



DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Registration – Pre-requisites: Instructors cannot waive the pre-requisites for a course. Pre-requisites are established by the Department and can be waived only by the Department. The Department reserves the right to determine the level of preparation, as indicated by successful completion of specified coursework, necessary to enroll in a Departmental course. The Department reserves the right to determine the competency of a student to enroll in a Department course when credit for any pre-requisite course is more than 10 years old or when the Department cannot verify the content of the pre-requisite course. In such cases, competency will be judged by written examination in all of the pre-requisite courses for which credits are more than 10 years old or for which the content cannot be verified. Integrative Biology graduate students taking undergraduate courses are automatically permitted into them, without screening for pre-requisites, as are post-baccalaureate students with degrees in biology and post-baccalaureate students enrolled in any USF graduate program.

Registration – Linked Courses: Students are not permitted to register for just the lecture or laboratory component of a lecture/laboratory combination course, and then take the other component later. Students are not permitted to repeat just the lecture or laboratory component of a lecture/laboratory combination course if they “pass” the other component. The lecture and laboratory components of such courses are intimately linked, and students pass or fail the entire course as a unit.

Registration – Time Conflicts: Instructors are not obliged to allow a student to miss any portion of a course because the timing of the course conflicts with the timing of another course. The University permits a student to register for two courses that overlap temporally if the instructors of both courses involved sign a time conflict waiver form, but the Department takes the position that all course content is essential and, therefore, that no portion of a course can be considered superfluous.

Registration – Late Adds: Students may add courses beyond the deadlines established by the University, but they must petition the College Academic Regulations Committee (ARC) to do so. Instructors cannot authorize late adds. The Department does not permit late adds to laboratory courses, with the exception of independent study or undergraduate research. Students are not allowed, under any circumstances, to sit in on laboratory sessions without being registered for the course and without having signed a release/indemnity agreement.

Registration – Pass-Fail (S-U): Students interested in the S-U grading option must negotiate and sign an S-U contract within the first three weeks of the semester and before the first examination. S-U grading is not an option for majors taking required courses. Instructors are not obliged to permit students to use the S-U grading option in any course just because they want to do so.

Attendance: Students are responsible for all of the information provided in class. Weather alerts and other warnings issued by the University are not valid reasons for missing a class: as long as the University is not closed and classes are in session, students are expected to attend.

Attendance – First Day: Students absent from the first class meeting of a course will be dropped from the course. Students wanting to replace absent students will not be placed on a waiting list or otherwise be given priority in registering for the course.

Attendance – Excused Absences: Excused absences, which are acceptable reasons for requesting a make-up, are medical (individual or immediate family only; documented), legal (accident or court case; individual only; documented), funerary (immediate family only; documented), military (call to active duty; documented), religious (customarily-observed holidays; absence pre-arranged with instructor), special requirements of other courses and University-sponsored events (exact nature of such requirements and events is unspecified, but examples include performances, games/meets, judging trips, and field trips; absence pre-arranged with instructor), and weather conditions severe enough to prompt University closure. The University does not consider employment schedules and athletic training/practice schedules to be acceptable reasons for requesting a make-up. The reason for requesting a make-up must relate specifically to the time period of the missed coursework and must be documented in writing by an involved professional, when documentation is required. The Instructor retains the right to make additional inquiries concerning the documentation.

Attendance – Making-Up Missed Course Content: If attendance is not required (i.e., not a component of the final grade), then the course Instructor has the prerogative to decide whether or not a student can make up any course content that is not evaluative. The instructor is not obliged to allow the student to copy lecture notes, to provide class materials to the student, to give a make-up lecture to the student, or in any other way to ensure that the student obtains the course content that was missed. The instructor may decide, however, that a situation beyond the student's control forced the student to miss a class, and in such case, may elect to help the student make up the course content that was missed. The help that the instructor provides can be in any manner that the instructor deems suitable. If attendance is required, then strict interpretation of the University's attendance policy suggests that tutoring must be provided for a student whose absence is excused.

Attendance – Making-Up Missed Evaluations: When a student misses evaluative course content which affects his/her course grade, and the absence is excused, then the University requires that the student not be placed at a disadvantage compared to other students as a result of his/her absence. The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to make up the missed evaluation or not have the missed evaluation factored into his/her course grade. The exact form of the make-up is determined by the Instructor. The instructor retains the right to give a make-up that is different in exact content and/or style than the missed coursework.

