Meeting Times: All-online and self-paced (but with deadlines)
Location: All-online. Take the course wherever you are!
First Day of Class: Monday, January 11th
Last Day of Class: Friday, April 23rd
Date to Withdraw Without Penalty (Census Date): Monday, January 25th

Please note that this course is all-online and has no face-to-face component.

Instructor:
Dr. Joshua Banta
Director, Center for Environment, Biodiversity, and Conservation
Associate Professor, Department of Biology
Office: Hudnall, Pirtle, Roosth Building (HPR) Room 129. NOTE: Since this is an all-online class, office hours will be held over the phone, not at my office.
Phone: (903) 565-5655
Email: jbanta@uttyler.edu
Office Hours: MWF 10:00 – 11:00 am or by appointment. NOTE: Since this is an all-online class, office hours will be held over the phone, not at my office. Simply call my phone number.

Course Description: This laboratory course focuses on plants and on how we can scientifically study the natural world using them. The goals of this laboratory course are for students to be able to recognize different types of plants and different plant tissues, and to be able to test scientific hypotheses using plants. The curriculum will emphasize the scientific method and hands-on activities.

Student Learning Objectives: By the end of the class, you should be able to…
1) Understand what a hypothesis is, and formulate your own hypotheses
2) Understand the steps of the scientific method and be able to follow them systematically
3) Present scientific results in a concise and informative format
4) Recognize different types of plants and different plant tissues, at different points in development

Required Textbook (Only Available at the UT-Tyler Bookstore):
Grading:
Participation: 33% of the final grade when added together
Lab worksheets: 33% of the final grade when added together
Lab reports: 33% of the final grade when added together
Total: 100%

100 – 90% = A  
89 – 80% = B  
79 – 70% = C  
69 – 60% = D  
< 60% = F

Required Materials:

- Access to a **laptop or desktop computer or a tablet (iPad)** on a regular basis.
  - It is not permitted to take this course using only your smartphone.
  - You must be able to access reliable, high-speed internet on your device on a regular basis, with generous data usage (no low data caps!).
  - If you do not have regular access to a laptop or desktop computer or a tablet, there are multiple computer labs located throughout campus.
    - I recommend the computer lab in the Robert Muntz library.
      - It has computers on the 2nd and 4th floors.
      - It’s normal operating hours are Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm, Saturdays 9am – 6pm, and Sundays 11am – 8pm.
      - It is recommended that you call ahead to confirm: (903) 566-7342
      - Access may be disrupted if the university has to suspend in-person operations due to COVID-19.

- A reliable high-speed internet connection that you can access on a regular basis, with generous data usage (no low data caps!).
  - See above about the university’s computer labs, which are another option.

- Headphones or speakers that work on your device.
  - 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.
  - I have a limited number of headphones I can lend to you if you need them (on a first-come, first-served basis until they run out).

- 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.
**Weekly Lab schedule** (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lab Manual Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microscopy and Plant Cells</td>
<td>Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photosynthesis</td>
<td>Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seed Germination</td>
<td>Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plant Development</td>
<td>Ch. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tree Investigations</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNA in Plant Cells</td>
<td>Ch. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaves and Roots</td>
<td>Chs. 10 and 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity: Seedless Plants</td>
<td>Ch. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity: Seed Plants</td>
<td>Ch. 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity: Flowering Plants (Reproduction)</td>
<td>Ch. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity: Flowering Plants (Seeds and Fruits)</td>
<td>Ch. 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Attendance and make-up policy:** “Attendance” in this all-online course means watching all of the videos and taking all of the quizzes by the deadlines. “Attendance,” in this sense, is mandatory. **No late work will be accepted.** Even though this course is entirely online and self-paced, there are strict deadlines to follow that require your regular participation. 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 laptop/desktop/tablet 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.

**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.

**Quoting:** As mentioned above, quoting is **never** allowed in this class, even if you use quotation marks. Everything must be written in your own words, not those of your study group or of anyone else.

**Citations:** When writing your lab reports, you will be consulting other sources. There will be strict rules about what other sources are allowed and how to cite these sources in your paper. The rules about copying will apply as well, and so will the penalties, and this includes the rules forbidding quoting, even with quotation marks. More detailed rules for the lab reports will be provided separately.

**Appeals:** If you think something was scored incorrectly, you will need to follow the following procedure:
- Write a few sentences explaining why you think you should have received a different score.
- Appeals will only be accepted through Canvas, and must be turned in no later than one week after the assignment was graded. Go to the course site and select “Modules” ➔ “Appeals.”
- Failure to follow these rules means that your appeal will not be considered.
- The only reasons I will give back points are if: (1) I made a math error; or (2) I decide that your answer was factually correct and followed all applicable rules indicated in the syllabus and elsewhere. By “factually correct,” I mean that your answer was really true about the world. Please also note that I, alone, will determine what is factually correct and what is not.
• The following are not valid reasons for getting points back: you feel that I explained something badly, you misunderstood what I was saying, or you feel that my PowerPoint slides or other materials were wrong or unclear.

