



Henry W. Grady High School
Mr. Curtis
1st and 2nd Semester
2011 - 2012
Syllabus for Biology

Teacher: Mr. Nikolai Curtis, Room C414 (4th floor of Charles Allen Building)

Course Description:

Welcome to your endeavor into the world of biology. I am excited to welcome you to this course and plan to provide an enriching experience in a subject I dearly love. Throughout the year we will explore many concepts to increase your understanding and critical thinking skills in science. I believe that science is not just about watching but also doing so you will be completing many lab-based activities this year. Your literacy skills will be used and developed through article reviews and journal entries so that you can put the content in a context. Simple memorization of content is not beneficial as it does not demonstrate understanding. This course is about taking risks and learning that mistakes lead to real questions and learning. Thomas Edison failed at making a working light bulb over two thousand times. When asked about it, he stated that he found out two thousand ways of how not to make a light bulb. That's real science.

Objectives: When this class concludes at the end of the year (May), all students will have demonstrated progression and eventual mastery in the following skills and concepts:

1. Demonstrate accepted methods, processes and procedures for conducting scientific investigation.
2. Develop and showcase original and authentic research based work to explain learned concepts.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the cellular basis of life.
4. Predict normal patterns of genetic inheritance and explain variation in genetic make-up as well as the social impacts of genetics on society.
4. Explain and apply the concepts of evolution and its impact on scientific work in today's society.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of life and ways in which each form of life contributes to the web of life.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of ecology, its principles, and the importance of protecting ecosystems and the role they play in the world.

Textbook:

Hopson, Postlethwait et al. (2009) Modern Biology. Holt. (\$100)

Required Materials:

Pencils, Pen, Loose-leaf paper, Three-ring binder (at least 2 inches thick), Folder, Metric Ruler, Quad Ruled Lab Book, Calculator

Grading Policy for Atlanta Public School System

Passing Grade: The minimum passing score for this class is 70.

Grading Scale: Grades will be assessed based upon the scale below

A = 90 - 100	Excellent achievement
B = 80 - 89	Above-average achievement
C = 70 - 79	Average achievement
F = 69 or below	Unsatisfactory achievement
I = No Grade	Incomplete

Deficiency Notices: A deficiency notice will be issued when a student's grade is 75 or less. These will be issued at least twice during the semester for these students. Expect a phone call to be made to your home in order to ensure that your parent/legal guardian has received the notice. Your progress can also be monitored through the parent portal of Infinite Campus. Please see Mr. Montero for a username and password. If you are struggling in class, you may be assigned a "mandatory tutorial" so we can address the concerns and help you get back on track. This tutorial session will be assigned for Thursday after school.

Evaluation: Each student's grade will be a cumulative average consisting of exams, assignments, laboratory work, quizzes, and a final/EOCT. The state will administer an End of Course Test (EOCT) for the class, which is a cumulative exam of the entire year occurring around the beginning of May. Keep all of your work in a binder so you can prepare for this exam. The exam will count as 20% of your overall grade for the 2nd semester. The EOCT is now the assessment used for all students to satisfy necessary graduation requirements.

Computation of Grades: The final grade will be computed using the following categories and percentages:

1. Exams	20%
2. Quizzes	10%
3. Laboratory Work/Research (Academic Fair)	30%
4. Assignments (Classwork/Homework)	20%
5. Final Exam/EOCT	20%

Assignment Policy: Work assigned is for your benefit. Completing that work during class or at home will ensure that your mastery of the content. Your work will be evaluated either through questioning or peer review. Part of your assignment grade will come from reading scientifically related articles and providing me with an abstract of what you read and how it helped your learning in the class. Working hard is not just about getting a grade.

Notebook/Lab Book: One of the most important factors in your success will be organization. Purchase a binder at least two inches in width to store materials such as handouts, worksheets, and completed assignments. This will be critical in your preparation for the End of Course Test (EOCT) in May. I will check your notebook periodically to evaluate your organizational skills. You may want to purchase a small notepad to write down assignments in your classes so you won't forget them. The **lab book** is proof that you completed a lab and demonstrated an understanding of the lab's concepts. **This is not an option.** This can be used as a student work example if you plan on attending college. You will be provided with a rubric and guidelines for your notebook and lab book.

Exams: Exams are 20% of your overall grade. I prefer short answer & essay questions as this demonstrates to me that you can put the information together in a described context. Your regular exams will be worth 200 – 300 points. Expect 3 to 4 regular exams in addition to a final exam or project each semester.

Classroom Behavior: This class is designed to allow us to work together and it is our responsibility to behave appropriately. Our actions have consequences and may cause others to not receive the full benefit of a lesson or put someone in harm's way. Think of this room as an extension of your home where respect and kindness should be the norm. We must also be willing to look out for the person next to us to ensure that they are learning and safe.

Academic Fair Project: The quality academic fair project is a requirement for this class. When you complete your project, it must be accompanied with a poster display for the class and academic fair. You will receive credit for doing a social science or math project as long as you can explain its relevance to science. You will be provided with a guide to help you complete this task. This project will most likely be due at the end of October or early November. There are also other ways to do research rather than typing a typical paper.

Tutorial Sessions: I am available for tutorial sessions every day for at least one hour (**3:15 pm - 4:15 pm**). If you are struggling, please take advantage of these times. I am also available for help through e-mail. If a request is made for tutorial at other times, please see me. I will also maintain a website to assist students if they misplace materials or are absent. The best way to contact me is through e-mail as I check it daily. My contact information is listed below.

Phone: 404-644-4120 (no calls after 9:00 pm please)

E-mail: ncurtis@atlanta.k12.ga.us

Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/nikolaicurtisgrady>

Resources: This is a list of resources to assist you during the year. Check these often as we go through each lesson for review and as well as a checklist.

1. **Georgia Performance Standards:** <http://www.georgiastandards.org/>
 - a. Click on the Science button at the top of the page for the standards.
2. **Encyclopedia of Life:** <http://www.eol.org>
 - a. Fantastic database being created to catalog all known living organisms.
3. **Cells Alive:** <http://www.cellsalive.com>
 - a. Great interactive site discussing and detailing cell structure, function, and cellular processes.
4. **John Kyrk Website:** <http://www.johnkyrk.com/index.html>
 - a. Completely interactive site demonstrating important cellular processes.
5. **National Geographic:** <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>
 - a. The world famous National Geographic site. Fantastic for articles related to science in general.
6. **Science Daily:** <http://www.sciencedaily.com>
 - a. A comprehensive site providing links to articles dealing with most every scientifically related branch. Here you can find articles relating to physical science, earth science, astronomy, biology, genetics, and much more.

Signature(s) of Acknowledgement:

I/We, the undersigned, have read, reviewed, and agree to support all of the expectations required for the successful completion of this course during the 2011 – 2012 academic year. We are aware of all academic policies (for Grady and APS) and opportunities for assistance in Mr. Curtis' class. We will utilize these resources for the maximum benefit of our child. Mr. Curtis has also signed this document to acknowledge his commitment to our child's academic and social progress at Grady High School. Should we have any questions or concerns, we acknowledge that we are aware of how to contact Mr. Curtis.

Phone: 404-644-4120 (no calls after 9:00 pm please)

E-mail: ncurtis@atlanta.k12.ga.us

Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/nikolaicurtisgrady>

Parent: _____

Date: _____

Parent: _____

Date: _____

Student: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for the privilege of being able to teach your child this year and I look forward to being a part of their academic success.

Nikolai S. F. Curtis

Teacher, Grady High School