Biology for Majors - I (BIOL 1306-001)

Sul Ross State University International (INTL)

Fall 2025 ***Tuesday & Thursday*** *9:30 - 10:45AM* ***Location:*** *Online Synchronous*

I'm excited to guide you through the fascinating world of Biology and help you succeed this semester!

We will learn about molecules of life, cells, genes, energy, and our health.

Instructor: Dr. Ferhat Ozturk

Department of Biology

Email: Ferhat.Ozturk@SulRoss.edu

Phone: 210-458-5922

Office: Eagle Pass Campus, Building D

Student Hours: Thursday 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Required: Hawkes Learning Biology Online

Required: Blackboard Access to Hawkes Workbook

Required: *TopHat* web access for in-class assessments

Important Note: ***The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes/corrections to the course materials, assignment dates, or other updates will be communicated to the students ahead of time. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard for updates to the syllabus.***

Course Information

This course is the first of a two-semester sequence designed to provide students with a strong foundation in biology. It begins with the molecular and cellular basis of life, including the chemistry of biomolecules, cell structure and function, energy metabolism, photosynthesis, cellular respiration, and the principles of genetics and molecular biology. Students will develop scientific literacy, critical thinking, and laboratory skills essential for success in advanced biology courses.

We will also emphasize the **scientific method, data interpretation, and research literacy** to prepare students to function as independent, objective scientists in laboratories and field settings. The content of this course directly supports the material in BIOL 1307 (Biology II for Majors).

About Me & My Teaching Philosophy

I am Dr. Ozturk, and I am excited to be part of your academic journey this semester. With over a decade of teaching experience, I joined Sul Ross State University in Fall 2025 as Associate Professor of Biology and Founding Program Director of Biology at the Eagle Pass Campus. My academic background includes a Ph.D. in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Nevada, Reno, followed by postdoctoral research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Before moving to Texas, I served as the department chair and director of the Honey Research Center in Samsun, Turkey.

From Spring 2022 through Summer 2025, I taught **BioSciences I (BIO 1203) at UTSA for seven semesters**, where I also served as Program Director of the **HONEY Pathway**, a USDA-funded initiative. Through this program and my **Medicinal Properties of Honey** course, I have mentored more than **70 student scientists**. Many of these students have gone on to medical school, dental school, graduate programs, careers in industry, and teaching positions.

My research and teaching are deeply rooted in the study of honey and its medicinal properties, but my broader passion is guiding students to think critically, explore scientifically, and connect biology to real-world challenges. I believe education is a collaborative journey where curiosity, critical thinking, and inclusivity play central roles. My goal is to support each student's unique path while equipping you with the skills needed for lifelong learning and success.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Display a basic knowledge of biology from the chemical makeup to how it replicates.
- Identify the basic building blocks of biology.
- Understand the structure and functions of cells and differences among cell types.
- Describe photosynthesis and respiration at the cellular level.
- Demonstrate how structure and function are related in biology.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Biology

- Demonstrate an understanding of biology as the study of life and its connections with other life sciences, such as chemistry and physics, as well as engineering, and other disciplines
- Describe how cell structure impacts the functions cells can carry out
- Explain the types of molecules necessary for life and how living cells convert these molecules into energy
- Demonstrate understanding of the "currency of energy" in the living cell and how this is utilized and converted into other forms of energy.
- Explain the concept of genetics, character traits, and how natural variation that have occurred.
- Analyze and understand the concept of molecular and cellular biology

Marketable Skills

- Ability to organize, analyze, and interpret data.
- Proficiency with presentation software.
- Effective time management and meeting deadlines.
- Ability to speak and write clearly about scientific topics.
- Professional email communication skills.

Grade Distribution and Letter Grade

Grade	Percentage
A+	97.5 - 100%
A	95 - 97.5%
A-	90 - 95%
B+	87.5 - 89%
B	85 - 87.5%
B-	80 - 85%
C+	77.5 - 80%
C	75 - 77.5%
C-	70 - 75%
D+	67.5 - 70%
D	65 - 67.5%
D-	60 - 65%
F	<60

Please NOTE: All GRADES posted on Blackboard are provided as Percentages not Points.

