



## **BIOL 2420 Microbiology (BIOL 2420.088)**

**Course Syllabus: Fall 2026 (August 24 - December 10, 2026)**

*"Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide personal, dynamic learning experiences empowering students to succeed."*

**Instructor:** Emad Tahtamouni, Ph.D.

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**Phone:** NA

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### **Weekday Office Hours**

| Weekday   | Office Hours            |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Monday    | By appointment / online |
| Tuesday   | By appointment / online |
| Wednesday | By appointment / online |
| Thursday  | By appointment / online |
| Friday    | By appointment / online |

**This syllabus serves as the documentation for all course policies and requirements, assignments, and instructor/student responsibilities.**

Information relative to the delivery of the content contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Should that happen, the student will be notified.

### **Course Description:**

This course covers basic microbiology and immunology. It introduces historical concepts of the nature of microorganisms, microbial diversity, the importance of microorganisms and acellular agents in the biosphere, and their roles in human and animal diseases. Major topics include bacterial structure as well as growth, physiology, genetics, and biochemistry of microorganisms. Emphasis is on medical microbiology, infectious diseases, and public health.

### **Purpose of the Course:**

This is an ONLINE course in microbiology for both lecture and lab. All lecture materials can be accessed through the NTCC Blackboard Learning Management System from any location in which the student has internet access. The lab component of the course requires the purchase of the eScience lab kit. If you are remote, you may purchase a voucher for the lab kit and go to the eScience lab website to redeem the voucher and have the kit delivered directly to your home. If you are a local student, you may be able to pick up a lab kit directly from the college store. All lab activities can then be completed at your location without coming to campus. However, both the mid- term and final exams (lecture and lab practicals) are required to be taken in an approved testing center either on the NTCC campus or other permissible location with an approved proctor available.

This course is intended for those students interested in pursuing a degree in any one of the health sciences professions including but not limited to: nursing, medical laboratory technology, dental hygiene, or medical assisting. Though there are no official prerequisites for this non-majors course listed in the Texas Academic Course Guide Manual, there is an expectation that students have had previous exposure to fundamental biological principles preferably gained from a college course in anatomy and physiology or general biology. Microbiology traditionally involves the study of organisms/viral particles too small to be seen with the naked eye. This includes bacteria, viruses, helminth worms, fungi, and protozoa. There are various applied sub-disciplines in microbiology including food, medical, and agricultural. This course will focus primarily on medical microbiology. An understanding of basic chemical principles, cell structure and function and human organ systems is beneficial as you begin your study of microbiology.

### **Prerequisite(s):**

There are no official prerequisites listed for this non-majors course; however, previous exposure to fundamental

biological principles, preferably through anatomy and physiology or general biology, is expected and beneficial.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

#### **College Student Learning Outcomes**

Critical Thinking Skills CT.1: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze complex issues, synthesize information, and evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of data.

Communication Skills CS.1: Students will effectively develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills EQS.1: Students will manipulate numerical data or observable facts by organizing and converting relevant information into mathematical or empirical form.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills EQS.2: Students will analyze numerical data or observable facts by processing information with correct calculations, explicit notations, and appropriate technology.

Teamwork TW2: Students will work with others to support and accomplish a shared goal.

#### **Course Student Learning Outcomes**

Describe distinctive characteristics and diverse growth requirements of prokaryotic organisms compared to eukaryotic organisms.

Provide examples of the impact of microorganisms on agriculture, environment, ecosystem, energy, and human health, including biofilms.

Distinguish between mechanisms of physical and chemical agents to control microbial populations.

Explain the unique characteristics of bacterial metabolism and bacterial genetics.

Describe evidence for the evolution of cells, organelles, and major metabolic pathways from early prokaryotes and how phylogenetic trees reflect evolutionary relationships.

Compare characteristics and replication of acellular infectious agents (viruses and prions) with characteristics and reproduction of cellular infectious agents (prokaryotes and eukaryotes).

Describe functions of host defenses and the immune system in combating infectious diseases and explain how immunizations protect against specific diseases.

Explain transmission and virulence mechanisms of cellular and acellular infectious agents.

Use and comply with laboratory safety rules, procedures, and universal precautions.

Demonstrate proficient use of a compound light microscope.

Describe and prepare widely used stains and wet mounts and discuss their significance in identification of microorganisms.

Perform basic microbiology procedures using aseptic techniques for transfer, isolation and observation of commonly encountered, clinically significant bacteria.

Use different types of bacterial culture media to grow, isolate, and identify microorganisms.

Perform basic bacterial identification procedures using biochemical tests.

Estimate the number of microorganisms in a sample using methods such as direct counts, viable plate counts, or spectrophotometric measurements.

Demonstrate basic identification protocols based on microscopic morphology of some common fungi and parasites.

### **Evaluation/Grading Policy:**

The breakdown of the course requirements is as follows:

| %   | Requirement                                                                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 20% | Connect Homework, NCLEX, & Quizzes                                                           |
| 30% | Unit Exams 1-4 (Respondus LockDown Browser)                                                  |
| 10% | Midterm Exam (approved proctored location)                                                   |
| 10% | Final Exam (approved proctored location)                                                     |
| 15% | Carolina Kit Online and Hands-on Lab Reports                                                 |
| 10% | Lab Practicals                                                                               |
| 5%  | Identification of Bacterial Unknowns / Connect Virtual Labs and ID of Bacterial Unknown Quiz |

Lecture Average: 70% of the final course grade. Lab Average: 30% of the final course grade.

