

Department of Biology Course Outline

Fall 2024, BIOL2050, Ecology, 3.0

Course Instructor: Dr. Birgit Schwarz

How to address me & my pronouns: Professor Schwarz/Dr. Schwarz/Dr. Birgit/Birgit (she/her)

Email: bsteach@yorku.ca

Office: Lumbers 317 [Click here for visual directions.](#)

Student Hours: Posted on eClass site.

Student Hours are dedicated times through the week for the course instructor to meet with YOU. Pop in to introduce yourself, ask questions about the course, or discuss content from the course.

Class Times: Mon. & Wed.: 10:00 – 11:20 am

Class Location: ACW 206 (Accolade Building West) [Click here for visual directions.](#)

Prerequisites: Both SC/BIOL 1000 3.00 and SC/BIOL 1001 3.00, or SC/ISCI 1110 6.00, or both SC/ISCI 1101 3.00 and SC/ISCI 1102 3.00. Course credit exclusions: SC/BIOL 2050 4.00 (cross listed to SC/ENVB 2050 4.00)

For accessibility purposes all links are provided here as linked text rather than long/short links.

Important Dates:

Drop Deadline: November 8, 2024 (*last day to drop without course on transcript*)

Course Withdrawal Deadline: December 3, 2024 (*course still appears on transcript with 'W'*)

- [York University's Undergraduate Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Important Dates website](#)

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Course Format: BIOL2050 is an interactive **in-person** course. You are expected to prepare ahead of class time using assigned readings, videos, etc.. In class we will be using an active learning strategy, i.e. classes will have activities (such as practice questions, case studies, worksheets, etc.) and discussions. This approach uses evidence-based techniques to increase your learning and create an engaging environment. I understand, however, that you might not be able to make it to every class and have accounted for this (see assessment section). ***Recordings of classes or equivalent will be provided whenever possible.** Recordings pick up sounds in the classroom (that means your voice may be recorded). Please note it may take several days for recordings to be posted and sometimes recordings may not be possible due to technical issues.

Study Spaces on Campus: [Book a study space at the library](#)

Land Acknowledgement

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

Welcome to BIOL 2050!

There are now more than 7.5 billion people on Earth – more than two and a half times the number that existed in 1960. Since people take up space, the rate at which natural habitats are being lost has skyrocketed. Species extinction rates mirror this. At the same time, emissions of greenhouse gases are causing global climate change. What does this all mean and how do we make sense of it?

Ecology is the study of biology at the individual, population, community and ecosystem levels, focusing on interactions of organisms with one another other and with their abiotic environment. Ecologists try to understand what determines the patterns of distribution and abundance of organisms. Ecologists also aim to predict how ecosystems respond to "disturbance". The central ideas, theories and principles of ecology are, therefore, directly relevant to the issues described above.

My role as instructor is to provide you with multiple learning opportunities in an environment that challenges you, encourages you to ask questions and engage in scientific thinking, such that you can achieve the course LOs. While I may not always be able to answer your questions, I can usually help you find out more. I also encourage you to seek answers to your questions on your own—an important skill to practise!

This class is collaborative, not competitive. In class, on eClass, and through your team podcast, you will work with your peers, asking questions, explaining reasoning, and receiving feedback. From the literature on science education, we know that students can learn a lot from each other, in addition to the help they get from their instructors. **I want this to be a strong, supportive, inclusive learning community for everyone.**

To get the most of out of this course, you are expected to complete the required readings and online work prior to class time. *As in all courses, you are expected to spend time beyond the regular course hours in preparation, review, studying, completing assignments, etc., related to the course.*

Course Calendar Description: A study of the interactions between organisms and their abiotic environments, presented in an evolutionary context. Includes processes of evolution, ecosystems

and communities, competition, predation, population ecology and current environmental problems such as habitat loss and extinction.

Course level learning objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain how populations can change over time, differentiating between the different evolutionary mechanisms that drive this change.
2. Explain how natural selection and evolutionary change interact with the environment and ecological processes and how these interactions lead to adaptations.
3. Illustrate how natural selection and trade-offs shape organisms, their life history traits and behaviours, using concrete examples.
4. Describe how and why climatic conditions vary across the earth and analyze how these affect the distribution and characteristics of individuals, populations, communities, ecosystems and biomes.
5. Predict how various factors affect population sizes, apply appropriate population growth models and evaluate different ways of estimating population sizes.
6. Describe how ecosystems function, species' roles and interactions within communities and ecosystems, how energy and chemical elements are transferred within ecosystems and how ecosystems can change over time.
7. Explain the concept of biodiversity, including how it is estimated, and the factors influencing species abundances and distributions, and why these matter in a conservation context.
8. Apply ecological principles to contemporary environmental issues, such as loss of habitat and biodiversity, pollution and climate change and make appropriate conservation-related recommendations.
9. Apply knowledge of ecological concepts to real-life examples, case studies, datasets and models, including making predictions, interpreting data and graphs and drawing conclusions.
10. Effectively communicate scientific concepts and results to different audiences, including the general public.
11. Work collaboratively to solve problems and jointly create a product (i.e. a podcast, answer to a problem, etc.)
12. Find, summarize and critically discuss primary research literature.

