

**MVLA
2025-26
COURSE INFORMATION SHEET**

Course Title: Biology Honors

School: Los Altos High School

UC/CSU requirement: Lab Science D-level, 1 year

MVLA Graduation requirement: 10 credits - life science

Textbook and/or other learning resources: *Biology* by Cecie Starr (Brooks/Cole Pub.) and FlexBooks® | CK-12 Foundation. <https://flexbooks.ck12.org/cbook/ck-12-biology-flexbook-2.0/>

Course Description/Student Learning Outcomes:

Biology is the study of living organisms. This course is designed to help the student better understand the relationships between organisms and their environment. It will be conducted at an advanced rate compared to general biology and students are expected to work accordingly. An inquiry-based method of learning is used as well as reading, note taking (lectures and book), F experiments, and group/class discussions.

Course Outline/Units of Study:

Through this course, students will demonstrate their ability to:

- engage in *NGSS* science and engineering practices to perform investigations, solve problems and communicate ideas.
- analyze and evaluate scientific data.
- apply mathematical concepts and construct models to understand natural phenomena.
- identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made.
- evaluate the importance of living organisms in the cyclical progression of the natural world.
- learn about organisms through firsthand observations and test concepts and principles that are introduced in the classroom.
- explore specific problems with a depth not easily achieved otherwise, and gain an awareness of the importance of confounding variables that exist in the "real world".
- engage in dialogue and research with classmates to build listening and public speaking skills.
- understand the ethical, moral, legal, and cultural issues related to research.

Topics covered in this college preparatory biology course include: the nature of science, the characteristics of living things, biochemistry and energetics, cell structure and function, evolution, Mendelian and molecular genetics, human systems, and ecology.

Assessment and Grading ([BP 5121](#) / [AR 5121](#)): To ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning, the course instructors implement aligned grading practices and common assessments with the same frequency.

1. Grading categories and their percentage weights:
45%: Assessments and Final
55%: Classwork
2. Achievement evidence collected within each grading category:
Students will be informed of the quantity, weight, and due dates of assignment/assessments in each grading category on Google Classroom/Canvas and Aeries. Lab work, classwork, homework, tests, quizzes, and projects/presentations will all contribute to the overall grade earned by the student.
3. Grading scales:
A = 100%-90% C = 79%-70%
B = 89%-80% D = 69%-60% F = 59% and below

4. Homework/outside of class practices ([AR 6154](#)):
Nightly homework could include reading, taking notes, worksheets, lab reports, researching topics online, and/or reviewing for tests. On average, students are expected to work 20-30 minutes a night.
5. Excused absence make up practices ([Education Code 48205\(b\)](#)):
 - A. When absent, it is YOUR responsibility to find out what you missed from Canvas/Google Classroom, a fellow student, or the teacher.
 - B. Make-up exams will be given the day you return from an EXCUSED absence. It will be the teacher's discretion as to whether the test will be given in class, after school, or during ACT (Academic Collaboration Time). It is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher the day of the missed exam.
 - C. If you are absent the day before a test and miss the classroom review, you will still be required to take the test when you return.
 - D. Make-ups should be prioritized during the following ACT session.
 - E. Lab experiments take time to set up and to do, therefore if you are absent, even if it is excused, you may not be able to make it up. You are still responsible for the material covered in the lab. If you have a doctor or dentist appointment on block days, please change it.
 - F. If you miss class for a school related event, you must turn in homework by the due date and check in with your teacher prior to your absence.
 - G. Students who fail to complete a make-up test or lab will not have the opportunity to make it up again and will earn a score of zero.
 - H. Completion of work is due in the number of days missed, unless the assignment was given prior to the absence (for instance, a test will be given on the day you return to class).
6. Academic integrity violation practices ([LAHS Academic Integrity Policy](#)): Honesty, trust and integrity are vital components of the education process. The Governing Board believes that academic honesty and personal integrity are fundamental components of a student's education and character development. The Board expects that students will not cheat, lie, plagiarize or commit other acts of academic dishonesty. Students and families should understand and act upon the values of academic integrity and should encourage the highest standards of academic behavior from themselves and their peers. It is assumed that all work completed for a class is original work created for that class, for a specific assignment. Violations of Academic Integrity will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the MVLA-LAHS Academic Integrity Policy. *Students caught cheating will earn a score of zero, denoted by a "V" in the grade book. There will not be an opportunity to make up the assignment.*
7. Late work practices: Late homework will not be accepted. A 20% penalty will be given to labs turned in one day late. Technology issues do not constitute a valid excuse for why an assignment is late, unless the student provides evidence that assistance was requested via the district help desk.
8. Revision practices: It is expected in honors that a student seeks assistance and feedback prior to an assignment due date. There are no test retake opportunities.
9. Extra credit practices:
Students should not expect any extra credit opportunities.
10. Additional grading practices:
Group work: while students often work collaboratively on laboratory and other assignments, each student is required to submit his/her own written report for credit, including data analysis (graph). Raw data is the only information to be shared.
Grade Book Update Policy: grades will be posted every 2-3 weeks on the Aeries [Student Information System](#) (SIS).
11. LMS Used:
Google Classroom (Bolton, Duran, Russo, Venugopal)

Instructors' email addresses:

Mrs. Bolton lisa.bolton@mvla.net (Room 709)
Mrs. Duran daniela.duran@mvla.net (Room 708)

Mr. Russo jacob.russo@mvla.net (Room 708)
Mrs. Venugopal archana.venugopal@mvla.net (Room 705)

Additional information:

1. Each student must maintain a notebook and charged device. These are to be brought to class each day.
2. Assignments (i.e. homework, lab reports, etc.) will be due on the teacher's specified day and must be ready to pass in/submit online at the start of class. There are no excuses (finishing last question, putting name on it, internet issues, etc.).
3. There will be no eating, no drinking, and no gum chewing allowed. Please wait until the given breaktime.
4. Phones and headphones/earbuds/airpods should be away during class. If they are found during class, parent contact will be made.
5. Take care of all restroom/bathroom needs before class or during breaks.
6. Always demonstrate respect for your classmates, teacher, and yourself. Our classroom is a place where people work together towards a common goal in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. As young adults, you know what behaviors are appropriate in such a setting. Listen to each other carefully and speak when it is your turn. Also, learn each other's names!
7. All rules from the student handbook apply in class (dress code, no cell phones, cheating, etc.).
8. Sunglasses and hats/hoods (headgear) are accessory items and are NOT to be worn during class. Remove jewelry for labs and pull back long hair.