Meeting Times: MWF 9:05 – 10:00 am
Location: Soules College of Business (COB) room 00103
First Day of Class: Monday, August 26th
Last Day of Class: Friday, December 6th

Instructor:
Dr. Joshua Banta
Director, Center for Environment, Biodiversity, and Conservation
Associate Professor, Department of Biology
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Office Hours: MWF 10:00 – 11:00 am 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)
  o Available exclusively for download through this link:
    • http://ljlmpress.com/plant_biology.html
  o Cost: $40.
  o Do not print out the book. It is designed to be read directly on your computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet.
• Top Hat™ Student Response and Engagement System (see the last page of syllabus).
• Top Hat™ Test, an add-on to Top Hat™.
• A smartphone with a working camera.

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 when added together
Total: 100%

90% – 100% = A  80% – 89% = B  70% – 79% = C
60% – 69% = D < 60% = F
Attendance: You are expected to be at class, on time, for every class, and you are expected to stay the whole time. If you will not be able to do this, please talk to me ahead of time. If you have obligations that keep you from coming to class on time on a regular basis, then you may need to drop the course. I reserve the right to deduct up to all of the day’s points (on assignments and for attendance) for arriving late to class or for leaving class early without a valid excuse.

Valid Excuses: I do not want you to come to class with the flu! But you will need to see the doctor on the day you are absent (or before) and get a doctor’s note. See below.

Absences, late arrivals, and early exits may be excused at my discretion, and there must be documentation to my satisfaction. Valid excuses include a sporting or other university-related event, a death in the family, or an illness affecting yourself or someone you must provide care for (such as a spouse or a child). Car troubles may sometimes be excused at my discretion, provided there is documentation from a police official (such as an accident report) or a mechanic’s shop that covers the dates in question. Valid excuses do not include oversleeping or work schedule problems. If you miss class because you or someone you provide care for was ill, you must provide a doctor’s note listing the dates affected. This means you or your loved one will need to visit the doctor on the day you are absent (or earlier) so that you can get a doctor’s note.

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 must have your smartphones with you, and they must have the Top Hat app activated on them, along with an add-on subscription to Top Hat Test.

Final Exam: As far as I can tell, the final exam will be on Friday, December 13th from 8:00 – 10:00 am. Since the university sets final exam dates and times, I will confirm this information with you later in the semester when I know for certain. The final will be cumulative, meaning that it will cover everything from the whole semester, including new material since the last exam.

Make-up Exams: If you contact me in advance, and if you have a valid reason with documentation, I will offer you a make-up exam. Please be aware that make-up exams may be entirely essay-format.

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. The quiz will only be available until the “watch by” date of the lecture, so don’t miss it! The quizzes must be completed alone. Working on the quizzes with classmates is not allowed. If you don’t complete the quizzes regularly, you could drop a whole letter grade or more just based on the lost points! Please note that I do not drop your lowest quiz scores when I calculate your final grade.
Graded In-Class Exercises: There will be many in-class exercises during class and they will be unannounced. 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. **If you don’t come to class regularly, and therefore miss the graded exercises, you could drop a whole letter grade or more just based on the lost points!** Please note that I drop your **one lowest** in-class exercise score when I calculate your final grade.

Excused Graded Assignments: If you miss a graded assignment, and if you have a valid reason with documentation that I accept, then you are excused from the assignment. Your other assignments will count as a larger share of your grade instead.

Participation: I will monitor your participation during every class period. **If you don’t come to class regularly, you could drop a whole letter grade or more just based on the lost participation points!** Please note that I drop your **two lowest** in-class participation scores when I calculate your final grade.

Excused Participation: If you miss class with a valid excuse that I accept, then you will not be penalized. The participation points for that day will not be factored into your final grade, and instead the rest of the participation points will be weighted more to make up for it.

Extra Credit: Extra credit assignments will be posted on Canvas, and each one will be worth 2 – 4% extra score added to one of your exams. You are allowed to add a total of 10% extra to one of your exams this way. **You are not eligible for extra credit if you have missed more than five classes (unexcused) during the semester.**

Appealing grades on Assignments or Exams: If you think you should have received credit for an answer that was marked incorrect, or that your work was scored incorrectly, you will need to follow the following procedure:

- Write a few sentences explaining why you think you should get credit.
- Hand this in on Canvas no later than one week after the answer key for the assignment or for the exam was posted online.

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. By “factually correct,” I mean that your answer was really true about the world. Please also note that I, alone, am the judge of 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 were wrong or unclear.
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

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, September 20th
- Introduction
- Plants and People
- Plant Cells
- Photosynthesis: Overview
Exam 2: Friday, October 18th
- Plant Structure, Growth, and Development
- Stems and Materials Transport
- Roots and Plant Nutrition
- Leaves
- Photosynthesis: Different Types of Photosynthesis
Exam 3: Friday, November 15th
- Plant “Behavior”
- Reproduction and Life Cycles
- Plant Diversity: Seedless Plants
- Plant Diversity: Gymnosperms
Final Exam: Friday, December 13th
- 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 the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones, tablets, or laptops.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don’t receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: https://app.tophat.com/e/074467
Note: our Course Join Code is 074467

Top Hat may require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, 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.
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.