Lecture Topics (*subject to change*)

1. Introduction to Ecology; Review of Evolution and Natural Selection
2. Climate and the distribution of Biomes
3. Organisms and their Environment
4. Behavioural Ecology
5. Life histories and populations
6. Population growth and regulation
7. Competition and Mutualism
8. Predation
9. Communities
10. Ecosystems
11. Ecosystem services, Climate change, Biodiversity, Sustainability & Conservation
12. New approaches & broadening our perspectives. Is there hope?

Inclusive teaching statement:

I designed this course with a commitment to the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), evidence-based teaching practices, and providing an environment that supports equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). As an instructor guided by evidence, I believe that you can all succeed! This class is a community and we are here to learn and succeed together and support each other. I sincerely hope that you can join me in my efforts to make this class accessible and welcoming to all, and a space where diversity and different perspectives are valued and respected. Everyone – students, instructors, TAs, and any guests need to be treated with respect during all interactions.

I acknowledge that the doing of science is subjective, influenced by cultural context, and has often been exclusionary in whose voices were allowed and amplified. This means that there can often be biases in the course materials, which I am working to reduce and hopefully eventually eliminate. My hope is to continue improving this course, integrating diverse scientists and experiences. Please let me know if you have suggestions to improve EDI within the course bsteach@yorku.ca.

YorkU students come from far and wide and represent a diversity of cultures and backgrounds. To support students whose primary language is not English, services are available at York including individual appointments, and group events. [Click here for more information](#).

Community Guidelines

The following values are fundamental to academic integrity and are adapted from the International Center for Academic Integrity*. In our course, we will seek to behave with these values in mind.

| | As students, we will... | As a teaching team, we will... |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Honesty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honestly demonstrate our knowledge & abilities on course work. Communicate openly without using deception, including citing appropriate sources. Familiarize ourselves with the York University academic integrity website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide honest feedback on your course work. Communicate openly & honestly about course expectations & standards via the syllabus & with respect to assignments and exams. |
| Responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete assignments on time & in full preparation for class. Show up to class on time & be mentally/physically present. Participate fully & contribute to team learning and activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide timely feedback on your assignments & exams. Show up to class on time, & be mentally and physically present Create relevant assessments & class activities. |
| Respect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak openly with one another, while respecting diverse perspectives. Challenge ideas (not people!) in a respectful manner. Listen respectfully & provide sufficient space for others to voice their ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect your perspectives even while I challenge you to think more deeply and critically. Facilitate respectful exchange of ideas. |
| Fairness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute fully & equally to collaborative work (i.e., no freeloading). Not seek unfair advantage over fellow students in the course. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create fair assignments & exams, & grade them in a fair, & timely manner Treat all students equitably. |
| Trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay on topic during class time. Be open & transparent about what we are doing in class. Not distribute course materials to others without authorization. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be available to you when we say we are. Follow through on our promises. Not modify course expectations or standards without communicating with everyone in the course. |
| Courage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say/do something when we see actions that undermine any above values. Accept a lower or failing grade or other consequences of upholding & protecting the above values. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say/do something when we see actions that undermine any above values. Accept the consequences (e.g., lower teaching evaluations) of upholding & protecting the above values. |

² This class statement of values is adapted from Tricia Bertram Gallant, Ph.D.

Contacting me

Please use bsteach@yorku.ca to contact me, **not** eClass, nor my personal email. In your email correspondence, please:

- Use your **yorku.ca email address** (other addresses are likely to be filtered as spam/junk).
- **Subject line:** put a **relevant description**
- **Include your NAME and student number** within your email
- **Consider attending student hours or booking an appointment**, rather than sending a long email if you have a concern/question that will take a considerable amount of time to read or answer.
- **Please allow 2-3 business days (not including weekends) for a response.**
- **Questions about course topics?** Please post them in the eClass lecture forum or ask during class as many other students may have the same or similar question.

