BIOL-GA.1031: Special Topics in Physiology (Physiology and Disease)
Department of Biology, New York University
Fall 2012

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When and where. The class will meet from Monday from 4:55 to 7:15 p.m. in room L120 of the Genomics Building (12 Waverly Place).

Course content. The course emphasizes the physiological basis for selected human diseases. We will explore how normal physiological processes (from molecular to whole body levels) are disrupted by disease.

Prerequisites. An undergraduate course in physiology, or instructor’s permission.

Course Materials: Vander’s Human Physiology: Mechanisms of Body Function by Widmaier et al., 4th edition, 2011 (McGraw-Hill) and an i-clicker are required.

Class activities. Class sessions will typically be preceded by a reading assignment and homework. Class time will be a mix of lecture, discussion, and recitation. The first half of the class will usually be an interactive lecture; the second half will usually involve the presentation and discussion of research papers or case studies. At the start of the semester, I will prepare for and lead most of the class activities. These responsibilities gradually will shift towards the students over the course of the semester.

Evaluation. Your final number grade will be determined as follows: two exams = 30%, assignments = 20%, clicker points = 20%, participation = 20%, presentation = 10%.

Your final letter grade will be based on the following scale:

A  = 93 to 100%  B  = 83 to 86.9%  C  = 73 to 76.9%  D = 60 to 66.9%
A– = 90 to 92.9%  B– = 80 to 82.9%  C– = 70 to 72.9%  F = 0 to 59.9%
B+ = 87 to 89.9%  C+ = 77 to 79.9%  D+ = 67 to 69.9%

There will not be any opportunities for “extra credit” (so don’t ask); I do not believe that simply doing more work entitles one to a higher grade. In addition, grades will not be “curved” (so don’t ask). “Curving” presumes a certain statistical distribution of grades and it makes your grade depend on the performance of your classmates; I do not believe in either.

Exams. There will be two exams: one mid-term and one final. Each exam will be on the material most recently covered in class. Exams will contain different types of questions: selecting choices, problem-solving, short essays, etc. Some questions require just simple recall and memorization. Many questions, however, will require you to apply or connect what you have learned.

If you cannot take an exam on the assigned date, you must inform me on or before that date if at all possible. If your excuse is not valid, you will receive a grade of zero on the test. If your excuse is valid and documented (illness, family emergency, school-sponsored activity), I will give you a make-up test, which may differ from the original (e.g., new questions, more essay questions).
Assignments. Most assignments will be posted on and submitted through Blackboard. Such assignments will normally be posted by Wednesday evening each week and due the following Monday morning. Be sure to save and submit your answers; make sure you receive confirmation that your answers were indeed submitted. You can answer each question as many times as you want, but only your final answer will count. You will not receive any immediate feedback on which answers are correct or how many questions you got right; you will only know that your answers were submitted. The answer key will be posted after the submission deadline; after this, submissions will not be accepted. You are responsible for knowing if an assignment has been posted on Blackboard and for completing homework before the deadline. If you fail to answer a question, you will receive a “0” for that question. I will not excuse missed assignments except in the case of documented extended illness.

Clickers. During class I will often ask questions to be answered using clickers. You may have time to discuss the questions with each other and refer to your books and notes before submitting your answer. Questions may be on assigned readings or the material just lectured.

You will get two points for submitting an answer and one additional point for getting the correct answer. To get credit for your answers, you need to have your own clicker and it has to be registered properly with me (see the last page for instructions). You need to bring your own clicker to class every day; you may not use the clicker of another student. Using the clicker of an absent student to gain points for that student is cheating and will be treated as such.

If you miss clicker questions (because of absence, technical issues, or simply forgetting your clicker), that same day you must ask to be excused via e-mail. Unexcused missed clicker questions will receive a grade of zero. You can be excused for forgetting your clicker for at most three instances.

Participation. You are expected to participate in all aspects of the class by contributing to discussions and by answering questions I ask. I will monitor both the quality and the quantity of your contributions.

Presentation. Towards the end of the semester, you will give your own lectures and lead the class discussions of papers and case studies. Additional guidelines will be provided later in the semester.

Attendance. You are expected to attend class. If you miss class you might miss clicker points, opportunities to participate, or announcements. If you are absent from class for a good reason, you must e-mail me to request to be excused; I may ask for documentation.

Course management: Course materials and your grades will be available on the Blackboard web site for this class. If I need to send e-mail to you I will do so through Blackboard. To access this site, go to your NYU home page, select the Academics tab, and go to the link for this class.

Class cancellation. If the university is closed, classes will not be held. If the university is open but I cannot make it to campus, I will try to arrange for a substitute. I will also try e-mail all students in class to inform you of the situation and any assignments.

Special needs. Please make me aware as soon as possible of any accommodations you require.

Academic honesty. You are expected to comply with the university policy on academic integrity. The work you submit must be the result of your own honest efforts. When academic dishonesty is suspected, it will be dealt with seriously in adherence to the official guidelines of
New York University. The College of Arts & Science guidelines, which all students should read, are available online at [http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity](http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity). We will report incidents to the department and to the office of the Dean; these incidents may become part of your record.

**Classroom decorum.** During times when I specify that it is time for you interact, do so but finish the work assigned and do not talk too loudly. When I am lecturing, however, I expect to have your attention. I can see all of you and I am easily distracted, so please be aware of your behavior. If you regularly distract your classmates or me, I will inform you. If you repeat the disruptive behavior, I will ask you to leave the room. I also may lower your final grade one level each time your actions require my attention and take away from your classmates’ learning.

**Letters of recommendation.** If you think you might be asking me to write for you, make sure that I get to know you well and that I have lots of positive things to say. In addition to your performance in the class, in my letters I may comment on your integrity, decorum, work ethic, ability to work with others, maturity and intellectual curiosity. Be sure to stand out in a good way and ask for the letter as soon as possible after the class ends so I can write it while you are still fresh on my mind.

**Registering your i>clicker.** To get credit for your clicker responses, you will need to register your clicker remote in class. I will project a registration screen; look for your name, which will scroll down the screen alphabetically. Follow the instructions shown. If for some reason, you cannot follow these steps, e-mail me with your clicker remote ID (on the bottom of the back of the clicker); do not register on the web unless I ask you to. We will practice using the clickers on the first day of class, when your responses will not be graded. Starting the second day of class, clicker responses will be graded. Your clicker needs to be registered by the end of the second day of class.