The Contribution % of each type (e.g. Hawkes Book, Exams, Final etc.) of assessment is listed above and will be used to calculate the Weighted Total for the Midterm and Final Grades

- **There are no extra credits**
- **No late work will be accepted**

Study Guide

You are expected to have read and taken notes on the assigned Hawkes Biology reading in your e-book **BEFORE** you come to the lecture. During the lecture, you will be asked to answer a series of ***"In-Class Assessments"*** based on the relevant subject. Your unit exams, and your final exam, will be ***based*** on these reading questions. I want to be clear what the word, "based" means. Some questions on your Exams will be the same as the In-Class Questions given in the lecture. However, many questions, will be edited versions of these questions, that will require a different answer.

Activities and Grading

Activity	Quantity	Percentage
• Unit Exams - Online	5	40%
• FINAL Exam Comprehensive End-of-the-Course (includes questions from all units)	1	10%
• Hawkes Biology - This is an adaptive learning and reading tool to help students understand content using McGraw-Hill Connect	15	25%
• TopHat- In-Class Assessments - Students will be asked questions about the relevant subject during the class	15	15%
• Group Study: Collaborative activities in-class exercises that will guide student discussions and allow for recording of collaborative answers	4	10%
TOTAL		**100%**

Unit Exams (40%): There are 5 (Five) Unit Exams, which will consist of **50 multiple-choice questions** to be taken ONLINE on the designated dates. You will need a computer with webcam access.

The lowest score or a missed exam on one of these exams will be dropped. The 4 top exam scores will count toward 40% of the final grade.

Final (10%): The "end-of-course-exam" consists of **100 questions and is worth 100 points**. This exam is comprehensive, includes questions from all units, and its score is not dropped and will contribute 10% of the final grade. **Failure to participate end-of-course exam may result in failure of this course**

Hawkes Learning Biology Assignments (25%): Hawkes Learning Biology Online text and homework are in Blackboard through "Sign in to Hawkes" Module (link for this will be included in every module for easier access for weekly reading and homeworks)

Labs will be posted on Blackboard and assignments addressed on alternative syllabus. I will drop your 2 lowest assignment scores to take care of issues such as being ill, internet connection issues, etc. These exercises will open on Monday and close on Sunday

TopHat In-Class Assessments (15%): For the in-class assessments, we will use **TopHat.** I will ask questions at the screen during my lectures, and you can use your cell phone, tablet, or computer to answer them. *Make sure you connect your TopHat with Blackboard to have your grades automatically synchronized*. Follow instructions at your invitation email you received from TopHat.

Group Study (10%) You will work with your assigned group at the table to analyze and find solutions for possible real-life problems using the knowledge you gained from the particular unit of biosciences. Detailed information will be provided during the first-class or before the group activity.

You need to be physically present in class to answer TopHat questions and attend the group activity. *There is no make up or individual assignments available for the Tophat and group studies.*

Attendance: *Attendance is not counted as a grade for this class. However, each missing class will cost you missing the daily TopHat questions, which makes 15% of your overall grade.* You do not need to inform me for your absence. If you do out of your kindness, thank you 😊

Due to "life happens" issues, I will drop your 2 lowest TopHat chapter scores and 1 lowest Group activity from your final grade calculation.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING SECTION CAREFULLY.

Your final course grade will be ***automatically*** calculated from your total course **percentage** using the above table.
At the end of the course, sometimes, I receive emails from students saying things like,
"I have an 88.3%. Can't you just round up my grade to an A"?
The answer is **no**. Your final course grade is determined by your **Percentage grade**, not your points. Your final grade is simply and completely determined by the number of points you accumulate during the course. I can't "give" students one or two points so they can get the next higher grade, nor can you do extra work (e.g. a paper) to earn extra points. Every point must be earned by you and every point is important. Be prepared for each exam.