Learning Materials

Textbook/Readings: Access to the Oxford Insight platform is needed for the course (we will be using materials from the platform in class). I therefore recommend purchasing access to the e-book, which includes Insight platform access, through the YorkU bookstore (we were able to negotiate a lower price through the bookstore). It is listed on the bookstore page as the required option: **CEB Ebook ECOLOGY 6TH WITH INSIGHT (180 DAY ACCESS)**.

Please note: physical copies of the book (listed as optional on the bookstore page) unfortunately do NOT include access to the platform (if you need a physical copy you can borrow one from the library).

Bowman & Hacker (2023). *Ecology*. 6th edition. Oxford University Press. **(CEB ebook with INSIGHT)**

You will have **free trial access** to the e-book hosted on the Oxford Insight platform at the beginning of the term (at least 8, possibly 14 days), after that you will need to purchase access to the e-book and associated materials. We will be using the book for pre-class readings. We will also be using some of the simulations, case studies etc. provided as additional materials on the Oxford Insight platform as activities in class. Please note that access to the e-book and the platform is provided for 180 days after purchase. For instructions on how to access our course-specific site on the Insight platform, please see eClass.

The platform is the only way to access the simulations and case studies we will use in class. If you are experiencing financial difficulties that hinder your ability to purchase textbooks please come talk to me so we can find a solution.





Physical copies at the library:

Two copies of the most recent edition (6th edition) are on reserve, one in the Scott Library and one at Steacie Library and can be borrowed for 24 hour periods. Additionally, the previous edition (5th edition) from 2021 is also on reserve at the Scott and Steacie Libraries.

Additional materials/readings will be posted on the eClass site.

Website (eClass): [BIOL2050 e-Class site](#)

Technology Checklist:

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
|  <p>An internet-enabled device to access eClass and materials and complete course assignments</p> |  <p>Zoom and microphone for online student hour (<i>and in the event an online class becomes necessary</i>)</p> |  <p>Office software (Word and excel) or equivalent. Free for students.</p> |  <p>Access to the Oxford Insight platform through the e-book (see textbook information above)</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

Note: [List of computers and computer labs available for use at York.](#)

Learning Outcomes (LOs): LOs form the foundation of this course – they are what I expect you to be able to do by the end of the course. All assigned work (videos, readings, activities, etc.) are based on these, so it will be helpful to refer to them repeatedly throughout the course. The majority of the LOs will be covered through a combination of the pre-class and in-class work, some will be addressed through assignments.

I recommend you download Office (freely available to students) so that you can use Word and Excel: [access Office here](#). You must save and submit your work as a pdf for Crowdmark submissions: [instructions on how to convert to pdf in Office](#).

Assessment in this Course

Research about learning strongly suggests that the most important factor in learning is doing the work of reading, writing, recalling, practicing, synthesizing, and analyzing. Learning happens best when people actively engage with the material on a consistent basis, and that is why I have designed the course in a way that encourages active engagement. This course has high standards, and I am confident that, with appropriate effort and support, you **all** can meet those standards.

When possible, I also try to promote consistency in grading and reduce unintentional bias in grading by, for example, providing marking rubrics, grading assignments one question at a time (grading all of question 1 before grading any of question 2), and grading anonymously where possible (e.g. Crowdmark only shows a booklet number not a name while grading).

Depending on the assignment you may be asked to submit it on eClass, Crowdmark (instructions will be provided) or Turnitin.

In setting up this course, I have aimed to create a consistent course structure, so that due dates for the same type of assignment will normally fall on the same weekdays (with a few exceptions). E.g. pre-class quizzes are normally due on Sunday (to prepare for the week ahead). Approximately, every

other week a Question of the Fortnight (QOF) will open on Friday and be due the following Thursday, 11:59 pm.

In designing BIOL2050, I have adhered to the principles of UDL that address many accommodations and allow for self-accommodation. There is built-in flexibility to accommodate different circumstances—including illness, accidentally missing a deadline, technical difficulties, late course registration, etc.—for almost all course elements (some exceptions apply), to give everyone a chance to complete the course successfully. For example, you normally have several days to complete pre-class quizzes, QOFs, etc., and most (but not all) course components allow you to miss the occasional assessment without penalty and/or provide grace days for the occasional late submission. As such there should be no need for additional exceptions (including for illness) and for that reason, modifications to the grading scheme will not be considered. Although this course is designed to allow for self-accommodation, you may have accommodations other than this; please bring these to my attention.

Please let me (bsteach@yorku.ca) know of any religious observance conflicts at least 3 weeks in advance of the conflict.

