



## About the Instructor

Name: Dr. Richard L. Essner, Jr.

Phone: 650-2338

Email: [ressner@siue.edu](mailto:ressner@siue.edu)

Office: Room 1115, Science West, SIUE, Edwardsville, IL 62026

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-3 pm or by appointment

**Welcome:** Welcome to BIOL 111 WS1, Contemporary Biology. It is my hope that you will enjoy learning about the living world and our place in it. I am truly excited by the opportunity to explore the diversity of life with you.

**Bio:** I grew up in Perryville, Missouri and attended Southeast Missouri State University where I completed a B. S. and an M.N.S. in Biology. I completed my Ph.D. in Biology at Ohio University where I conducted comparative locomotion research on flying squirrels, tree squirrels, and chipmunks. I then completed a two-year postdoc at the University of Pennsylvania, where I researched frog locomotion before arriving at SIUE in 2005.

I am a Professor of Biological Sciences at SIUE, where I teach an array of courses in vertebrate zoology, including Ornithology, Mammalogy, Wildlife Management, Vertebrate Natural History, Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy, and Human Anatomy and Physiology. I also teach summer field courses to the northern Rockies and Panama. Prior to my arrival at SIUE, I taught courses in Field Zoology and Ecology, Field Botany and Ecology, Wildlife of Ohio, and Nature Interpretation at Zane State College.

My research interests are in vertebrate functional and ecological morphology, and wildlife ecology. Much of my laboratory research at SIUE focuses on the evolution of frog locomotion. My field research is varied and has included habitat modeling studies of forest birds, as well as grassland and shrubland birds in the Mississippi River floodplain on lands managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I am also involved in studies of habitat use and movement patterns in Southern Flying Squirrels and Eastern Box Turtles. Since 2015 I have been involved in conservation research on two state-threatened amphibian species, the Illinois Chorus Frog and the Eastern Narrowmouth Toad.

Here is a link to my website: <https://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/biology/ressner/>

**Communicating with the Instructor:** You may reach me by email: [ressner@siue.edu](mailto:ressner@siue.edu) or phone 618-650-2338. We can also meet face-to-face or via Zoom.

**Tutoring:** Online tutoring is available for BIOL 111 WS through Zoom (a videoconferencing system) which is very easy to use. Your tutor's name is Ethan Hunsperger. You can email Ethan at [ehunspe@siue.edu](mailto:ehunspe@siue.edu). Here is a link to his Zoom Room <http://siue.zoom.us/my/ethan.hunsperger>. Ethan's assigned hours of availability are TBD.

## About the Course

**Course Description:** This online course will offer students the chance to learn about biological principles and to understand how they relate to our everyday lives

### Course Objectives

1. To understand how biology is an important part of our everyday world.
2. To learn about basic biological principles such as inheritance, evolution, cell theory, human health, ecology and the environment.

**Course Textbook:** Belk, C. and V. Borden Maier. 2019. Biology: Science for Life with Physiology, 6<sup>th</sup> edition available for rent from SIUE Textbook Services. Click [here](#) for instructions. You will need to register for access to MasteringBiology. A link to registration instructions is provided on the left hand menu in BlackBoard.

### Netiquette

You are expected to behave professionally during all interactions with me and with peers enrolled in the course. This extends to all electronic communication. Please show respect for others in discussion boards and other correspondence. Failure to behave appropriately will result in removal from discussion boards and a loss of points for this activity.

## Course Requirements

### Technology Requirements

At a minimum, you will need the following software/hardware to participate in this course:

- Computer with an updated operating system (e.g. Windows, Mac, Linux)—**Do NOT attempt to take exams, quizzes, etc. with your smartphone.**
- Updated Internet browsers (Apple Safari, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox)
- DSL or Cable Internet connection or a connection speed no less than 6 Mbps.
- Media player such as, QuickTime or Windows Media Player. Must be capable of playing MP4 files.
- Adobe Reader or alternative PDF reader (free): <http://get.adobe.com/reader/?promoid=HRZAC>
- Java plugin (free): <http://java.com/en/download/index.jsp>
- Any other specialized software or basic software (e.g., MS Office, etc.). Students can download MS Office at no charge here: <http://office365.siue.edu>

### Technology Capabilities

Students in an online course should be able to:

- Use a word processor, such as MS Word, to compose assignments and communicate with others in class
- Attach files to emails or course areas
- Navigate websites and course materials
- Reach out to tech support staff when issues arise and troubleshoot to resolve problems

**Technical Support:** Since this is an online course, you are expected to have reliable Internet access on a regular basis. It is your responsibility to address any computer problems that might occur. Such problems are not an excuse for delays in meeting expectations or for missing course deadlines. Contact ITS at 618-650-5500 with any technical concerns.