Attendance – Emergencies: The University intends to continue delivery of instruction using an alternative (e.g., electronic) mode (of instructor's choice) in the event of a campus closure resulting from a pandemic escalation or other emergencies. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Canvas site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information

Attendance – Section Switching: For courses, especially laboratory courses, with multiple sections, students are not permitted to attend a section of a course that is different than the one for which they are registered.

Attendance without Registration: Students are not permitted to sit in on a lecture course beyond the first week of classes unless they are officially registered for the course. Under no circumstances, are students permitted to participate in a laboratory, even during the first week of classes, unless they are officially registered for the course and have signed the required release/indemnity agreement.

Students are not permitted to sit in on a class in order to try for a higher grade; they must re-register. Students are not permitted to sit in on a class to help them replace an “I” grade; the Department interprets University policy to mean that “I” grades do not require additional instruction in order to be replaced.

Religious Observances: Within reason, the Department accommodates students’ religious beliefs. The University compiles a list of established religious days when classes may need to be missed for religious observances, and only these established religious days are addressed by University policy. No student will be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time when such activity is specifically prohibited by his/her religious belief. Instructors will make a reasonable attempt to permit make up of examinations or other work; but, if a student registers for a lecture or laboratory course in which class participation is a required part of academic credit, and the student is aware that repeated absences (even for official religious holidays that may extend over many days) will be necessary and that class or laboratory participation cannot be made up because presence is required during scheduled class time, the student should evaluate whether he/she wishes to register for the course or to withdraw from the course before the drop/add period. For example, a student who needs to pray every day at sunset will not be excused from every class that is scheduled at that time. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class because of the observation of an established religious day must provide notice of the date(s) to the Instructor, in writing, by the second class meeting.

Students with Disabilities: The Department accommodates the special needs of students with documented disabilities. Students with special needs should meet with the Instructor, preferably during the first week of the semester, to make arrangements to accommodate those needs. A student may request an accommodation at any point in the semester, but is required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation.

Grading: Instructors may choose whether to employ the plus/minus grading system. If the Instructor does not state in the syllabus whether he/she is using the plus/minus grading system, then students can assume that the plus/minus grading system is being used. Instructors do not retain assignments, examinations, or any other class materials longer than 90 days from the date of the final examination.

Grading – Incompletes: An Incomplete (“I”) grade may be awarded only when a small portion of the required work is incomplete and when the student otherwise is earning a passing grade. Although “a small portion” is undefined by the University, the Department interprets this statement to mean that the unfinished work is simply the taking of an examination, submission of a report, or some similar task, which can be completed within a relatively short period of time after the semester is finished. As interpreted by the Department, the University policy does not permit informal sitting-in on the course in a subsequent semester to replace the “I” grade. If the student must do additional work, then he/she must re-register. Students are expected to complete the required work within the normal time limit, as set out in the syllabus, and allowing a student to exceed the usual time limit is a courtesy provided by the instructor. University policy does not require an instructor to assign an “I” grade just because a student has an excuse, medical or otherwise, that is valid for other purposes, such as making up an examination. An incomplete grade contract, which states the nature of the incomplete work and the deadline for its completion, must be signed before final grades are due.

Grading – Learning Assessments: Written assignments from certain courses may be used by the Department to assess student learning. The assignments may be evaluated after the course is completed to assess how well the IB Department prepares its students in the areas of discipline-specific knowledge and skills, critical thinking skills, and communication skills. Assessments will not affect a student’s grade in any way.

Withdrawals: Students may drop courses beyond the deadlines established by the University, but they must petition the College Academic Regulations Committee (ARC) to do so. Instructors cannot authorize late drops.

The lecture and laboratory are linked for the introductory course (BSC 2011/2011L, Diversity/Diversity Laboratory). Students without valid reasons are not permitted to drop the laboratory without also dropping the lecture. A student who thinks that he/she has a valid reason can obtain a Petition to Drop General Biology Co-requisites form his/her TA. Students may drop the lecture and retain the laboratory, but only during the last week of the withdrawal period and after submitting a request. Prior to that time, students will be required to withdraw from both courses. For the fundamental ecology and physiology courses (PCB 3043/3043L, Principles of Ecology; PCB 3712/3713L, General Physiology), students may withdraw from the laboratory and remain in the lecture at any time before the withdrawal deadline. Students may withdraw from the lecture and retain the laboratory, but only during the last week of the withdrawal period and after submitting a request.