Communication Plan

There are several ways you can communicate with me:

- **Email:** You may email me at **Ferhat.Ozturk@sulross.edu**. Please begin your message with a professional greeting such as *Good morning*, *Hello*, or *Dear Dr. Ozturk*. Casual greetings like *hey*, *yo*, or *whassup* are not appropriate for academic communication.

- **Course Messages in Blackboard:** Use this option if you need to send me a private message regarding grades or other sensitive information. This is the only secure way to discuss grades. You must log in to Blackboard to send and receive course messages.
- **Response Time:** I will respond to all messages within **24–48 business hours**.

Don't hesitate to reach out and to join me during **Student Support Hours (office hours)**. I will be in my office or available online to answer questions and help you better understand the subject matter.

Course Management and Policies

Instructor-Initiated Drops

This course uses instructor-initiated drops for students who exceed the absence and/or missed assignment limit. Therefore, up to the last day for students to withdraw from an individual course, **October 24**, you will be dropped for exceeding **5 absences/assignments**. Students will receive at least one courtesy warning when approaching the absence/missed assignment limit. Notification will be sent via Blackboard to the student's email address. A subsequent absence or missed assignment will result in being dropped from the course. Notification of being dropped will also be sent via Blackboard to the student's email address. This drop does not affect enrollment in other courses. Please consult the Dropping Courses webpage for further details on the process and appeals

Please see the Sul Ross Academic Calendar for Drop and Withdrawal Dates and Procedures.

Essential Student Information

SRSU Disability Services:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartze@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. RGC students can also contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and honesty in all work. Submit only your own work, cite sources properly, and do not reuse assignments from other courses or copy from online materials. Unauthorized collaboration or the use of tools such as AI without permission is prohibited.

Violations may result in failing grades on assignments or the course, as well as further university consequences. I take academic dishonesty very seriously—but remember, **citations are your friend**. There is a difference between intentional dishonesty and honest mistakes made while learning. If you are unsure, please ask.

Do:

- Cite all sources used in assignments and presentations.
- Ask for clarification if you're not sure what counts as plagiarism.
- Collaborate only when group work is clearly allowed.
- Use your own words and ideas to show what you've learned.

Don't:

- Copy text or ideas from the internet, AI tools, or peers without citation.
- Submit work completed for another course as if it were new.
- Share answers or collaborate on exams or assignments when not permitted.
- Assume "small" plagiarism is acceptable—it is not.

Classroom Climate of Respect

This course is built on free expression, critical inquiry, and open discussion of ideas. Together, we share the responsibility of creating and sustaining an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for one another's viewpoints.

Disagreement and debate are valuable parts of learning, but they must always be conducted with professionalism and courtesy. Intimidation, harassment, or personal attacks of any kind will not be tolerated. Likewise, no one should be belittled or discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or personal identity.

Challenging topics, including politically or socially sensitive issues, may arise in the study of biology and its broader impact. Our classroom will remain a respectful and safe space where all voices can be heard, questions can be asked, and learning can take place.

Commitment to Your Success

I believe education is a collaborative journey where curiosity, critical thinking, and inclusivity are central. My goal is to create a supportive learning environment that values your unique perspectives

and experiences. I understand that challenges such as health concerns, financial pressures, or unexpected life events may affect your ability to fully engage in class.

My commitment is to support you not only in mastering the course material but also in developing the skills and confidence needed for lifelong learning and success. If you encounter difficulties inside or outside of class that impact your performance, please reach out to me. Together we can find strategies and resources to help you succeed.

As part of the Sul Ross Familia, I see each student as more than just a grade—I see you as a future scientist, professional, or educator. Many of my former students have gone on to medical school, dental school, graduate programs, industry positions, and teaching careers. I am here to challenge you, encourage you, and provide guidance as you explore your own path in biology.

For Remote/Online Courses Only - SRSU Distance Education Statement.

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

SRSU Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, https://library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.