# Course and University Policies

## Student Resources

*How to succeed in this course:* An online student is expected to:

- Participate in the virtual classroom 5-7 days a week
- Be able to work with others in completing projects
- Be able to use terminology properly
- Be able to complete assignments on time
- Enjoy communicating in writing
- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined
- Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process
- Be able to think ideas through before responding
- Contribute your ideas, perspectives, and comments to course discussions
- Be polite and respectful
- Be willing to “speak up” if problems arise
- Be able to apply what you learn
- Be open minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process

*Online class behavior/“netiquette”:*

- **Reflect** before you post an emotional response and reread what you have written to be sure it is professional. Communicate as if your comments are printed in a newspaper.
- **Communicate** effectively.
  - Do not use all caps or multiple punctuation marks (!!!, ???, etc.).
  - Be sure to define or explain acronyms, jargon or uncommon terms so everyone can understand and participate in the discussion.
- **Sign your name.** Take responsibility for your comments in order to build a strong classroom community.
- **Foster community.** Share your ideas and contribute to ongoing discussions. Make comments that add to, not detract from, a positive learning environment for the course.
- **Be constructive.** Challenge ideas and the course content, but do so in positive ways. It’s fine to disagree, but when done politely you stimulate and encourage helpful discussion, and you maintain positive relationships with fellow students.
- **Keep the conversation on topic.** Online dialogue is like conversation. If there is a particular dialogue going on, please add to it, but if you have something new to say, start a new thread.

**SIUE Plagiarism Policy:** “The University recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism, the act of representing the work of another as one's own, may take two forms. It may consist of copying, paraphrasing or otherwise using the written or oral work of another without acknowledging the source, or it may consist of presenting oral or written course work prepared by another as one's own.

Normally a student who plagiarizes shall receive a grade of F in the course in which the act occurs. The offense shall also be reported to the Provost. In addition, any graduate student who has been found to have committed an act of plagiarism may be dropped from his or her graduate degree program by his or her department. A student who is reported a second time shall be suspended from the University for a period of not less than one term. Should a student who has been suspended for plagiarism be readmitted and be again found guilty of the offense, he/she shall be permanently expelled from the University.

This policy statement shall appear in the University catalogs and course announcements, shall be called to the attention of advisers, shall be explained during the program of new student orientation, and shall be published in the [Alestle](#) at least once during the beginning of each fall term.

The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is charged with administrative responsibility for handling complaints, allegations, or grievances against students concerning plagiarism, according to the [Student Academic Code \(Policy 3C2\)](#). "

## Services for Students Needing Accommodations

Students needing accommodations because of medical diagnosis or major life impairment will need to register with Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) and complete an intake process before accommodations will be given. Students who believe they have a diagnosis, but do not have documentation, should contact ACCESS for assistance and/or appropriate referral. The ACCESS office is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1203. You can also reach the office by emailing us at [myaccess@siue.edu](mailto:myaccess@siue.edu) or by calling [618-650-3726](tel:618-650-3726).

## Grading

Quizzes	85 pts	A	90-100%	484 – 540 pts
Discussion board	70 pts	B	80-89%	429 – 483 pts
Homework	85 pts	C	70-79%	376 – 428 pts
Lecture exam 1	100 pts	D	60-69%	322 – 375 pts
Lecture exam 2	100 pts	F	0-59%	< 322 pts
Lecture exam 3	100 pts			
<b>Total</b>	<b>540 pts</b>			

See the course calendar for reading assignments/lecture topics, as well as due dates for assignments, quizzes, and exams. This calendar is subject to change, and all changes will be announced in class. All questions will come from lecture material and assigned readings in the textbook. **The statute of limitations for contesting any graded material (exams, quizzes, etc.) is one week from the date you receive the grade.**

## Weekly Folders

The assignments for each week are located in the weekly folders accessed on the left hand menu under the Week 1, Week 2, and Week 3 buttons. There you will find folders with the week's Powerpoint lectures (MP4 files) and lecture PDFs, quizzes, discussion boards, homework assignments, and exams. The lectures, quizzes, discussion boards, and homework assignments for the week will be available on Monday mornings by 8:00 am. Weekly exams will be available by Thursdays at 12:00 am and remain open until Sunday nights at 11:59 pm.

## Lectures

Lecture content will be available in the weekly folders on the left hand menu. This will be in the form of narrated Powerpoint lectures in MP4 format. This format is compatible with a wide array of media players and will begin playing automatically once the file is opened. I will also post lectures in PDF format to accompany the MP4 files.

## Quizzes

There will be 17 quizzes (5 pts each) during the course (one per chapter). These are generally in multiple choice and/or true-false format and are available in the weekly quiz folders. You will have 5 minutes to complete each quiz and must complete them once you begin taking them. Be sure you read the chapters and listen to the lectures before taking quizzes.

## Mastering Homework

There will be 17 online homework assignments (5 pts each) during the course (one per chapter). These will be available through MasteringBiology.