Grade Breakdown

| COMPONENT | GRADE VALUE | WHEN? |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| WEEKLY PRE-CLASS QUIZZES | 10% (best 10 out of 13) | Approx. weekly. Typically due on Sunday (some exceptions). |
| ACTIVITIES | 10% (best 75%) | In class, some may be online. |
| QUESTION OF THE FORTNIGHT (QOF) ASSIGNMENTS[^] | 15% (best 3 of 4) | Approx. bi-weekly, see table in QOF section below. Typically released on Friday and due on Thursday. |
| 2-STAGE MIDTERM QUIZZES | 20% | In class; Oct. 9 and Nov. 6. |
| PODCAST TEAM PROJECT | 15% | Various deadlines throughout term, final podcast due Nov. 27. |
| FINAL EXAM | 30% | During final exam period. |

Weekly pre-Class Quizzes

There will be total of 13 pre-class quizzes (~1 per week) in the course. The quizzes are based on the course material (though some review or reflection questions may be included). The quizzes are completed on eClass and will mainly consist of multiple choice questions which are **marked for correctness. Some exceptions apply** (e.g. some other types of questions such as reflection questions may be included that are scored based on completion with reasonable effort). You will have at least several days to complete each quiz, and you get two tries for each quiz (the best attempt counts).

The best 10 out of 13 quizzes will be used to calculate your total Weekly Quiz mark. This means that if you miss a quiz, there is no need to worry, as only the top 10 quizzes will be used for your total quiz mark.

This accounts for missed quizzes for any reason (e.g., missing the deadline, technological/internet problems, illness, late registration to the course) and means additional exemptions/extensions will not be granted. In keeping with UDL principles the time limit for quizzes includes, at minimum, an additional 100% time on top of the longest time normally needed to complete the quizzes and as such self-accommodation is possible. Grace days can NOT be applied to quizzes as their purpose is to prepare you for class, therefore they need to be completed on time. If you are completing a quiz when the deadline passes you will not earn any marks for that quiz. Similarly, late quizzes will not receive any marks. Please check the course eClass page to confirm due dates as these may be subject to change. Most pre-class quizzes are normally due on Sunday to ensure you are prepared for our class on Monday, but I encourage you to complete these early, so you have time to seek clarification where needed.

| PRE-CLASS QUIZ # | OPENS | CLOSES |
|------------------|---------|---|
| 1 | Sep. 4 | Sep. 20 <i>Course info and study skills quiz (recommended completion by Sep. 6)</i> |
| 2 | Sep. 4 | Sep. 8 |
| 3 | Sep. 10 | Sep. 15 |
| 4 | Sep. 17 | Sep. 22 |
| 5 | Sep. 24 | Sep. 29 |
| 6 | Oct. 1 | Oct. 6 |
| 7 | Oct. 8 | Oct. 20 |
| 8 | Oct. 22 | Oct. 27 |
| 9 | Oct. 29 | Nov. 3 |
| 10 | Nov. 5 | Nov. 10 |
| 11 | Nov. 12 | Nov. 17 |
| 12 | Nov. 19 | Nov. 24 |
| 13 | Nov. 26 | Dec. 1 |

Activities

During class we will apply the knowledge gained from pre-class readings/videos, practice problem solving, and address questions. The classes provide an opportunity for you to interact with me as your

instructor and with your peers and get timely feedback on your understanding of the course material. Activities may include case studies, worksheets, reflection questions, practice questions, etc.. Most of these will take place in class, but some may be online and completed outside of class time on eClass. Items in the activities category are graded for reasonable participation/completion; you must make a reasonable effort at answering all questions and for collaborative submissions you must have made substantial contributions. No points may be awarded if little effort was made (e.g., missing answers to some questions). Activities do not have grace days.

Typically, we will spend the Monday class doing these activities. What we do in class on Wednesdays will vary depending on the week. Some Wednesdays we may continue with Monday's activities and discuss answers or spend time on your questions. We may also expand into other topics connected to that week's overarching theme. Some Wednesday classes we will spend on developing skills that you will need for this course and beyond. If time allows, some classes may also have time set aside to work on your team project (podcast). Please note that depending on the nature of the class, some classes may not have activity points associated with them (e.g. some, but not all Wednesday skill development workshops or Wednesday classes dedicated to working on the podcast project).

To maintain the evidence-based benefits of interaction and active learning, I highly recommend you attend classes, but I understand that this will not always be possible and have therefore implemented a buffer: When I calculate your activities grade, I will drop 25% of points. This means you only have to complete 75% of the total number of points to get the full amount for your activity grade; less than 75% will be adjusted accordingly. This is to account for the occasional missed activity for any reason, including technological/internet problems, illness etc.. Because the marking scheme has flexibility for missed classes and technical glitches, **additional exemptions/extensions (including grace days and doctor's notes) cannot be granted or accepted**, as participation is a crucial component of this course.

