

**Biology 408 – Physiology Teaching Practicum
Syllabus and Policies
Spring Semester 2020**

Biology 121 is a unique course in that it allows undergraduates to participate in teaching assistant positions. You have been chosen as a teaching assistant for this course because you have previously received high marks in the course and have demonstrated the desire to receive upper level teaching credit. For your work as a teaching assistant, you will receive two credits in Biology 408 through the Department of Biological Sciences. In order to successfully complete this course, you must adhere to a strict set of policies outlined in this syllabus.

Course Learning Outcomes: In accordance with UI Learning Outcomes, it is expected that students will:

- Learn & Integrate: Students will apply their previous and gained knowledge of the human body to disseminate this information to current students in the lab portion of Biology 121 and to gain a basic understanding of pedagogy concepts used in undergraduate education.

- Think & Create: Students will be expected to apply the concepts and approaches learned previous courses here to solve future anatomical, physiological, and academic problems both in and out of the classroom setting and to create an effective learning environment for students.

- Communicate: Students will be expected to better communicate with others using the vernacular and nomenclature of human physiology with both peers and supervisors in all forms.

- Clarify Purpose & Perspective: It is expected that all students will gain important insights into the human body and the physical world that helps to support physiological study and gain a better appreciation for the aspects of educational pedagogy.

- Practice Citizenship: It is every student's responsibility to share their knowledge and appreciation of the human body and its physiological functioning and to disseminate that information to others.

Code of Conduct: This course is offered in the Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho. This course and the instructor will comply with all Federal, State, and University laws, rules, and policies. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Academic Integrity
 - I will not tolerate any form of cheating in this course, either in lecture or lab. Any individual that is observed cheating by the teaching assistants or myself will be dealt with according to the university regulations.
- Students with Disabilities/Disabilities Support Services
 - Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have documented temporary or permanent disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Support Services located in the Idaho Commons Building, Room 306 in order to notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible regarding accommodation(s) needed for the course.
- Discrimination
- Classroom Civility
 - In any environment in which people gather to learn, it is essential that all members feel as free and safe as possible in their participation. To this end, it is expected that everyone in this course will be treated with mutual respect and civility, with an understanding that all of us (students, instructors, professors, guests, and teaching assistants) will be respectful and civil to one another in discussion, in action, in teaching, and in learning. Should you feel our classroom interactions do not reflect an environment of civility and respect, you are encouraged to meet with your instructor during office hours to discuss your concern. Additional resources for expression of concern or requesting support include the Dean of Students office and staff (5-6757), the UI Counseling & Testing Center's confidential services (5-6716), or the UI Office of Human Rights, Access, & Inclusion (5-4285).
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Emergency Management
- Weapons
 - "The University of Idaho bans firearms from its property with only limited exceptions. One exception applies to persons who hold a valid Idaho enhanced concealed carry license, provided those firearms remain concealed at all times. If an enhanced concealed carry license holder's firearm is displayed, other than in necessary self-defense, it is a violation of University policy. Please contact local law enforcement (call 911) to report firearms on University property."

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Idaho Student Code of Conduct. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these topics, please contact the administrative offices of the University of Idaho. <http://www.uidaho.edu/about/administration>

Course Responsibilities: Your first responsibility will be to check out a key to the anatomy/physiology lab and cadaver room from Candi. You are responsible for this key and its use throughout the semester. This key is to be used ONLY by you! No visitors of any type are allowed in the anatomy lab without prior arrangement with the Biology 121 instructor. If you allow anyone other than yourself into the lab and storage areas, you will IMMEDIATELY be dropped from the course and receive a failing grade in Biology 408. The key must be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the semester. Failure to return your key will constitute an AUTOMATIC failing grade in Biology 408.

As a teaching assistant, it is your responsibility to assist students during the lab sessions. This includes helping students with laboratory procedures, answering questions and assisting students in problem areas. Therefore, TAs need to have a THOROUGH understanding of the material to be presented PRIOR to the lab sessions. Spend time outside of scheduled lab sessions to review the material to be presented. If you need to use the anatomy lab for review, you are welcome to do so, in groups with other TAs for the course if you wish. You will have access to the lab and all teaching materials, models, cadavers, equipment, etc. at anytime and may review the material at your convenience.

