



Reynolds High School

Biology (2023-2024)

Building Relationships for Academic Success

Instructor Name: MacKenzie (Mac) Morando

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Room: 211

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Required Textbooks/Materials:

- Science specific notebook and folder (or a science binder with paper works too) as long as all materials can be kept organized in one place
- Writing utensils
- School Chromebook
- NO personal textbook needed

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to and survey of Biology. Topics to be covered are outlined on the following page. The overarching goal of this course is for you to be able to make connections between biological and ecological systems that affect our daily lives. Our course content aligns with Next Generation Science Standards (<https://www.nextgenscience.org>). Additionally, throughout the course we will work to develop 8 core science practices that NGSS outlines:

1. Asking questions and defining problems
2. Developing and using models
3. Planning and carrying out investigations
4. Analyzing and interpreting data
5. Using mathematics and computational thinking
6. Constructing explanations and designing solutions
7. Engaging in argument from evidence
8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Notes about Grading:

My goal is to help each, and every student be as successful as possible, regardless of the level of skill or knowledge they arrive with. My sole purpose for assigning grades is to fairly and accurately communicate student achievement of course objectives, in alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). I use a 4 point grading system in order to reflect the level of proficiency aligned with the standards.

Letter Grade Description & Percentage Breakdown:

As said above, we do not collect “points” in our class. Every piece of work or assessment is scored on a 0-4 scale in order to communicate the student’s level of understanding. However, grades are then weighted based on the following categories:

Formative Classwork

Formative classwork is all the work that we do each week in class. This includes activities, discussions, notes, formative quiz checks, mini labs, mini projects, etc. These **are worth 5% of your grade**. Each week students will receive a weekly guide (more on this below). On the weekly guide sheet there will be a box for an individual score for each day of the week based on what we did in class. These scores will be averaged and go into synergy as the formative classwork score for the week.

Unless a student needs to finish work they did not complete in class, there will be NO homework assigned to students. At home practice opportunities are optional. Homework has not been shown to improve student achievement throughout research. Additionally, I respect that they may need to work, spend time with family, play sports, or be involved in extracurriculars outside of school. That being said, I expect students to give 100% in class during the time I see them.

Weekly Guide Sheets

Each week students will have a weekly guide that they must fill out. At the beginning of the week we will set goals, write learning objectives, and at the end of the week we will reflect on different aspects. Students must complete the whole guide, thoroughly and thoughtfully. This is a separate score from the averaged classwork that week. An example shown below. These guides **are worth 5% of your grade** and will also be put in the gradebook at the end of each week.

Weekly Guide		Name	Week #/Date	Unit
Unit Essential Question		Weekly Goal In Science		
My goal this week is: I will know I have reached my goal when: I can achieve this goal by:				
Date:	Date:	Date:		
Learning Objective:	Learning Objective:	Learning Objective:		
Warm-Up:	Warm-Up:	Warm-Up:		
Exit:	Exit:	Exit:		
Score:	Score:	Score:		

End of Week Goal Reflection	Social Emotional Reflection	My Takeaways
<input type="checkbox"/> I DID reach my goal this week <input type="checkbox"/> I DID NOT yet reach my goal I believe I reached my goal/did not yet reach my goal because: (If you did not reach your goal) What I will do differently next week is:	This week I am feeling: I feel this way because:	Draw or write about something that you are going to remember most from this week.

Feedback For My Teacher	Teacher Scoring
Something specific my teacher can do to support me is: Any comments you would like to add/things my teacher should know: Comments From My Teacher:	My Weekly Class Work Score: <input type="text"/> My Weekly Guide Sheet Score: <input type="text"/> Key 3.5 / 4 = A Advanced Mastery 2.5 / 3 = B Meets Proficiency 1.5 / 2 = C Approaching Proficiency 0.5 / 1 = D Little Evidence 0 / 0.25 = F Insufficient Evidence