Questions of the Fortnight

Approximately, every other week, a Question of the Fortnight (QOF) assignment will be posted. The QOFs are short-answer questions that are at the level of application, analysis, evaluation, and/or creation, and you will have approximately 6 days to answer these. These are **open-book, but not open-internet questions**; all you need to know is in the course materials – notes, eClass, readings, videos, etc.. These questions are an opportunity for you to develop your problem-solving skill and especially your communication skills in a low-pressure environment. Furthermore, these will be the kinds of questions that will make up a part of the final exam, so this is your chance to practice answering these kinds of questions in preparation for the final exam.

You are **expected to complete this assignment individually** to demonstrate **your** understanding of the course concepts. **The answers MUST be in your own words and based on what you have learned in the course during the term, you cannot copy anything from anyone else, nor from the internet, textbooks, or course slides. You are not permitted to use generative AI to assist you in answering these questions.** You are not permitted to share your answers with others or post them anywhere (doing so is considered aiding and abetting and is a breach of academic honesty). Your

answers to the QOFs must be submitted to **both** Crowdmark and Turnitin.com. If you only submit to one, your work will be considered late.

QOF are marked for correctness and clarity (*i.e.*, how well your answer is communicated). There are 4 QOFs. When calculating the QOF component of your course grade, the QOF with the lowest score (including zero), will be dropped. This means you can miss one QOF without penalty as it is **your best 3 of 4 QOF assignments that will count toward this mark.**

QOF GRACE DAYS: I understand that life happens and have therefore built some flexibility into this assignment. You may submit QOFs up to three calendar days after the due date (*i.e.*, 11:59 pm on Sunday), without penalty. Grace days also allow you to work toward building time management skills. You should not expect grace days in higher-level courses. The following rules apply to grace days:

- **You can use these grace days only for QOFs (and the podcast project, see below);** they do not apply to quizzes, midterm quizzes, activities, tests, or exams.
- **Grace days will be applied automatically.** Please don't email to ask permission to use them.
- You are **expected to always strive to meet the initial deadline** and not rely on grace days. Grace days are for when unexpected things happen or too many deadlines across courses conflict. There can be no further extensions past the grace days so please keep that in mind.
- If you do not use your entire 3 days for one late assignment (*e.g.*, you submit only one day late), you **cannot** transfer the remaining days to the other late QOFs. That is, none of the QOFs can be more than 3 days late. Late submissions past the 3 grace days cannot be accepted.
- **3 days = 3 calendar days.** Each day in a weekend counts as 1 day each.

| QOF # | ON CONCEPTS FROM* | OPENS | DUE | WITH GRACE DAYS |
|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Week 2 | Fri. Sep. 13 | Thu. Sep. 19 | Sun. Sep. 22 |
| 2 | Weeks 3-4 | Fri. Sep. 27 | Thu. Oct. 3 | Sun. Oct. 6 |
| 3 | Weeks 5-7 | Fri. Oct. 25 | Thu. Oct. 31 | Sun. Nov. 3 |
| 4 | Weeks 8-9 | Fri. Nov. 8 | Thu. Nov. 14 | Sun. Nov. 17 |

*may require incorporation of some material from previous weeks

2-stage Midterm Quizzes

Together with the Questions of the Fortnight, these Midterm Quizzes replace the traditional midterms. Each Midterm Quiz is worth 10% of the final course grade. The Midterm Quizzes will be in-person on **Wednesday Oct. 9 and Wednesday Nov. 6** during class time and consist of Multiple-Choice questions. The Midterm Quizzes will be two-stage tests, in which Stage 1 is an individual test and Stage 2 is a team test. Stage 1 is weighted as 85%, and Stage 2 is 15%. **If Stage 1 grade > Stage 2, Stage 1 will count for 100% of the test grade (i.e. you can only gain not loose by participating in the team portion).**

If you are registered with Alternate Exams, please let me know via email (bsteach@yorku.ca) by **Fri. Sep. 13**. I need to know so that we can let you know arrangements so you can write the team portion of the test.

