer your questions during office hours and this is an excellent time to get clarification on confusing topics.
- 8) Investigators from all branches of science collaborate. It is a good idea to form study groups to discuss lecture topics. If you can explain a topic (like alternation of generations) to a colleague, you will have a very clear understanding of that topic.

9) A failing grade is not what most students anticipate receiving at the beginning of the term. Sometimes, extra help outside the class or a tutor may be in order. There are many folks on campus that can help you with this topics (or many others in science and math). Graduate students may provide tutoring at a nominal fee.

10) Understand that this is an upper division course for biology majors, and we will cover a large amount of information over the next few weeks. Much of the information in lecture will be the taxonomic classification of marine organisms, and will be emphasized again in lab. We will also cover major processes and biological concepts. It is important that you understand this information. Again, be sure you understand the major topics and key concepts.

11) While it is very early in the term and difficult to anticipate problems, *never* wait to the last minute to discuss the problem. “Stuff” happens, but not communicating with me will make matters worse. In short, don’t assume I will know all the facts, and have documents (doctor or employer letter, etc.) to validate your reasons.

12) Again, *there are no victims in my classes*. The grade I report, is the grade you’ve earned. Pay attention to assignment deadlines, announcements, and especially detail in your lab/field notebooks. If you are unsure about something, it is important you ask.

Keep this document with your syllabus and refer to it often.

Notes