

Syllabus BIOL 3339 – 001

Plant Biology

Fall 2025

Meeting Times: TuTH 09:30AM – 10:50AM (Must meet in person, no zoom lectures)

Location: WT Brookshire Hall Room 136

First Day of Classes: Monday, August 25th

Last Day of Classes: Friday, December 13th

Date to Withdraw Without Penalty (Census Date): November 3rd

Instructor:

Jared Dickson, M.S.

Lecturer, Department of Biology

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11AM – 2PM or by appointment

Course Description: This course focuses on plants, their unique features, their diversity, and how they profoundly influence all life on Earth. The goals of this course are for students to understand what makes a plant a plant and to appreciate the ways in which plants make life possible for humans and life on Earth in general.

Student Learning Objectives: By the end of the class, you should be able to...

- 1) Describe what a plant is and how plants are different from animals
- 2) Describe a plant cell, its parts, and its unique features
- 3) Explain how a plant cell captures energy (photosynthesis)
- 4) Describe the main groups of plants and how they differ from each other
- 5) Understand the significance of plants to you and your life, and be able to use your knowledge of plants to make informed decisions

Required Materials

- *Plant Biology, Third Edition*, published by LJLM Press (Graham, Graham, and Wilcox, authors)
 - Available exclusively for download through this link:
 - http://ljlmpress.com/plant_biology.html
 - Cost: \$40.
 - Do not print out the book. It is designed to be read directly on your computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet.
- A reliable high-speed internet connection that you can access on a regular basis.
 - If you do not have a reliable high-speed internet connection:
 - The computer labs will be open on campus.
 - The computer lab in the library has the best hours. It is open every day of the week. Most weekdays it is open from 7:30AM until midnight! The schedule is here: <https://ask.library.uttyler.edu/faq/190062>
 - Access to the computer labs may be disrupted if the university has to suspend in-person operations due to COVID-19.
 - There will also be WiFi available in some of the campus parking lots.
- Access to a laptop or desktop computer or a tablet on a regular basis.
 - You must be able to access reliable, high-speed internet on your laptop or desktop computer or tablet on a regular basis, with generous data usage (no low data caps!).
 - It is not permitted to take this course using only your smartphone.
 - See above about the computer labs on campus, if needed.

- Headphones or speakers that work on your laptop or desktop computer or tablet.
 - The speakers may be built into your device (internal), or you may need to add external headphones or speakers on your own.
 - The bottom line is that you will need some way to hear sound on your device that accompanies the videos you will watch.
- If you cannot access these materials, you **cannot** take this course. Changes to the assignment deadlines will **not** be made if you lack (even temporarily) access to these materials, except in some exceptional situations specifically related to COVID (see the COVID section below). Missing deadlines will result in zeros on the assignments and these zeros cannot be changed.

Grading:

Three exams, each worth 15% of final grade (worth 45% of final grade when added together)

One comprehensive final exam, worth 25% of final grade

Quizzes, worth 10% of final grade when added together

Graded in-class exercises, worth 10% of final grade when added together

Participation, worth 10% of final grade

Total: **100%**

90% – 100% = A

80% – 89% = B

70% – 79% = C

60% – 69% = D

< 60% = F

Attendance and make-up policy: Attendance is mandatory. **No late work will be accepted.** The deadlines are **not** flexible. You are expected to plan ahead and do your work ahead of time. You are expected to **not** wait until the last minute. Problems with your tablet/laptop/desktop or internet connection or Canvas, problems with scheduling for your job(s) or other classes, car problems, problems with child care, or personal or medical problems will not be accepted excuses for missing the deadlines. In general **no** excuses will be accepted, except under extraordinary circumstances at my sole discretion. Missing the deadlines means you will receive zeros on the missed assignments and these zeros cannot be changed. **There will be no make-up assignments or extensions.**

Correspondence: You are required to activate the email address that is listed for you on Canvas and to check it regularly. You must check this email address at a minimum every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning, for the entire duration of the semester, for any correspondence from me. You are also required to check the Canvas site for this course every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning as well, for the entire duration of the semester, for any announcements. You will be held responsible for any information, including deadlines, that I communicate to you via your email address listed on Canvas and/or through the announcements on the Canvas course site. The information could come from one or both places (email and/or Canvas announcements), so you must check BOTH places on the schedule indicated above.

Due Dates and Deadlines: You are required to have this course visible in your calendar on Canvas. To do so, make sure the box for the course has a check mark. You will be held responsible for all of the due dates and deadlines for this course that are indicated in your Canvas calendar.

Lectures: Lectures will be pre-recorded. You are responsible for watching and listening to the lectures on Canvas. The “watch by” dates of the lectures will be indicated. The lectures will be available at least 24 hours before the “watch by” date. You are expected to take notes as you watch the lectures!

Quizzes: Once you have watched/listened to a lecture on Canvas, there is a quiz for you to take, also on Canvas. The purpose of the quizzes is to make sure you watched/listened to the lectures carefully.

There will also be quizzes embedded into pre-recorded videos on Canvas. In other words, for these videos you will take the quizzes as you watch videos. The quiz questions will automatically pop up on your screen as you go along. The due dates of the quizzes will be indicated in your Canvas calendars. The videos with the embedded quizzes will be available at least one week before the due dates. The quizzes will tentatively be due every Monday and Wednesday evening throughout the entire semester.

Graded Exercises: There will be many exercises assigned during class. I will only grade some of these, but I won’t tell you which ones. This is because I want you to do your best on all of them regardless of whether they are being graded.

Exams: Exam formats are open to change. They could be multiple choice, short-answer + essays, or a mixture. They will cover anything from the lectures. You will take the exams on Canvas.