If you are ill, please do not enter the exam room; once you have written the Midterm Quiz, your mark will stand regardless of the reason you may have once the exam is over. **There is no makeup Midterm Quiz.**

Missed Midterm Quiz: If you miss one Midterm Quiz, the weight will be transferred to the other Midterm Quiz, no questions asked (no documentation will be required). However, you need to write at least one Midterm Quiz to write the Final Exam.

| MIDTERM QUIZ | GRADE VALUE | ON CONCEPTS FROM | DATE |
|--------------|-------------|--|-------|
| 1 | 10% | Weeks 2 – 5 | Oct 9 |
| 2 | 10% | Weeks 2 – 9 (emphasis on weeks 6 – 8) | Nov 6 |

The Podcast Team Project

The goal of this project is to create a podcast to introduce an ecological topic to a wider audience and you will be practicing and refining your communication and teamwork skills. Making Science topics accessible to the general public has become increasingly more important and is a skill you are very likely to need at some point in your career. This assignment is a team project. Detailed assignment instructions will be posted on eClass. There will be multiple deadlines associated with parts of the project throughout the term. The **deadline for submission of the final product (the podcast) is Nov. 27.**

Up to **3 grace days** apply to handing in the final product (the podcast). As with the grace days for QOFs, these are calendar days (i.e. weekend days count) and you are **expected to always strive to meet the initial deadline** and not rely on grace days. Grace days are for when unexpected things happen or too many deadlines across courses conflict. There can be no further extensions past the grace days so please keep that in mind.

Final Exam

The December exam will include cumulative questions and will be 180 minutes long. Dates/times/rooms for December exams are scheduled and published by the Registrar's Office (RO); instructors find out when exams are the same day as you. The final exam will be a two-stage exam if we have permission from the Registrar's Office.

- **To be eligible to write the final exam, you must write at least one of the Midterm Quizzes.**

- **If you are ill**, please do not enter the exam room; once you have written an exam, your mark will stand regardless of the reason you may have once the exam is over.
- **If you miss the Final Exam, you will need to:**
 - a. Email me at bsteach@yorku.ca within two (2 days) of the final exam, and attach a [completed Deferred Standing Agreement \(DSA\)](#).
 - b. [Petition](#) your home faculty for [deferred standing](#). It is the Petition Committee's decision whether deferred standing is granted; if it is, the committee will set the deadline for writing the deferred final exam. The format of the make-up final exam can differ from the original final exam format. Denied petitions will result in a zero on the final exam.

Regrading/Reappraisal Procedures

To be fair and consistent to the entire class, individual grades are **NOT** negotiable and individual 'extra credit' assignment are not available during or after the course. Please contact me about marks ONLY if there is a clear error in your mark (calculation, clerical, etc.). Grade requests that contravene this policy (e.g. requesting individual extra credit assignments etc.), will not receive a response.

If you think a written answer was marked incorrectly, please follow the procedures below. Please note that re-marking can result in the mark being raised, confirmed, or lowered and the grade from a remark/reappraisal is final.

- **For midterm quiz/final exams:** You must review your test /exam and then submit a written rationale (based on academic merit) at the end of reviewing your test.
- **QOFs and Podcasts:** You must complete the reappraisal form available on eClass detailing your rationale (based on academic grounds**) within 2 weeks of the grade for that assessment being made available.
- Please avoid inflammatory language in your rationale. We are humans and make mistakes just like everyone else, but we are trying our very best to be fair.
- Emails about regrades without the proper form will not receive a response. Please use the procedure outlined above.
- Requests not based on academic grounds** or beyond the 2-week limit will not receive a regrade or response.

****Academic grounds** means that you make an academic argument for why your answer is correct. That is, it should show why you believe your answer was correct and well communicated. Statements such as 'this mark doesn't reflect how hard I studied' or 'I need a higher mark' or 'the grading was not fair' do not have academic merit and will not receive responses. If a written rationale is not included, requests for remarking will not be considered, nor will they receive a reply. In your rationale, your answer must have merit on its own (i.e. detailing why your answer was correct); you cannot compare your answers to other students' answers. Regrades take some time, typically around 3-4 weeks.

Please note that individual grades are not negotiable. This course has a flexible marking scheme with buffer built into it and aims to be fair to everyone, hence there are no extra credit assignments. Individual grades are not 'bumped' and course grades are not 'curved' (i.e., adjusted).

Generative AI Policy for this course

With the exception of the podcast assignment, every element of each course assessment in this course must be fully prepared by the student themselves. The use of generative AI is not permitted, and its use may be treated as a breach of academic honesty. For more information, please refer to York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct and Procedures](#).