• Please note that I cannot discuss anyone else’s scores with you because of privacy reasons, even if you say that you have their permission, and even if they say that I have their permission. I lack the legal expertise to allow someone to waive their privacy privileges, even if they want me to, and even if they have already shared their scores with others on their own.

• Appeals can result in a lower score, the same score, or a higher score than you originally received. Specifically note that I reserve the right to lower your score if I re-evaluate it and deem it appropriate.

• The rules about copying apply to appeals as well. See above.

Uncheck: All assignments and appeals that you hand in will be checked for copying using a program called Uncheck™. 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. It uses artificial intelligence to detect copying. 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.

COVID: Illnesses involving yourself and/or others will generally not be considered excuses for missing the deadlines to turn in assignments, in which case you will receive zeros on those assignments and those zeros cannot be changed. This is because I expect you to do the work ahead of time and not to save it for the last minute. However, if you are unable to meet the requirements for the course specifically because of some specific disruptions related to COVID, I may give you a grade of “incomplete” for the course, at my discretion. For this to be possible, you will need to discuss the situation with me as soon as you can.

If I allow it, then the procedure will be as follows:

• When conditions improve, you will be able to continue making progress in the course, on your own, until you have completed all of the required assignments.

• You will have until May 2022 to finish the incomplete assignments.

• If you do not finish the assignments by that point, your “incomplete” grade for the course will be changed to the grade you earned up to that point, with zeros factoring into your grade for everything else that is left unfinished, and you will no longer be given the opportunity to finish the rest of the work or to change your course grade beyond that point.

The only COVID-related disruptions I may consider are:

• You or someone you care for gets COVID (and let’s all wish this doesn’t happen!!!), and this renders you unable to keep up with the course.
  
  o In this case, I will require a doctor’s note that references the date of your positive COVID test or diagnosis and/or the date of the positive COVID test or diagnosis of the person you are caring for.

• COVID disrupts your access to consistent, reliable, high-speed internet and/or to consistent, regular usage of an internet-enabled laptop or desktop computer on which to access high-speed internet.

Weather and/or closures: Because this is an all-online class, winter weather will not affect the course schedule, or the deadlines of any assignments. The same is true of any other disruptions (including COVID) that might close or restrict access to the university. As mentioned before, you are required to plan ahead and not save assignments for the last minute. Therefore, it is expected that sudden disruptions will not affect your ability to keep up with the course. The bottom line is that, even if everything else, including the university, gets closed, this course will always stay “open” as originally scheduled.

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.
Quizzes: This is how you will receive your weekly participation score. The quizzes will be embedded into pre-recorded videos on Canvas. In other words, 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 evening throughout the entire semester. There will almost always be multiple videos with quizzes to watch each week, which together will add up to 100 quiz points for the week. Together with all of the other quizzes, in all the other weeks, this will be 33% of your final grade when they are all added together.

Worksheets: Most laboratory exercises will have a worksheet due a week later. Each one will be worth 100 points. Follow the instructions I provide to you in the videos, and then use the link on Canvas to turn it in before the due date/time. You must do your own work! Every person is expected to answer all of the questions on their own, in their own words. You are allowed to work together and decide what answers you think are correct, but then each person must write down the answers on their own and in their own words. The rules about copying and quoting apply. You are not allowed to share your answers with others in your group and ask them to change the wording. This is still considered copying. Together with all of the other worksheets, in all the other weeks, this will be 33% of your final grade when they are all added together.

Lab Reports: There will be two lab reports during the course of the semester. The format of the lab reports will be explained in lab. Please follow this format carefully. There will additional assignments as part of the lab reports that you will complete along the way that will count towards your lab report grades. You will be collecting data and writing in the style of a formal scientific paper, where you set up the hypothesis, explain your methods, concisely present your results, and discuss your findings as they relate to the hypothesis. Just like the worksheets, each person is expected to write their own lab report, in their own words. You are allowed to work together and come up with answers together, but each person must write everything out on their own and in their own words. The rules about copying and quoting apply. You are not allowed to share your lab report with others in your group and ask them to change the wording. This is still considered copying. All of the lab report points will be 33% of your final grade when they are added together.
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://marktomforde.com/academic/undergraduates/GradeGrubbing.html
**Important Covid-19 Information for Classrooms and Laboratories**

Students are required to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth, and follow social distancing guidelines, at all times in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories), as specified by Procedures for Fall 2020 Return to Normal Operations. The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its Honor Code and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher than normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home and may join the class remotely. Students who have difficulty adhering to the Covid-19 safety policies for health reasons are also encouraged to join the class remotely. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email saroffice@uttyler.edu.

**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.