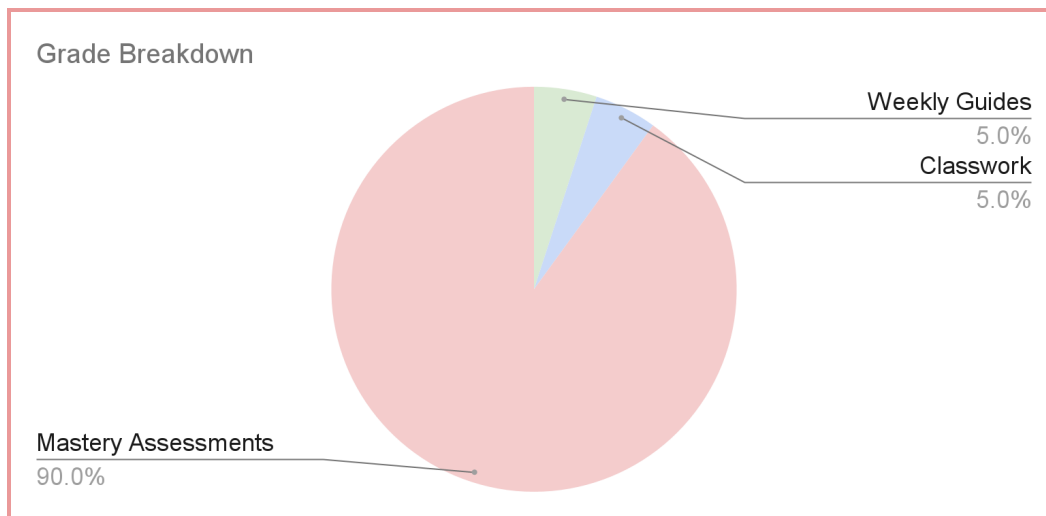
Mastery Assessments

Mastery assessments include things like end of unit exams, large projects, mastery based labs, and reports. Mastery assessments **are worth 90% of your grade.** Students will be made aware well in advance of what mastery assessments are coming up and what they are. Unless it is an exam, students will always be provided a detailed rubric that outlines their expectations on the assessment.

Mrs. Morando...Why are mastery assessments worth so much and classwork/weekly guides worth so little?!

Formative work is practice! I am not looking to penalize students based on how well they know something while they are learning it, or how many classwork assignments they don't turn in. I am looking to objectively communicate how well students understand the learning objectives of a unit after we have spent the unit learning and practicing and getting feedback. This method prioritizes positive progress and rewards students at their *best*.

Grading Summary:



Points Earned	Letter Grade	Description
3.5 or 4	A 95% or 100%	The student has demonstrated advanced mastery, beyond proficiency , of course objectives aligned with NGSS
2.5 or 3	B 80% or 85%	The student has demonstrated proficiency of course objectives aligned with NGSS
1.5 or 2	C 70% or 75%	The student is approaching proficiency of course objectives aligned with NGSS
0.5 or 1	D 60% or 65%	The student has provided little evidence of proficiency of course objectives aligned with NGSS
0 or 0.25	F 0% or 40%	The student has not yet provided evidence of proficiency of course objectives aligned with NGSS

Late Work/Retake Policy:

- Outside of extenuating circumstances, students **are permitted to submit weekly guides/classwork scores up to one week after it is due**. However, I highly encourage students to turn in work on time, in order to receive timely feedback from me and to avoid a build-up of work for themselves. Successful students stay organized and meet deadlines in order to stay on track.
- Students may **always re-do formative work to show that they have made more progress** towards a learning objective **up to one week after it is due**. Students will retain the highest grade out of each attempt.
- **Late mastery assessments will be handled on a case by case basis. A meeting with Mrs. Morando is required. Additionally, opportunities to retake/redo/make greater progress on summative work will be handled on a case to case basis and require meeting with Mrs. Morando.**
- **Unless there has been an arrangement made with Mrs. Morando students are responsible for making up work they missed while absent no later than one week after returning from an absence**. Students can look at schoology for what they missed, check in with peers, look at the student center in our classroom, and check in with Mrs. Morando.
- **I always encourage students to reach out to me first and advocate for themselves if they have any questions or concerns.** That being said, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. If your student requires additional support, it is best to reach out as early as possible to set up a plan of action. This includes any absences that require make-up work.

Course Topics Outline:

****Subject to change based on appropriate class pacing and departmental decisions****

Quarter 1	Unit 1: Intro to Biology Unit 2: Cells
Quarter 2	Finish Cells Unit Unit 3: Energy
Quarter 3	Unit 4: Genetics Unit 5: Heredity
Quarter 4	Unit 6: Evolution Unit 7: Ecology

Mrs. Morando's expectations in addition to Reynold's POWER:

1. Respect yourself, your learning, others, materials
2. Practice a GROWTH mindset daily
3. Make learning your priority (grades are meaningless if you don't walk away with greater importance/knowledge/connections)
4. Give your best effort and advocate for yourself (my "door" is always open)
5. Be present each day, coming prepared and removing distractions

Reynolds General Expectations: (i.e. POWER)

- 1.**PREPARED and PUNCTUAL:** Come to class every day, on time and ready to learn!
- 2.**ORGANIZED:** Turn in assignments and homework on time. Get help from me before an assignment is due. Use your planner.
- 3.**WRITE:** Listen and speak to others but do your own, best work. Copied work will not receive credit.
- 4.**ENGAGED:** Much of the learning takes place in class while collaborating with peers, so PARTICIPATE 100%.
- 5.**RESPECT:** Show respect for yourself and your learning, others, and materials.

Behavior Policies:

- Zero tolerance for bullying/hate speech. Automatic removal from class until a restorative meeting has happened to prioritize the safety of all students.
- Zero tolerance for lab misconduct. Students not following lab rules will automatically be removed from the lab and receive a 0.
- Cheating/plagiarism will receive a 0 and retakes will not be permitted.
- Repeated behavior challenges will require a restorative meeting/letter before continuing to participate in class. Further behavior challenges will be referred to school administration.
- Absolutely no headphones or cellphones in class unless directed by Mrs. Morando. Mrs. Morando will give one warning, after the second time the cell phone will be taken, and a third strike will result in the parent or guardian needing to come pick up the phone from school to get it back.
- If a student is more than 15 minutes late without a pass they will be marked absent automatically.