For the podcast assignment, limited use of generative AI will be permitted for specific tasks of the assignment only. Details about conditions of use, and what is and what is not permitted in the context of this assignment will be given in the assignment instructions. If you choose to use generative AI for this assignment, **you must**:

- Obtain permission from ALL other team members. Generative AI can only be used if all team members agree to its use.
- Only use generative AI for the purposes that are explicitly permitted in the assignment instructions. If you are unsure – check with me!
- Fact-check and critically evaluate all AI-generated content and output
- Be transparent:
 - cite any AI-generated material ([Library page on citing GenAI tools](#))
 - you may be required to submit an appendix that specifies:
 - which tool was used
 - how this tool was used (for which purposes)
 - how you integrated the output into your submitted work
 - all of your prompts and all output from the tool

Course Academic Integrity Policy

You are expected to be familiar with and follow York University's policies regarding academic integrity (see below University Policies section). **Your work must be your own:** answers to assessment questions MUST be in your own words; you cannot be given a grade for work that is not yours, therefore a zero (0) will be assigned in cases where the submission is not your own work. You cannot copy anything from anyone else (e.g., a friend, the internet, textbook, course slides). Copying a sentence, paragraph, or more and then just changing a few words is still considered plagiarism. Head to the Spark Academic Integrity site as a reminder of what is okay/not okay: <https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/> and <https://spark.library.yorku.ca/creating-bibliographies-plagiarism/>. If you have discussed an assessment question with others from the course (e.g., in your study group), you should **ensure that you are not copying from each other. The use of (generative) AI resources for quizzes, QOFs, exams, and activities is expressly forbidden.**

Electronic file-sharing is not permitted. Some exceptions exist, such as sharing within your group in class for the purpose of completing assignments/activities specifically designed to be collaborative or for sharing your own notes from class with students currently enrolled in the course who missed a session. Outside of that, sharing of files/answers (e.g. assignments, questions) is not permitted. If you're unsure whether sharing is okay in your circumstance, check with us *before* sharing.

Posting assessment questions or answers anywhere is considered aiding and abetting and is a breach of academic honesty. Use of services (e.g., essay writing/editing/file-sharing websites or private services) that complete your assignments for you or provide “model answers” is **not permitted**. Some private tutoring companies claim an affiliation with York University; this is not true. There are serious consequences for individuals involved in breaches of copyright and/or academic honesty. From the official York University statement: “It has come to our attention that certain private tutoring companies are making claims that they are affiliated with York University. York has no affiliation with any of these companies, who are illegally passing themselves off as connected to or endorsed by York.”

In this course I offer a flexible grading scheme, where for some course elements I drop your lowest assignments. This privilege is revoked if you are found to have not acted with academic integrity. *E.g., if you are found to have plagiarized one of the QOFs/submitted work that is not your own, that grade cannot be dropped.*

Copyright and Intellectual Property

All BIOL 2050 course material is copyrighted, including images, recordings, questions, and other materials (e.g., slides). **Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) is a violation of copyright law and may lead to a charge of misconduct under [York’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct and Procedures](#), and/or legal consequences if copyright law has been violated.** **You do NOT have the right to post course materials anywhere or share them with anyone outside of this course.** Lecture materials designed for SC/BIOL 2050 3.0 by instructors are the intellectual property of the instructor. They cannot be distributed without explicit written permission. Third-party copyrighted materials (e.g., book chapters, articles) have been licensed either for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law or permission for their use in this course has been obtained from the copyright holder. Please be respectful and do not share any conversations, recordings, etc., outside of this course.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for verbal abuse or harassment

All students at York are governed by York’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (<https://oscr.students.yorku.ca/student-conduct>), which allows all students the right to pursue all academic activities without “harassment, intimidation, discrimination (or) disruption.” You cannot disrupt or interfere with the academic activity of others, online or in-person. Students who engage in any type of abuse (e.g., threats, harassment, racist and/or sexist language) against their instructor and/or other students may be subject to punishment under York’s Code of Conduct, the rules of the appropriate Department/Faculty, Ontario Laws and/or the Canadian Human Rights Code as required. Even if you drop a course, all incidents will be investigated regardless of student standing.

University Policies

Grading Scheme

In accordance with the York University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in undergraduate courses at York conform to the [York University grade descriptions and ranges](#).

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Academic misconduct undermines the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility that we expect in this class. York University provides supports such as academic integrity workshops to ensure that you understand the norms and standards of academic integrity that we expect you to uphold.

You are required to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and are subject to the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct and Procedures](#). The Policy affirms the responsibility of faculty members to foster acceptable standards of academic conduct and of you to abide by such standards. Please review and familiarize yourself with the policy.

