



January 4, 2010

Dear Biology Student!

Welcome!

My records show that you have registered for Biology 3A for the Spring, 2010 Semester. Welcome! We will have a great semester and do lots of neat things! I'm writing this letter to tell you about some of the things I have planned for the class.

Website!

I post announcements, assignments, podcasts and other pertinent and interesting information on my website. The URL (or address) is:

www.bioprof.org

Check out the photos from previous field trips, or learn about your new lab assistants, or what Biology alumni are doing now. I add new stuff frequently, so check often.

Syllabus and Course Schedules!

Your Syllabus and Course Schedules will be posted on my website as .pdf documents. (If you do not have a .pdf reader installed on your computer I have included a link there to download it free.) Please download and read these documents. You should print them so you can bring them to class with you the first few days. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about them in class the first week.

Podcasts!

For the last 5 years I have been podcasting my lectures and posting them to the web. Do you have an iPod or another brand of MP3 player? You'll be able to download my lecture to listen to again and again. You can listen to lectures at the laundromat, on the treadmill or on the bus. Not a substitute for attending class because it contains no visuals, but a great way to review material or to make sure your notes are complete. Don't have an iPod or MP3 player? You can play MP3 files on your computer as long as you have a sound card and any media player or burn them to a CD to play in any CD player. You can also listen or download at the computer commons. I'm one of a few profs at BC who podcasts her lectures. You can check this out on my website.

Student Success!

Student success is important to me. I'm hoping that by letting you know in advance what to expect next semester you'll be able to budget your time better and end up with a higher grade. Download the course Syllabus and Schedule. Please read through them and think about the time you have already committed to other classes, to your job, to family obligations. Do you have enough time to accomplish it all? If you get sick, have a car problem, or a family problem can you still keep up your schoolwork? Do you need to consider taking a lighter load of classes or working fewer hours? Every semester students tell me they are glad they took a lighter course and workload. Students who didn't cut back have told me if they had it to do over again they would for sure work less and take fewer classes. Notice that this is a 5-credit course but it meets 9 hours per week. That's like taking 3 Psych or History courses. Add another science class and you have almost a full load.

If you are not a science major (or pre-med, pre-vet, etc) but are taking this course only to fulfill a lab science course requirement **you are in the wrong class!** You need instead to take Bio 11, Concepts of Biology, Bio 20, Human Biology, or Bio 10, Environmental Science. These were designed with you in mind and have only a 3-hour lab instead of the 6 lab hours you get in Bio 3A. Bio 3A is a rigorous science course equivalent to those offered at major universities.

Short Semester!

At Bakersfield College we offer classes in a short, 15-week format. Students tend to get less burned out by the end of the semester and consequently perform better on their final exams. The down side of the shorter term is that the pace is fast and students need to stay on top of their work so they don't fall behind.

Books!

You may wish to buy your books before classes start to avoid the long lines in the bookstore. The titles are listed in the syllabus. Just don't write your names in them till you've been to class. Please note that the textbook and the Atlas are also used for the Biology 3B course so the per course cost is really half of the amount you spend. Lab Manuals are in the bookstore and additional ones will be delivered by Friday, January 15th.

The BIOLOGY text we are using comes with some really neat animations and study questions and activities and links to websites as well. Many test questions will come directly from the textbook, study questions, textbook website, and the Study Guide. I will be referring to this book in class and my course schedule refers to chapter numbers in this edition only. If you are repeating the class, you may still use your old Campbell & Reece book but be aware that the chapter numbers are different and some of the material has changed. You may want to make friends with someone who has the new book!

A word of caution: If you buy a used lab atlas (the one with all the colored photographs) be sure to check the page numbers to make sure there are NO MISSING PAGES!! In the past students have purchased an atlas which was missing several important pages. Don't let this happen to you.

Lab Manuals must be new and never used before since you are required to fill in information as you go along as part of the basis of your grade. Students repeating the course **must** purchase and use a new lab manual.

Notice there are other items listed which you will need for the class and some optional items as well. Anything you can start getting together now will be that much less you'll have to do during the semester.

The **Life Science Lexicon**, which we have used in the past, is now out-of-print. I have listed it in case you wish to find a used copy. You may find it helpful for the lexicon assignments we will be doing. There is also a copy for you to sign out in the lab and in the library.

Field Trips!

Students in previous semesters have enjoyed the field trips we have taken and have urged me to continue to lead them. Because of budget issues we may not be able to continue having field trips. I will let you know if these field trips become unavailable. Below are the field trips planned for this semester and their approximate cost so you can budget ahead for them. Transportation is by carpool, so you'll want to make friends early. Students who would like to organize fundraisers should talk to me at the beginning of the term. You don't have to go on every trip.

- **LOS ANGELES ZOO:**
This one-day trip is to study Primate Behavior and Classification by observing the excellent collection of Primates at the L.A. Zoo and will be a great value. I'll be assisted in your Zoo tour by an Anthropologist whose area of interest is primatology.
Cost: About \$8.50 plus food and gas.
Date: To be announced.
- **HART PARK BIRDWATCHING:**
There is no cost for this early morning trip on campus or to our local park. You'll learn techniques for bird identification and binocular use and get pretty good at identifying our usual birds. You'll get a look at a few migrant species that are passing through, and get to observe avian behavior as well. This trip will add lots of species to your Field Journals and enable you to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count.
Cost: Nothing!
Date: To Be Announced (but soon)
- **GREAT BACKYARD BIRDCOUNT:**
This is a national event in which people all over the country report their bird sightings for an observation period. We have the opportunity to participate in this exciting event in early spring.
Cost: Free
Dates: Feb. 12th through 15th, exact date to be announced.
- **MOJAVE DESERT ECOLOGY:**
This one-day trip to the Desert Tortoise Wildlife Preserve will focus on the special adaptations of desert flora and fauna. On previous fall trips we observed hundreds of migrating Tarantulas and a Mojave Green rattlesnake. Spring brought Desert Tortoises, wildflowers, horned toads and lizards.
Cost: About \$5.00 or less plus gas.
Date: To Be Announced

Computer Accounts!

You will need access to a computer, to the Internet, and e-mail in order to successfully complete this course. If you do not have access at home, as a BC student, you were given a free e-mail account when you registered. We will be using both e-mail and looking at web sites early this semester so be ready so you won't miss out on a thing. If you have not accessed your account yet, please do so because that is the only way that I can initiate email communication with you.

Questions?

If you have any questions you may call me at my office at 395-4449. I probably won't be there during vacation until just before school starts, but I will retrieve my phone messages periodically and call you back (If your phone does not accept blocked calls, I cannot call you back). I can be reached by e-mail at: bcbioprof@mac.com both now and later or ikelly@bakersfieldcollege.edu (after school begins)

See you on January 19th!

Professor Kelly