SPECTRUM ACADEMY
A Community of Learners

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HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY SYLLABUS

Dear Students and Parents,

We are excited to be your science instructors this year. My name is Mr. Powner and my co-teacher/paraeducator's name is Miss Anna. Between us, we have taught every branch of science and several math courses at the high school level for multiple decades. Also, we both have experience working as real laboratory scientists. As teachers, nothing gives us greater pleasure than the "Aha!" moment; that glorious instant when students' eyes widen and satisfied smiles spread across faces as their minds expand into new areas of understanding.

Importance of Science Education

Basic knowledge of science is critical to being able to function as adults in today's world. Science education prepares students to better deal with life challenges, including: solving problems effectively, making informed choices, living with rapidly evolving technology, preserving human health, protecting our environmental resources, and pursuing our insatiable curiosities with regards to nature and life. The applications of science education touch every aspect of our lives. This is true whether one is obtaining healthcare, flipping hamburgers for hire, dealing with personal challenges, raising children, voting in elections, engaging in hobbies, working as highly trained professionals, etc., etc.

Nature of Science Education

Science requires the synthesis of all basic academic skills. To effectively study science high school students must be willing to develop in the following areas: language, reading, writing, mathematics, history, the arts, geography, politics, law, economics, cultural studies, social skills, technology, general philosophy, and more. Students will combine these skills and bring them to bear as they learn methods and theories of science.

Course Description

High School Biology class will include the following concepts: basic science philosophy, ecology, cell theory, genetic theory, theory of evolution, survey of biodiversity, and the human body. More specific information can be obtained from the curriculum expectations handbook (available for download from our website or by request).

Laboratory Safety 

Students will be using standard high school laboratory equipment and chemicals. Training will be provided and care must be exercised in order to prevent accidental injury. Students will be required to complete the safety training and pass the safety quiz with an 80% or better before being permitted to participate in experiments. If a student violates safety principles the following may occur at the instructor's discretion: warnings, temporary ejection from the laboratory, retaking the training and quiz might be required for further participation, and grades may be lowered. If a student repeatedly demonstrates unsafe behavior in the laboratory, the instructors may choose to exclude offenders from further participation, in which case alternative activities will be provided.

Supplies

Students will need to bring the following daily: supply of 8.5x11 paper, and pens or pencils. All other items must either be cleared with the instructor or specifically permitted by the student's IEP. A great way to get some of your volunteer hours is to donate supplies to our classroom. Ideas for donations: tissues, pens and/or pencils, gift cards to buy supplies, hand sanitizer, etc.

Grades

We will use the Compass system for posting assignment titles, due dates, and grades. Please contact the front office to obtain instructions for logging in and using the Compass system. Instructions and downloadable resources for assignments will be available at our class website (see the URL below).

Behavior Expectations

We will both model and expect the following in class: Respect, Responsibility, and Civility. We will also teach and enforce school PRIDE Rules, which are as follows. P = practice appropriate listening. R = respect for all. I = incorporate accountability. D = demonstrate compliance. E = embody safety.

Participation/Citizenship

Participation and good citizenship is required. A participation/citizenship grade will appear as a column in the grade system. This score will rise and fall with participation. Term citizenship grades will be as follows: "H" is for honors, "S" is for satisfactory, "N" is for needs improvement, and "U" is for unsatisfactory. An N or U can be earned if students break class rules after a teacher intervention. Unexcused absences and tardiness will lead to an N or U.

Assignments/Homework

There will be several assignments and activities each week. Students should not expect to be able to finish all assignments during class. Types of assignments/assessments will include: reading, vocabulary, written reports and essays, hands-on labs, individual and group projects, presentations, quizzes, tests, etc. Science students will also participate in the school-wide writing program as follows: a narrative work on a famous scientist for term 1, an informative piece on a course-related topic for term 2, develop an argument on ethics in science in term 3, and create a full technical research paper in term 4.

Late/Makeup Work Policy (Specific to This Course)

Late and makeup work may be accepted, but the following rules will generally apply:

- If the assignment is late because of an EXCUSED absence, school-wide policy applies (makeup work will be accepted for as many days as you were absent).
- If a low grade is received as a result of poor performance, but no behavior or attendance issues were involved, students may ask approval to redo the assignment or to do an alternative assignment to raise the grade.
- If the assignment is late or a low grade awarded because of a lack of participation, only 50% of credit may be recovered.
- If a low grade is received or a late assignment turned in following poor citizenship, the decision to permit credit recovery will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Contact/More Information

Feel free to contact either of us with questions or concerns. Our email addresses are included in the header of the first page of this syllabus. You can find more information about this course or about us on our website at http://mr.powner.org. Also, you may visit the school website at http://spectrumcharter.org.

We look forward to working with you this year. Science Rocks!

Sincerely,
Aaron J. Powner, M.Ed.
Anna M. Grant, B.A.


Science
Physics
Earth
Theory
Hypothesis
Technology
Philosophy
Chemistry
Biology
Astronomy
Law

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HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY SYLLABUS
SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read and understand the course syllabus provided by Mr. Powner and Miss Anna. By signing, I agree to abide by the expectations and policies that have been established for success of students.

Date: _____

Student Name (Print): _____

Students Signature (Sign): _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (Sign): _____

Parent Email: _____

Parent Phone: _____