Biology of Sex and Death

Last Updated: Mon, 01/05/2026

Course prefix: BIOS

Course number: 1220

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
32997

Instructor First Name: Chrissy

Instructor Last Name: Spencer

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

Students learn biology through the lens of the formation and collapse of biological systems, organized around questions pertaining to life, sex, and death.

Course learning outcomes:

1. Explain, apply, and evaluate basic biological information surrounding life, sex, and death. (Biology Content Knowledge)
2. Know and apply the scientific methodology, including a recognition of scientific uncertainty. (Scientific Methodology)
3. Work effectively on teams to present, explain, and critique your results and the results of others. (Teamwork & Scientific Methodology)
4. Interpret evidence and reflect upon how scientific thinking about biological topics can inform personal and societal decisions in the context of the environment, bioethics, medicine, and politics. (Authenticity & Reflection)

Required course materials:

All course readings and videos are on the course website, bio1220.biosci.gatech.edu or in the syllabus. Learning Catalytics access is provided to students.

Grading policy:

Your final grade will depend on the following combination of grades:

- Incoming Knowledge Evaluations (IKEs): 5%

- Team In-class Activity Assignments (TICAs): 5%
- Homework Assignments: 5%
- Biology and Society: 10%
- Tests: 35%
- Final Exam: 15%
- Laboratory: 25%

We will assign final letter grades using the following scale:

A: ≥ 90.0% B: ≥ 80.0% and < 90.0% C: ≥ 70.0% and < 80.0% D: ≥ 60.0% and < 70.0% F: < 60.0%

Attendance policy:

We expect you to demonstrate persistent learning by attending every class period, reading ahead, bringing appropriate notes that support quality participation during class. Data and our own experience show that attendance and deliberate attention in class correlate with performance and course grades. Questions presented in class are usually at the same level of difficulty as test questions, so attending class gives you practice for taking the tests. The In-Class Activity sessions in Learning Catalytics close at the end of class, with a few exceptions, and will not be reopened for credit, but you can review closed sessions for study purposes. All TICA questions receive full credit for completion rather than correctness.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

The statement below is required by the University System of Georgia.

BIOS 1220 Biology of Sex and Death

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the STEM area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I ask scientific questions or use data, mathematics, or technology to understand the universe?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will use the scientific method and laboratory procedures or mathematical and computational methods to analyze data, solve problems, and explain natural phenomena.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Inquiry and Analysis
    - Problem-Solving
    - Teamwork