

BIOLOGY 351 – THE BIOLOGY BEHIND THE NEWS

Spring 2023

Department of Biology, University of Victoria

A. Basic Course Information

Course Description

An examination of the biological science that bears on current environmental, social, ethical and political issues. Emphasis on how an understanding of the science might inform decision-making by individuals and groups.

Course TMCID 0Lang (enUS)BDC q0.00000912 0 62 92 reW nBTW*12 91 ics (9as9W*at96Tonal) 0 1 138

You will receive an F in the course if your aggregate grade is less than 50% (rounded to the nearest whole number). It is not necessary to pass the midterm exam or the final exam in order to pass the course.

You will receive an N in the course if you miss the final exam in April and do not write a deferred final exam; or if you do not pass on Packback participation (50% or better).

No supplemental final exam (second-chance final exam) will be given in this course, although, as described above, you may defer the final exam for any of the reasons given.

C. Packback

What is it?

Packback is an online platform for discussion among students. You will probably have been contacted already by the company about signing up.

Since Biology 351 has only third-year standing as a prereq, there are students from many different academic backgrounds registered here. I hope that Packback will be able to bring together in courteous, respectful discussion students with different knowledge, ideas, viewpoints and values.

Cost

The cost is \$29 (CAN); it is less if you have used the platform in previous courses at UVic.

How it works, what you will do, and how you will be assessed

The idea behind the platform is that you will post one discussion question per week, related to the course material in some way, and respond to two questions from other students per week. Each question and response is worth 3 points, or 9 points per week total. You don't have to respond only to questions posted that week; it's fine if you respond to earlier questions. Your response will be time-stamped, and will count toward the current week's participation mark.

You should try to participate every week. You can't let the first week slide and then post 2 questions and 4 responses in the next week.

The questions will be assessed for their quality by the platform's AI. Questions that pertain to specific, easily-lookupable matters get low marks; more open-ended questions score higher. The score a post gets is called its "Curiosity Score". I have set the minimum curiosity score at 60. After the AI tells you what it thinks of your question or response, you may edit and improve it. It is only your edited post that will count, or your original post if you choose not to edit.

If the AI thinks your

D. University Statements and Policies

Cheating and Plagiarism

The University and the Biology Department deal with cheating and plagiarism as a serious matter, since ignoring it could be

