

EDWARD R. MURROW HIGH SCHOOL  
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT  
Allen Barge, Principal  
Carlos Reyes, Assistant Principal

Course Syllabus  
**SBS21: Regents Biology I**  
Fall 2024

## 1. Instructor Information

Mr. D. Sprague  
Office: Room 403  
Email: [DSprague@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:DSprague@schools.nyc.gov)  
Phone: (718) 258-9283 ext. 4032

## 2. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- (1) Describe and explain biological concepts, theories, structures, and processes.
- (2) Develop and use biological models.
- (3) Design experiments and conduct research using appropriate laboratory techniques and equipment.
- (4) Graph and analyze data to determine meaningful patterns.
- (5) Use evidence to support or refute biological claims.

## 3. Required Materials

You should bring to class everyday:

- Both pen (blue or black ink only) and pencil
- Three-ring binder with loose leaf paper
- Pocket folder
- Calculator (cell phones may not be used as calculators)

## 4. Grading Policy

Students will be evaluated multiple times on each of five biology skills (see section 2, Course Objectives) listed in this syllabus through written examinations, laboratory work, writing assignments, and class discussions. Students will receive a separate evaluation of each biology skill on assessments (i.e., you will not receive a single score on an exam; instead, you will receive a separate mark for each biology skill that the exam assesses). Students will be provided with a rubric describing the criteria for success on each skill.

The final score for each biology skill will be based on the most recent, consistent evaluations of the skill rather than a simple average of scores. Thus, students who struggle with a particular skill on assessments early in the semester will not be penalized if they can consistently demonstrate proficiency by the end of the semester.

## **5. Exams**

Exams will be given periodically throughout the semester with advanced notice. Make up opportunities for missed exams will be provided when an absence is excused. Missed exams must be made up within two class days of the original exam date. Students are required to turn off and place cell phones, smartwatches, and other electronic devices in the envelope provided during exams and other formal assessments; assessment credit will not be given to students who have an electronic device in their possession during an exam (regardless of whether the student used the device).

## **6. Laboratory Work**

New York State requires that students complete 1200 minutes of laboratory work and submit 28 satisfactory written lab reports to sit for the Biology Regents Exam, including all parts of three state-mandated investigations; students should complete at least 14 satisfactory lab reports per semester. For this reason, students who miss a lab for any reason must arrange to attend a make up lab. Any lab that is not made up cannot receive credit. For safety reasons, students who arrive late to lab will not be permitted to enter the lab, and will be required to make up the lab. Inappropriate or dangerous behavior will result in removal from the lab.

## **7. Assignments**

Each week, a set of practice problems will be assigned. Assignments should be turned in through Google Classroom by the due date.

## **8. Classroom Protocol**

In-class assignments, attendance, punctuality, preparedness, participation, and productivity during class time are all valued in this course. It is expected that you will treat everyone in the classroom with respect, contribute to class discussions, and remain attentive. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off and out of sight.

## **9. Attendance**

Regular attendance is mandatory. Class begins five (5) minutes after the end of the previous band. Students who are not in the room at that time will be marked late without a pass. When you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to find out what class activities, assignments, or notes were missed and arrange to make up these activities and get the notes from a classmate. Students who are isolating after receiving a positive COVID-19 test are responsible for communicating with me over email and completing assignments on Google Classroom.

## **10. Academic Honesty**

All work that you turn in is expected to be your own. When you use someone else's ideas, you must give that person credit, even if you do not use his or her exact words. Anyone who is caught cheating, talking, or using a cell phone or other personal electronic device during an exam will be penalized. It is not acceptable to look at another student's written work or show another student your written work, nor is it acceptable to submit work generated by artificial intelligence programs without clear acknowledgement.

# *Edward R. Murrow High School*

DESIGNATED A SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CARLOS REYES, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SCIENCE

ALLEN BARGE, PRINCIPAL

## REGENTS BIOLOGY WELCOME LETTER

September 5, 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to **Regents Biology** for the Fall 2024 semester! I am excited to share with you that your child is among the first cohort of students in New York State to experience the brand-new Regents-aligned biology course designed to prepare students to be science-literate in the twenty-first century. As both a native New Yorker and a veteran educator in the state, I have seen a lot of changes to state science curricula over the years; I am pleased to say that I personally think the new biology curriculum we are implementing this year is one of the most promising approaches that I have seen!

Because this course (and the new Biology Regents Exam in June 2025) takes a unique approach to learning science, it is likely to feel a bit different to your child than previous science classes. Here is what you should expect and how you can help your child have the most positive learning experience:

1. **Students may leave class some days with more questions than answers.** This course takes an “explore before explain” approach to learning, meaning that students will be asked frequently to generate scientific questions and use scientific tools and procedures to attempt to answer their own questions. To make this approach most effective, I will avoid answering certain questions until after students have had a chance to propose their own explanations and then test those explanations to see how well they hold up to data. *You can support your child by reminding them that learning the process of answering a scientific question is often more valuable than learning the answer.*
2. **Grades will reflect evidence of learning rather than compliance.** In order to pass the course, students must consistently demonstrate through lab work, projects, exams, and class discussion that they understand the biology concepts we are studying and that they can apply the biology skills we practice. While excellent attendance and assignment completion are essential to success, these by themselves are not enough to pass the course. Keep in mind that this course is designed to prepare students for a challenging Regents exam in June. *You can support your child by emphasizing the importance of learning from the work rather than just turning in work check it off a to-do list.*
3. **My feedback will be targeted to specific skills that we are learning in class.** Since most of the complex tasks we work on will involve multiple biology skills, I will report student progress separately for each skill (so a student might earn two separate scores on the same exam: one for their ability to interpret diagrams and another for their ability to design experiments). *You can support your child by encouraging them to use my feedback to celebrate their strengths and improve their weak areas.*
4. **Attendance is more important than ever.** Most of the biology concepts addressed in this course are presented through scientific “storylines” where students spend several classes exploring a case study as they discover the underlying biology. This means that it will take extra effort on the student’s part to catch up after an absence. *You can support your child by ensuring that they arrive on time and attend class regularly.*

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ALLEN BARGE, PRINCIPAL

It is my goal to help every student in the class learn to think like a biologist. If you have questions about the course or need assistance in supporting your child's science education, please do not hesitate to contact me. The fastest way to reach me is by email ([DSprague@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:DSprague@schools.nyc.gov)).

I am looking forward to a joyful and productive semester.

Sincerely,

Mr. Devin Sprague  
Biology Teacher

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Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and understand:

- The welcome letter explaining the new Regents Biology course
- The classroom expectations outlined in the attached document entitled "Course Syllabus: Regents Biology I, Fall 2024"
- The cell phone policy in the syllabus (cell phones must be turned off and kept completely away during class, and must be kept in the envelope provided during exams and other formal assessments)

A copy of this letter and the course syllabus will be posted to Google Classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Daytime Phone Number  
(between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent E-mail Address

Please provide any information that you would like me to know about your student (special talents or needs):