Research Participation: The Department encourages students to become involved in research. Students who have achieved above-average performance in their coursework may substitute a limited number of credits earned for undergraduate research for credits earned in more typical classroom instruction. Credits earned for undergraduate research may be applied toward any major in the Department. The Department sets the minimum standards necessary for enrolling in undergraduate research, and these minimum standards will not be waived. A research advisor has the right to set standards for his/her undergraduate researchers that exceed Departmental minimum standards.

Students who do not meet the minimum standards necessary for enrolling in undergraduate research may choose, with the consent of a research advisor, to enroll in independent study or to volunteer. Students who successfully complete one semester of independent study or volunteering may petition the Department, with the consent of the same research advisor, to be allowed to enroll in undergraduate research. The Department will not grant retroactive undergraduate research credit for any work performed while enrolled in independent study or working as a volunteer.

Safety: Students in laboratory courses are required to read and sign the Departmental Safety Guidelines and Suggestions, thereby agreeing to comply with the Departmental safety standards. Students will be asked to leave the laboratory if they fail to comply with Departmental safety standards, and any student who is asked to leave a laboratory for failing to observe Departmental safety standards is not entitled to make-up coursework missed because of the student's non-compliance with those standards. No student will be permitted to return to the lab until the Instructor determines that the student will comply with all safety standards.

Objections to Laboratory Participation: The Department realizes that a student may object to laboratory on religious or moral grounds, but the student cannot be excused from laboratory participation. The Department follows. "Some laboratory courses in the Department of Biology require the use, manipulation, and/or euthanatization of live animals, or use of preserved animals, as an indispensable part of the laboratory exercises. By enrolling in one of these courses, a student agrees to participate in the laboratory experiments that involve live or dead animals. Although a student who objects on the basis of religious or moral grounds need not participate directly in the euthanatization and/or ensuing dissection of tissues, if no acceptable alternative is available, as determined by the faculty member in charge of the course, the student is expected to participate in data collection from the preparation or dissection, to monitor/manipulate experimental devices involved in the experimental set-up, to participate in discussion related to the data collection, to write lab reports involving the preparation or dissection, and to be examined on material involving the preparation or dissection.

Failure to participate in any of these activities will have a negative impact on the final grade in the course. It is the student's responsibility to bring any concern that may limit participation to the attention of the instructor by the completion of the first laboratory session. All such concerns will be addressed by the laboratory coordinator. All protocols for the use of animals in Department of Biology courses have been approved by the USF IACUC and adhere to all State and Federal regulations."

Objections to Course Content: In the teaching arena, the University policy prohibiting discrimination and harassment this policy may be is violated when a student feels that he/she is being penalized in some way because of race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, or military status; or that he/she is being exposed to offensive material that is irrelevant to course content. The University does not intend to abridge academic freedom or to interfere with its broad educational mission, however. Verbal expression and written or other material that is relevant and appropriately related to a course, or is protected by State or Federal constitutions, is permissible, regardless of whether some persons might find it offensive.

Grievances and Disputes: The Department policy is based on the University policy. The Department defines a 'grievance' as a claim that a specific academic decision or action that affects a student's academic record or status has violated published policies and/or procedures, or has been applied to the grievant in a manner different from that used for other students. A grievance could result, for instance, from an instructional, grading, or academic advising decision or action that is based on non-academic criteria, criteria that vary among students, standards that are different than those described in the course syllabus or the Undergraduate Catalogue, or an illegal or unconstitutional act. The Department considers any student complaint that does not meet the standards of a grievance to be a 'dispute'. The filing of a grievance initiates a formal University process that must be followed carefully by both student and Instructor. A dispute, on the other hand, is a simple disagreement that needs to be resolved informally between student and Instructor.