## Discussion Boards

You are required to participate in an introductory discussion post as well as two discussion posts per week relating to the week's course material. You will earn up to 10 pts each (70 pts total). The initial post is an exercise, where you will introduce yourself to the class. The remaining discussion board activities are focused on a topic from the week's reading. You'll find a news article that relates to the topic and then post a brief summary (3-4 sentence) and link to the article. You'll then pose a question about the story. After that you're responsible for reading a post from another student in the course and posting a response. There are 3 possible grades for this activity (0 = no or minimal attempt; 5 = completed most but not all requirements; 10 = completed all requirements). You may access the discussion boards by clicking on the weekly assignment buttons on the left hand menu or by clicking on **Discussion Boards**. **The weekly deadlines for your posts are Thursdays by 11:59 pm. Your response to others' posts will be due Sundays by 11:59 pm.** Details about discussion posts are found in the Discussion Boards link on the left hand menu or in the weekly folders.

## Lecture Exams

Lecture exams will be completed online via Blackboard and will be available from 12:00 am Thursday until 11:59 pm on Sunday. Exams should not be attempted until you have viewed and studied PowerPoint lectures. These can be accessed by clicking on the weekly folder. There will be 3 lecture exams worth 100 pts each (300 pts total). These will be multiple choice and/or true-false exams and you will have 60 minutes to complete the exam and submit your answers. You must complete the exam once it has begun. Be sure you read the chapters and listen to the lectures before taking exams. Exams will close at 11:59 pm on Sundays. Any exams still in progress at that point will be automatically submitted. **Do not wait to start the exam with less than one hour before the deadline!**

## Missed Exam

If you miss an exam for medical reasons, I must have a written statement to that effect signed by the attending physician. If you missed an exam for a non-medical emergency, submit to the instructor the appropriate written documentation of the emergency. If I decide it was a real emergency, you may be allowed to retake the exam in person. **Documentation will be accepted only up to one week following the missed exam.**

## Late Work Policy

**NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED.** You are expected to start assignments early in the week and schedule regular time to: 1) LEARN the material and 2) COMPLETE the assignments prior to posted deadlines.

## Course Calendar

Lecture Date	Topic
<b>Week 1: 12/16 - 12/22</b>	Ch 1 Introduction to the Scientific Method
	Ch 2 Water, Biochemistry and Cells
	Ch 3 Nutrients and Membrane Transport
	Ch 4 Enzymes, Metabolism, and Cellular Respiration
	Ch 5 Photosynthesis and Climate Change
	Ch 6 DNA Synthesis and Mitosis
<b>Week 1 Assignments</b>	Discussion post 1 (Introductory post), Discussion post 2 (Pseudoscience), Discussion post 3 (Climate Change). Initial posts due Thursday, 12/19 by 11:59 pm. Responses due Sunday, 12/22 by 11:59 pm. 6 chapter quizzes due Sunday, 12/24 by 11:59 pm. Lecture exam 1—Opens Thursday, 12/19 at 12:00 am. Closes on Sunday, 12/22 at 11:59 pm. <b>NOTE: EXAM MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE DEADLINE!</b>
<b>Week 2: 12/23 - 12/29</b>	Ch 7 Meiosis and Human Reproduction
	Ch 8 Mendelian Genetics
	Ch 9 Complex Patterns of Inheritance and DNA Profiling
	Ch 10 Gene Expression, Mutation, Stem Cells, and Cloning
	Ch 11 The Evidence for Evolution
	Ch 12 Natural Selection
<b>Week 2 Assignments</b>	Discussion post 4 (Gene Editing), Discussion post 5 (Evolution). Initial posts due Thursday, 12/26. Responses due Sunday, 12/29 by 11:59 pm. 6 chapter quizzes due Sunday, 12/29 by 11:59 pm. Lecture exam 2—Opens Thursday, 12/26 at 12:00 am. Closes on Sunday, 12/29 at 11:59 pm. <b>NOTE: EXAM MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE DEADLINE!</b>
<b>Week 3: 12/30 - 1/5</b>	Ch 13 Species and Races
	Ch 14 Biodiversity and Classification
	Ch 15 Population Ecology
	Ch 16 Community and Ecosystems Ecology
	Ch 17 Climate and Biomes
<b>Week 3 Assignments</b>	Discussion post 6 (Biodiversity), Discussion post 7 (Human Impacts). Initial posts due Thursday, 1/2 by 11:59 pm. Responses due Sunday, 1/7 by 11:59 pm. Writing Assignment due Friday, 1/3 by 11:59 pm. 5 chapter quizzes due Sunday, 1/5 by 11:59 pm. Lecture exam 3—Opens Thursday, 1/2 at 12:00 am. Closes on Sunday, 1/5 at 11:59 pm. <b>NOTE: EXAM MUST BE SUBMITTED BEFORE DEADLINE!</b>