

Infectious diseases and society (BIOL 301) syllabus

Spring, 2025

I. Basic course information:

Lecture instructor:

Professor: Arndt Laemmerzahl

E-mail: alaemmer@gmu.edu. ***The best way of getting in touch.***

Contact information: Please see the link on our web page:

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~alaemmer/disease/main.html>

This page has our lecture notes as well as other important information for our class.

Text:

There is no text for Biology 301. Instead, we will use the notes available on the course web page (see link above).

Grading:

Three in class exams:	21% (each)
One written disease summary:	22%
Oral presentation of disease summary:	10%
Attendance:	5% (during presentations)
TOTAL	100%

Note: there is no final exam in this class!

Exams:

The exam will be mostly fill in the blanks and multiple choice. Some matching and one line definitions may also be included.

All exams are comprehensive in the sense that I may ask questions from previous material. Each exam will, however, concentrate on the material covered since the last exam.

The lowest exam will be dropped. Your middle exam will count twice.

Disease summaries:

You will need to write a disease summary on the infectious diseases of your choice. This does not have to be a human disease, but can be any infectious disease you wish. You should follow the outline/advice given in the disease summary section of the web page. **You will need to submit this through blackboard.**

Presentations:

For your oral presentation you will need to present your disease summary to the class. I will be a member of the audience. You should plan on about 9-10 minutes for your presentation. Please do not go longer than this - surprisingly, often the problem talking too long rather than not long enough.

Do ***not*** read your report (*or your slides!*). Present your report as if you were trying to inform someone else about this disease. Try to provide graphics, summaries, tables, etc, of your disease. Be prepared to answer questions from the rest of the class.

*I have posted more details about the **disease summaries** and your **presentations** on our web page.*

Attendance:

I would like it if everyone is there to support your fellow students when they are giving presentations. As such I will be taking attendance when we do presentations.

Some miscellaneous remarks:

We will strictly follow the honor code. If there is a problem I will refer you to the honor committee! Be aware that cheating (unfortunately) has skyrocketed in the last few years but you should know that many, many students have been caught.

A reminder that plagiarism is an honor code violation. If you do not know what plagiarism is, please see the following web site:

<https://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism#plagiarism>

It is my hope that everyone here will do well. If you start having problems with the material *please, please*, talk to me, and we will try to fix things before they get out of hand.

If any classes are canceled for whatever reason, we will simply reschedule the missed class for the class immediately following. This includes exams (e.g., should we miss an exam, the exam will take place the very next class that we meet).

Because I drop the lowest exam and substitute it with the “middle” exam, there is no make-up opportunity for any of the exams.

VII. Course outline (dates for topics are approximate):

<i>Week of</i>	<i>Lecture topic</i>
January 20	Introduction - what are infectious diseases?
January 27	The immune system - our defenses against infectious disease Bacteria, viruses, fungi & parasites - biology of pathogens
February 3	Parasites
February 10	The common cold <i>Exam I (Wednesday, February 12th)</i>
February 17	Influenza Plague
February 24	Smallpox Anthrax
March 3	Other diseases I (yellow fever, typhoid, tetanus, botulism) <i>Disease topics due (Wednesday, March 5th)</i>
March 10	<i>Spring break - no classes!</i>
March 17	Other diseases II (<i>E. coli</i> , salmonella, rabies, human papilloma virus (HPV)) <i>Exam II (Wednesday, March 19th)</i>
March 24	Cholera AIDS
March 31	Tuberculosis Malaria <i>Disease Summary due (Wednesday, April 2nd)</i>
April 7	Covid-19 <i>Exam III (Wednesday, April 9th)</i>
April 14	<i>Presentations</i>
April 21	<i>Presentations</i>
April 28	<i>Presentations (Monday only)</i>

VIII. Information that applies to all classes at GMU:

(Some of this is repetitive, but important. It applies to *all* your classes at GMU.)

Academic integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit to those people in the proper, accepted form. When doing homework, the work must be yours. It is totally unacceptable to copy the work of another student in this course in any form.

GMU email accounts

Students must use their Mason email accounts—either the existing “MEMO” system or a new “MASONLIVE” account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

Writing center:

A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

University libraries (“Ask a Librarian”)

<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and psychological services (CAPS):

(703) 993-2380;
<http://caps.gmu.edu>

University policies:

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

Disability Resource Center

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.