All TAs, the TA coordinator, and I will meet once a week to discuss the upcoming labs and procedures, prepare for lab exams and quizzes and address any problem areas that you may have encountered in the previous week. These weekly sessions will also include various aspects of educational pedagogy. It is expected that these topics will be incorporated into your weekly teaching and a portion of your professionalism grade is based on such. Attendance is required for these meetings and you will receive 10 points per week for attending. If you need to miss a weekly meeting, you must contact me prior to the meeting to discuss your lab section. You are allowed two absences for these meetings. Further absences will constitute you receiving a failing grade in Biology 408.

You are responsible for lab set up and clean up each week. Plan on arriving 15-20 minutes early for your lab section and staying the full three hours. I understand that you are taking courses outside your TA responsibilities and I will assist you as much as possible. However, I have several time constraints that will not permit me to attend all three hours of every lab section, so be prepared to be busy during your scheduled lab section.

At the beginning of each lab section, you will be responsible for presenting an introduction to the lab materials, procedures, and underlying physiological importance to the students. Be on time, prepared, and engaging in these presentations. Incorporate what you are learning about educational pedagogy in this course into your weekly presentations. If the chance arises, you may get assistance from your cooperating TA, coordinator or instructor. During your cooperating TA, coordinator, or instructors' presentations of the introduction to the labs for each section, I expect you to listen intently to the presentation so that you can give reliable information to students during your session. You will receive 10 points each week for your introduction. Grading of this portion of Biology 408 will be from evaluations from myself, your coordinator, and from student reports on your lab performance as needed.

During exam time, plan on spending at least one hour prior to your lab section for exam set-up and approximately one-half hour after your section for exam clean up. Attendance is required for all lab sessions of your scheduled sections. Not attending puts an enormous strain on the students and myself. Strive to be prompt and on time for your section. If you must be absent for your section, you **MUST** notify me at least one day prior to your section so alternative plans can be developed.

Suggestions for Success: If you do not know the answer to a student question, **DO NOT GUESS!** Consult another TA or myself if you have a problem. You should not be embarrassed that you don't know an answer. Students in the course will learn just as much by having you help them look up the information in their text or lab manual. I don't expect you to know everything about physiology or anticipate all the outcomes of an experiment, but I do expect you to take the time and use resources to find the answers to student questions.

Rules and Policies: As a TA, it is important that you follow all safety rules and regulations of the physiology lab. Become familiar with these policies and set an example to the students by abiding strictly to these policies. It is your responsibility as a TA to require **ALL** students to follow the same rules and regulations and to assist them in doing so. Specifically, you will need to keep close observation of the lab exercises and obtain consent forms from **ALL** subjects at the beginning of the semester. At the beginning of the course, you will be required to read all lab safety policies outlined in a student handout as well as those safety policies outlined in the

Department of Biological Sciences T.A. Safety Manual. After reviewing these documents, you will be required to sign a release form indicating that you understand and can follow all safety rules.

Course Grading: You will be responsible for writing and grading laboratory exams and quizzes given throughout the semester. This requires a high level of professionalism at all times. **DO NOT** discuss any test questions or ideas outside of the lab. All exam preparation and grading will be completed in the lab **ONLY**. All assigned grades are **CONFIDENTIAL** and are not to be discussed. Failure to follow any of these confidentiality policies may constitute your removal as a TA and immediate failure of the course. You will be required to take and pass a FERPA tutorial at the beginning of the semester and to provide documentation to the course instructor that you have done so.

All exams and quizzes need to be pre-approved by the TA coordinator **AND** myself **BEFORE** they are administered. **Quizzes and exams to be approved need to electronically submitted by Friday at 11:30am prior to the week of labs in which they are to be given.** This will give the TA coordinator and myself time to review the quizzes and exams and make necessary corrections and copies. You will be contacted via email concerning material revisions and a grade will be recorded in bblearn for each quiz you submit. Each quiz will be worth 10 points when submitted and the number of revisions required will determine *your* grade on this quiz. I expect this to be a learning curve in educational pedagogy, so do not get frustrated with revision requirements at the beginning of the semester. Each lab exam will be worth 50 points toward your teaching assistant grade.

