Syllabus BIOL 3339 – 060 (20850)
Plant Biology
Spring 2021
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 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

Recommended Textbook
- *Plant Biology, Third Edition*, published by LJLM Press (Graham, Graham, and Wilcox, authors)
  - Available exclusively for download through this link:
  - Cost: $40.
  - Do not print out the book. It is designed to be read directly on your computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet.
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 the final grade when added together
Top Hat questions, worth 10% of the final grade when added together
Graded assignments, worth 10% of final grade when added together
Total: 100%

90% – 100% = A
80% – 89% = B
70% – 79% = C
60% – 69% = 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).
- Top Hat™ Student Response and Engagement System. (More on that below)
- 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.
**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: There will be three times per week (please note: three times per week). 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 24 hours before the due dates (please note: this is different from the lab!). The quizzes will tentatively be due every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday evening throughout the entire semester (please note: this is different from the lab). There will almost always be multiple videos with quizzes due on a particular day, which together will add up to 100 quiz points for that day. Together with all of the other quizzes throughout the semester, they will be 10% of your final grade when they are all added together. If you do not keep up with the quizzes, you could drop a whole letter grade or more, just based on the lost points!

Top Hat Questions: Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday evening, you will have questions due using Top Hat (see below for more information.) These questions are for me (and for you) to discover what you do and do not understand, as well as to help you study for the exams. The questions will be available at least 24 hours before the due dates (please note: this is different from the lab!). There will be multiple Top Hat questions to answer on a particular day, which together will add up to 100 Top Hat points for the day. Together with all of the other Top Hat questions throughout the semester, they will be 10% of your final grade when they are all added together. If you do not keep up with the Top Hat questions, you could drop a whole letter grade or more, just based on the lost points! Please note: when you register for Top Hat, you are required to use your Patriots email address as your email address. Do not give Top Hat any other email addresses. Unless you register correctly with your Patriots email address, you will receive zeros on your Top Hat assignments, and these zeros will not be changed and there will be no make-up assignments.

Exams: There will be three exams this semester. They will be open-book, but with a strict time limit of 50 minutes. Each exam will be made available on a Friday morning and will remain available until that Sunday evening at 11:59 pm. You will have one hour to complete the exam from when you begin, and you cannot pause it or start over. Therefore, make sure you start the exam when you have enough time to complete it and when you will not be interrupted. You will need to have a constant internet connection while taking the exam. The loss of internet will cut it off and you will not be able to get back in. Also, you need to have the exam completed by that Sunday evening at 11:59 pm, so the latest you should start the exam is that Sunday evening at 11:09 pm. If you begin the exam later than that, you will not have the full 50 minutes to complete it. Beware that the exams will be hard and you will not have enough time to look anything up. Furthermore, each person’s exam will be different. This is because the exams will be 50 multiple choice questions that are drawn from a test bank of hundreds of questions. On average, you will only have one minute to answer each question! You should treat these exams as if they were closed-book, in terms of how hard you study and in terms of how you take the exam. You are not allowed to work on your exam with anyone else, to talk to anyone else about your exam, to help anyone else with their exam, or to accept anyone else’s help with your exam. Each person must work on their own exam by themselves, completely alone. Unlike the other parts of this class, exams are not something you are allowed to work on together. You are expected to do the exam well ahead of time. Therefore, no late exams will be accepted and no excuses will be accepted for missing the exam or for not finishing it on time. There will be no makeup exams. Failure to do the exam by the deadline means you will receive a zero, or whatever grade you got at the time you got cut off. If it is possible that you may lose internet during the exam, then I encourage you to play it safe and take the exam on the UT-Tyler campus (see the “Required Materials” section above for information about the computer lab in the UT-Tyler library, although there are also many other computer labs available to students on campus.)

Final Exam: All of the information above for the regular exams also pertains to the final exam. The only two differences are: (1) the final exam will be longer. Rather than 50 minutes, you will have two hours. (2) Rather than 50 questions, there will be 100 questions. The final exam will be made available on Friday, April 30th in the morning and will be available until Sunday, May 2nd at 11:59 pm. But remember: you need to be finished with the exam by May 2nd at 11:59 pm. You cannot begin it at that time. The latest you can begin the exam on May 2nd, and still have the full time, is 9:59 pm. The final exam will be cumulative, meaning that it will cover everything from throughout the entire semester.

Graded Assignments: There will be many assignments this semester, but I will only grade some of them. I won’t tell you which ones I am grading, because I want you to do your best on all of them. If you don’t keep up with the assignments, you could drop a whole letter grade or more just based on the lost points!

Extra Credit: There will be very little extra credit offered this semester, if any, so please be sure to do your best on every assignment.
**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](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](https://www.math.uh.edu/~tomforde/GradeGrubbing.html)

**Academic integrity**: Cheating or any other type of academic misconduct will be reported to the university administration, and at minimum will result in failure of the course.
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: Friday, February 5th – Sunday, February 7th
- Introduction
- Plants and People
- Plant Cells
- Photosynthesis: Overview
Exam 2: Friday, March 5th – Sunday, March 7th
- Plant Structure, Growth, and Development
- Stems and Materials Transport
- Roots and Plant Nutrition
- Leaves
- Photosynthesis: Different Types of Photosynthesis
Exam 3: Friday, April 9th – Sunday April 11th
- Plant “Behavior”
- Reproduction and Life Cycles
- Plant Diversity: Seedless Plants
- Plant Diversity: Gymnosperms
Final Exam: Friday, April 30th – Sunday May 2nd
- The final will be cumulative and cover:
  - Everything from the entire semester, as well as:
  - Plant Diversity: Angiosperms
  - Animal-Plant Coevolution
Top Hat

We will be using Top Hat Pro (www.tophat.com) for class participation. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. For instructions on how to create a Top Hat account and enrol in our Top Hat Pro course, please refer to the invitation sent to your school email address or consult Top Hat's Getting Started Guide (https://bit.ly/31TGM1w).

If you already have a Top Hat account, go to https://app.tophat.com/e/127513/ to be taken directly to our course. If you are new to Top Hat, follow the link in the email invitation you received or...

• Go to https://app.tophat.com/register/student
• Click "Search by school" and input the name of our school
• Search for our course with the following join code: 127513

If a paid subscription is required, it will be listed at checkout when you enroll in our Top Hat Pro course. Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491. Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

The UT-Tyler bookstore also has Top Hat licenses that you can purchase using student loans.

Please note: when you register for Top Hat, you are required to use your Patriots email address as your email address. Do not give Top Hat any other email addresses. Unless you register correctly with your Patriots email address, you will receive zeros on your Top Hat assignments, and these zeros will not be changed and there will be no make-up assignments.
Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/StudentRightsandResponsibilities.html

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness
If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to do so will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three course repeats; graduates, for two course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler.

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the 12th day of class (See Schedule of Classes for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Registrar's Office if you have any questions.

Disability Services
In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office in UC 282, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.
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.