Academic Dishonesty: The Departmental has no tolerance for academic dishonesty, and enforces the University's Academic Integrity Regulations. 'Cheating' is defined by the University as using or attempting to use materials, information, notes, study aids, or other assistance in any type of examination or evaluation which have not been authorized by the Instructor. In addition to the unauthorized transmission of information and use of aids during an examination or evaluation, a student may cheat by taking an examination or evaluation in place of another person or allowing another person to take an examination or evaluation in his/her place; stealing visual concepts, such as drawings, sketches, diagrams, musical programs and scores, graphs, maps, etc., and presenting them as one's own; stealing, borrowing, buying, or disseminating tests, answer keys, other examination materials, research papers, creative papers, speeches, other graded assignments, etc., except as officially authorized; and stealing or copying of computer programs and presenting them as one's own (including the use of another student's program, as obtained from the magnetic media or interactive terminals or from cards, print-out paper, etc.). Engaging in *plagiarism* is a form of academic dishonesty, even though a student may plagiarize without any intent to be dishonest. 'Plagiarism' is defined by the University as intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another person as one's own. This definition includes the presentation of the work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources. Other forms of academic dishonesty include *fabrication* (use of invented, counterfeited, altered, or forged information), *forgery* (use of counterfeited images, documents, and signatures), *obstruction* (any behavior that limits the academic opportunities of other students), *multiple submissions* (submission of the same or substantially the same work for credit in two or more courses), *complicity* (assisting or attempting to assist another person in any act of academic dishonesty), *computer misuse* (use of the University's computer system in support of any act of plagiarism or monitoring or tampering with another person's

electronic communications), and *misuse of Intellectual Property* (illegal use of copyright materials, trademarks, trade secrets, or other Intellectual Property).

Departmental sanctions for academic dishonesty are based on University guidelines. Sanctions are based on the seriousness of the offense. *Level 1*: intent is questionable, involves a small fraction of the total coursework, is not extensive, and/or occurs on a minor assignment (e.g., jointly working on an assignment, such as a laboratory report, when it is prohibited). Recommended punishment is reduced or no credit for the assignment. *Level 2*: dishonesty is of a more serious character and/or affects a larger fraction of the coursework (e.g., plagiarism, multiple submissions, casual cheating on a test). Recommended punishment is assignment of an “F” grade with a numerical value of zero on the assignment or test, and the “F” used to determine the final course grade. It is the option of the Instructor to fail the student in the course and assign an “F” or “FF” (the latter indicating academic dishonesty) grade for the course. *Level 3*: affects a major or essential fraction of the coursework, involves premeditation, and/or is preceded by one or more violations of academic dishonesty (e.g., using prohibited materials on a test, altering an exam for the purposes of regrading, fabricating references). Recommended punishment is assignment of an “FF” grade for the course. Offences at this level also could result in suspension from the University for one semester. *Level 4*: serious breach of intellectual honesty (e.g., involving criminal activity, using a surrogate to take an examination, sabotaging another student’s work). Recommended punishment is permanent dismissal from the University. Records are kept of “FF” grades within and among universities. “FF” grades beyond the first one carry additional penalties that are imposed by the University.

For courses employing plagiarism-detection software, the Department is careful to comply with federal (FERPA) and state privacy laws. Students are not required to include personal identifying information such as name, SSN, and/or U# in the body of the work (text) or use such information in the file naming convention prior to submitting. Students should follow carefully the Instructor's instructions regarding what identifying information to include. A submission can be accessed by the Instructor and attributed to a particular student.

Disruption of Academic Process: Students are expected to show proper respect for the Instructor and for other students. Sanctions will be imposed for any kind of disruption of academic process. ‘Disruption of academic process’ is defined by the University as an act, words, or general conduct of a student in a classroom or other academic environment which in the reasonable estimation of the Instructor: (1) directs attention from the academic matter at hand (e.g., noisy distractions; persistent, disrespectful or abusive disruptions of lecture, exam, or academic discussions) or (2) presents a danger to the health, safety, or well-being of self or other persons. Students coming to class late or leaving class early can be considered a disruption of academic process and can be dealt with accordingly.

Department sanctions for disruption of academic process are based on University guidelines. If the unacceptable conduct is serious enough to warrant dismissal from the course, then the student shall receive a final grade of “W,” if he/she is passing the course, and a final grade of “F,” if he/she is not passing the course.

Recording Course Content: The material presented in a course is the intellectual property of the Instructor and the Department. Students are not permitted to take notes or record lectures by any means for the purpose of sale.

The Department prohibits the use of all electronic devices, including, but not limited to, programmable calculators, laptop computers, cell phones, and PDA’s, in classrooms and laboratories, unless the use

of specific devices is permitted explicitly and the conditions for use of those devices is specified in the course syllabus.

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