Final Exam: The final will be *cumulative*, meaning that it will cover everything from the whole semester, including new material since the last exam. You will take the exam on Canvas.

Copying: You can discuss your assignments with your friends or classmates whenever you want and you can discuss anything you want. But **you**, alone, are expected to write everything that you submit, by yourself, and everything that you submit must be in your own words. It is not allowable to hand in something as a group, or for all members of a group to each hand in the same thing. **Any** copying whatsoever from others, whether they are part of your study group or not, is entirely **prohibited**. You are **not** allowed to pass around your submitted assignments or drafts to anyone else to look at, **for any reason**, and you are also not allowed to look at submitted assignments or drafts of anything written by anyone else. These prohibitions apply to any materials submitted by students in previous years' classes as well. These prohibitions also apply to any material from **any** source (newspaper, TV, website, professional journal, magazine, etc.) Simply putting everything in quotation marks does **not** get around any of these prohibitions, **because quoting is not allowed either, no matter what the source is!** If you hand in the same assignment as someone else, or if it is copied from someone else, even a little!, or if the assignment contains any quoting from any source, with or without quotation marks, you will receive a zero for the assignment and the person you copied from will receive a zero as well. I will not seek to determine who copied from whom; all persons with similar content will have the same penalty.

Turnitin: All assignments and appeals that you hand in will be checked for copying using a program called Turnitin. This software checks the internet as well as every other student's work who has ever taken this course or any other course. It also checks against any papers that are secretly traded or sold over the internet. The bottom line is that if you copy someone else's or somewhere else's writing, even a little, the software will catch you and it will give me the names of the other persons and/or the other copied sources.

Privacy: Students do **not** have the right to be "anonymous" whether classes are in person or online, or for all-online classes. All discussion will take place within Canvas, and your names will be displayed.

Grade grubbing: Grade grubbing will not be tolerated. I have quoted some relevant passages below about grade grubbing. They come from an excellent website that I recommend you read:

<https://www.math.uh.edu/~tomforde/GradeGrubbing.html>

Grade Grubbing (also called "grade begging" or "grade lawyering") is the act of a student going to a professor and asking for a grade to be raised for no legitimate reason. Often the student argues that they feel their work was "not graded fairly", or they made only a small mistake and should get more points, or they knew what they were doing even though they gave the wrong answer. Grade grubbing often involves asking for detailed justification of why certain points were taken off, questioning subjective aspects of grading (e.g., Why is this problem worth 5 points and this one worth 7 points?), and wearing down the professor by arguing, begging, and pleading until they finally relent and increase the student's grade.

...In addition, grade grubbing presents a very negative image of you: it indicates that you do not care about learning the material, and that all that matters to you is your grade in the class, even if you get that grade unfairly or when you do not deserve it.

Grade grubbing greatly affects the way your professors view you and the way they will treat you in the future. If you challenge your grade without a good reason, you will probably not be remembered fondly when you ask that professor for a recommendation...

...If an obvious error has been made in grading, such as points added incorrectly or a clearly correct answer was inadvertently marked wrong, then by all means talk to the professor and they will likely change your grade immediately. Likewise, if you don't understand why you lost points, or want clarification (not justification) of the grading, most professors are happy to talk with you. **And, if you want to discuss the material, learn what you did wrong, or discuss how to do better on future work, most professors will probably be thrilled to speak to you about this.**

However, if you are going to approach a professor who has spent their life studying, teaching, and doing research on a particular topic, and then argue that their decision of how to grade or award points should be changed to what you say it should be, then you better be prepared with a strong and convincing argument.

Source: <https://www.math.uh.edu/~tomforde/GradeGrubbing.html>

COVID

It is important to take the necessary precautions to ensure a healthy and successful year. UT Tyler continues to urge you to protect yourselves against the flu, COVID and any new threats that may be developing. Be diligent about preventive measures such as washing hands, covering sneezes/coughs, social distancing and vaccinations, which have proven to be successful in slowing the spread of viruses. Encourage those who don't feel well to stay home, and if they show symptoms, ask them to get tested for the flu or COVID. Self-isolation is important to reduce exposure ([CDC quarantine/isolation guidelines](#)). Please work with your faculty members to maintain coursework and please consult [existing campus resources](#) for support.

Recording of Class Sessions

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

Class schedule (subject to change):

Lecture Topics

Introduction

Plants and People

Plant Cells

Photosynthesis: Overview

Plant Structure, Growth, and Development

Stems and Materials Transport

Roots and Plant Nutrition

Leaves

Photosynthesis: Different Types of Photosynthesis

Plant “Behavior”

Reproduction and Life Cycles

Plant Diversity: Seedless Plants

Plant Diversity: Gymnosperms

Plant Diversity: Angiosperms

Animal-Plant Coevolution

Tentative exam schedule (subject to change):

Exam 1: Thursday, September 18th

- Introduction
- Plants and People
- Plant Cells
- Photosynthesis: Overview

Exam 2: Thursday, October 23rd

- Plant Structure, Growth, and Development
- Stems and Materials Transport
- Roots and Plant Nutrition
- Leaves
- Photosynthesis: Different Types of Photosynthesis

Exam 3: Thursday, November 20th

- Plant “Behavior”
- Reproduction and Life Cycles
- Plant Diversity: Seedless Plants
- Plant Diversity: Gymnosperms

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 11th, 09:30AM – 11:30AM

- The final will be ***cumulative*** and cover:
 - o Everything from the entire semester, as well as:
 - o Plant Diversity: Angiosperms
 - o Animal-Plant Coevolution