Grades for quizzes and exams must be provided to the instructor and coordinator as soon as possible, but by **Friday at noon at the LATEST. Therefore, have all graded materials to the coldroom or my office by this time!** You will receive 10 points per quiz and 25 points per exam for on time submission of graded materials. Each day beyond the Friday deadline will constitute a 20% reduction in these points towards your TA grade.

I have a policy dealing with student grading concerns outlined in the Biology 121 syllabus. Refer to this policy in the syllabus and adhere to it throughout the semester. Grading concerns are not allowed for lab quizzes, but can be submitted for lab exams. These concerns are to be submitted to you and I will discuss how to handle these concerns prior to the first lab exam. **DO NOT** entertain argumentative behavior about exams or quizzes during lab sessions.

Being a teaching assistant is a major responsibility and places you in a position of authority over students in the course. I expect you at ALL TIMES to maintain the level of professionalism indicated by this position. Professionalism constitutes 50% of your grade in Biology 408. This includes following professional ethics when dealing with students and peers. Your professionalism grade will also reflect your incorporated knowledge and use of educational pedagogy. This is a broad topic, so use your discretion. I will not tolerate any disrespect towards myself, the TA coordinator, or students in the course. Abide by the rules, policies and responsibilities outlined in this syllabus. You must maintain a strict level of confidentiality in this course, show a strong respect for lab materials so students will follow your example, behave and dress appropriately for this position and maintain professional relationships with the students at all times. A thorough understanding of the lab processes and experimental steps are a must PRIOR to helping students. This will be a large portion of your professionalism component. BE PREPARED for lab! Professional conduct is major portion of your grade in Biology 408 and failure to maintain this professionalism may earn you a failing grade.

I hope that you have a wonderful experience as a teaching assistant in this course and gain a respect for teaching at the college level. It is my objective for this course to allow you the freedom to learn and develop your own teaching styles and philosophies while guiding you in your teaching experience. If you have ANY problems or concerns throughout the semester, PLEASE contact me ASAP.

Conflicts of Interest: I have often been approached about tutoring opportunities for Biology 408 teaching assistants. Although I encourage you to work one-on-one with your students during the lab sessions and to visit outside of class, I do NOT allow any private outside tutoring to be done by Biology 408 TA's. This creates a conflict of interest for both students and TAs and leads to partiality to certain students.

Your Biology 408 grade is based on the attached rubric. Although I try to eliminate as much subjectivity from your grade as possible by the use of this rubric, understand that the nature of an "education" based course leads to some subjective grading, especially in the assessment of professionalism. Either the TA coordinator or myself (whomever you are directly working with during a particular week) will fill out your rubric at the conclusion of the week and/or your scores will be reported on bblearn for Biology 408.

Summary of TA Responsibilities and Learning Outcomes

- Maintain a high level of professionalism at all times.
- Check out and turn in key.
- Assist students in all aspects of learning human physiology through experimentation.
- Follow all safety rules and policies and require students to do the same, collect consent forms from all participating subjects.
- Write and grade all lab quizzes and exams and have scores to Candi in a timely manner.
- Attend all scheduled lab sessions for your section.
- Attend all weekly TA meetings for lab development and problem solving.
- Set up and clean up lab materials for your assigned section.

Teaching Tips

- Take pride in your teaching, show your students that you care.
- Try to avoid talking down to your students.
- Get to know your students; identify those that have difficulty with material.
- Have more than one approach to the material that you teach to accommodate different learning skills.
- When in the teaching lab, give 110%. Forget about your own schedule and projects that are due. Your students will sense that you would rather be some place else.
- Know your lab exercises inside and out before you try to teach it.
- Look for students that need assistance but are not asking for it. Remember that several of your students are freshman and may not be clear about what is expected of them.
- Show students that you are excited about human physiology. Don't sit at the front desk and look important, walk around the lab and interact with students.
- It is OK to think out loud in front of students and to not know the answer to a question. This helps students understand that they can learn material in several ways, including looking information up in texts or lab manuals.
- Tactfully correct answers so that students aren't inhibited from trying again. Look for something positive in each students learning when giving an answer to a question. Don't always tell the student that they are wrong, but look for other methods to correct students learning. "Good observation, but let's look at it this way."