There is also a [York University academic integrity website](#) with comprehensive information about academic honesty and how to find resources at York to help improve your research and writing skills, and cope with University life. You are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website:

Examples of actions that do not adhere to York's Academic Integrity Policy include:

- Plagiarism (passing off someone else's work as your own)
- Accessing unauthorized sites for assignments or tests
- Unauthorized collaboration on assignment and exams
- Uploading work to third party repository sites (e.g., Course Hero, One Class, etc.)
- Scanning, sharing, uploading, or publishing exams, tests, or scholarly work
- Use of generative AI without permission

For more information on what academic integrity is and why it is important see please see the [Learning Commons' tutorial](#). Information on the process of investigations into breaches of academic honesty can be found at these [academic integrity FAQs](#).

Important Note from the FSc Committee on Examinations & Academic Standards (CEAS):

Numerous students in Faculty of Science courses have been charged with academic misconduct when materials they uploaded to third party repository sites (e.g., Course Hero, One Class, etc.) were taken and used by unknown students in later offerings of the course. Whenever a student submits work obtained through an external site (e.g., Course Hero, Chegg), the **submitting student will be charged with plagiarism** and the **uploading student will be charged with aiding and abetting**. To avoid this risk, students are urged not to upload their work to these sites.

Assistance for Students (Academic and Well-Being)

We all need help from time to time and York has a variety of resources available to support you in your courses and your daily life. Below you can find links to these resources.

[Faculty of Science Academic Advising](#) – Departments also offer program-specific advising. Check with your Department's Undergraduate Office.

[York University Learning Commons](#) – General academic learning supports including library research, time management, study skills, career planning, etc.)

[Bethune College Writing Services](#) – Faculty of Science & Lassonde students can get support for written assignments (whether you're just starting or want someone to read it over). If you're from another Faculty try out the [Writing Centre](#).

[York University Library](#) – The library is your one-stop shop for information! Get articles & other resources ([including resources for student success](#)), study, use the equipment in the [Making & Media Creation Labs](#), & check out their workshops.

[York University Student Services](#) – Links to all student services (academic & personal)

[Centre for Indigenous Students Services](#) – Community space & supports for Indigenous students

[York International Support Services for International Students](#) – Advising, peer mentoring, & information about on-campus employment for international students

[York University English as a Second Language Open Learning Centre](#) – Offers support to English as another language students to improve English skills

[York University Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[York University Student Counselling, Health & Well-being](#)

[York University Student Well-being Resources](#) – Wide variety of resources to support your personal well-being

[Office of Student Community Relations](#) – Offers conflict resolution services & supports students through crises

[Food Access, Funding, & Supports/Resources](#) – Information on meal programs, food banks, emergency bursaries, community gardens, & more

[The Centre for Sexual Violence Response and Support](#) – Provides support & resources for those who have experienced or been impacted by sexual or gender-based violence

Good2Talk 24-hour Ontario Student Helpline: Call 1-866-925-5454 or Text: GOOD2TALKON to 686868

[Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) (24 hours a day/7 days per week): <https://988.ca>; Call or Text 9-8-8.

[GuardMe Student Support Program](#) – free, confidential health & well-being support

[Bethune College Peer Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\)](#) – Facilitated study groups – available for specific 1st & 2nd year science courses

[Bethune College Peer Tutoring](#) – one-on-one drop-in tutoring to help you better understand concepts

[York Federation of Students Food Support Centre](#) – provides free non-perishable food & basic need items

Accessibility

York University is committed to principles of respect, inclusion, and equality of all persons with accessibility needs across campus. The University provides academic accommodations and supports for students from all Faculties and programs with temporary and permanent accessibility needs (including physical, sensory, medical, learning, and mental health needs) who require accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials. Please note that registering with accessibility services and discussing your needs with your professors is necessary to avoid any impediment to receiving the necessary academic accommodations to meet your needs.

To access these services, please register with accessibility services as early as possible to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided with advance notice. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs.

Additional information is available at the following websites:

- [Student Accessibility Services](#)
- [York Accessibility Hub](#)

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for an in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within 14 days of the date for which accommodation is sought. Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course Director immediately. To arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation Form](#) at least 3 weeks *before the exam period begins*.

Procedures are outlined in York's [Academic Accommodation for Students' Religious Observances](#).

Ethics Review Process

York students are subject to the York University [Policy for the Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants](#). Ethics approval must be obtained prior to starting any research activities involving human participants, including research conducted by graduate or undergraduate students for a course/thesis/project/dissertation. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact your Course Director immediately.

Student and Instructor Conduct in Academic Situations

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom and other academic settings, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. Please see the [policy and procedures governing disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations](#).

Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.

Please consult the [University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know](#).