Semester grades will be earned as follows:

| Percentage     | Letter Grade |
|----------------|--------------|
| 90.0-100       | A            |
| 80.0-89.9      | B            |
| 70.0-79.9      | C            |
| 60.0-69.9      | D            |
| 59.9 and below | F            |

### **Required Instructional Materials:**

**Inclusive Access:** We have negotiated with the Publisher to obtain a discounted price for your lecture course materials. Your eBook and Connect Access Code are included with your tuition and will be available through Blackboard on the first class day (use the link found on the Bb course homepage). The materials are required for your class and essential in your success. If you also determine that you would like a print copy of your text in addition to your inclusive access loose-leaf copies will be available in the College Store at a discounted price. You may opt out of purchasing your materials from the College Store through the Census Date for the course. If you choose to opt out, you will be responsible for purchasing your Connect Access Code from another vendor. You will receive a refund for the Inclusive Access if you opt out.

The required lab kit is a separate purchase available from the NTCC College Store.

Textbook: Cowan, 2022, Microbiology Fundamentals: A Clinical Approach, 4th Edition with Connect

Publisher: McGraw Hill ISBN Number: 978-1-260-70243-9

Lab Part: Carolina Distance Learning. (n.d.). General Microbiology online lab kit. Carolina Biological Supply Company.

<https://www.carolina.com>

### **Optional Instructional Materials:**

Recommended Reading(s): Appropriate chapters in textbook as assigned.

### **Minimum Technology Requirements:**

Laptop or computer (webcam optional); access to high-speed daily internet.

Microsoft Office 365 (available as a free download for all NTCC students)

### **Required Computer Literacy Skills:**

Ability to use a web browser to access NTCC Blackboard System for course information, eBook and Connect assignments and Respondus Lockdown Browser for test monitoring as required.

Ability to access NTCC student email system and communicate professionally and competently with instructor.

Ability to create and complete Word documents, save on your computer and upload into Bb assignment links.

### **Course Structure and Overview:**

This is a fully online microbiology course for both lecture and lab. Lecture materials are delivered through NTCC Blackboard. The course uses McGraw-Hill Connect for eBook access, homework, SmartBook, NCLEX activities, and chapter quizzes. Unit assessments are completed using Respondus LockDown Browser. Laboratory work includes online and hands-on activities using the Carolina Distance Learning General Microbiology lab kit. Midterm and final exams and both lab practicals must be completed at an approved proctored testing center.

### **Assignments/Learning Activities**

Homework and quizzes are assigned using McGraw-Hill Connect. Each assignment or quiz will be due at a specific time in the semester related to the lecture schedule. See the printable calendar to note specific due dates.

### **What is McGraw-Hill Connect?**

The McGraw-Hill Connect provides you with access to your eBook. Additionally, within each Connect Folder in Blackboard you will see a link to three different activities: 1) SmartBook, 2) Chapter Assignment, and 3) NCLEX and Quiz. Each of these types of activities are auto-graded in the Connect system and those grades will be automatically uploaded into the Blackboard grade book. If you feel that there is a grading error within Connect, do not hesitate to contact me with that information. If you have any question about a Connect assignment, do not hesitate to contact me for an explanation. There is also a link within Connect to report or challenge an incorrect answer.

SmartBook assignments are beneficial to your understanding of the material. These are not figured into your course grade; however, students have said that doing the SmartBook exercises improved their grades. This guided reading helps identify areas that you are having trouble understanding and provides you with some “tutoring” in those areas. The SmartBook assignments take an average of 60 to 90 minutes; however, you can spend as much time on these reading activities as you need.

Homework assignments are required and figured into the course grade. These can be done 2

times before the due date. Five percent will be deducted for the 2nd try. There is no time limit, so it is advisable to start early and work on this all during the week. Use of the eBook and hints are available with no deductions.

Feedback will be shown after submitting each attempt. After the first attempt, you will see what questions you got correct or incorrect. After the 2nd attempt, more detailed feedback is given. Printing is allowed on homework assignment questions. Study attempts: After the due date, these homework assignments will be available for practice without changing your grade. Assignments are automatically submitted on the due date. If you do not complete the assignment before that time, a grade of zero will automatically be recorded in the gradebook. If you open the assignment after the due date as a study attempt, you cannot receive an extension on the work.

NCLEX and Chapter Quizzes are required and figured into the course grade. Chapter Quizzes are usually 20 – 25 questions with a time limit of 30 minutes. NCLEX assessments vary in length but are not usually more than 15 questions. Please use these quizzes to determine whether you have a true understanding of the material. Each quiz can be taken 2 times

before the due date. Five percent will be deducted for the 2nd try but I have set the quizzes and the homework assignments to take the highest grade, so it is to your advantage to correct your work and review the questions.

### **What are Unit Assessments?**

There are 4 Unit assessments/tests. Each assessment/test will be taken through Respondus Lock-down Browser and will consist of multiple choice and short answer/discussion questions. Each assessment is graded based on the number of multiple-choice questions and points awarded for short answer or discussion questions. The number of points per question will be represented in each assessment. The unit assessments are intended to prepare you for the mid-term exam and/or the final exam. Read the information below and in the “Start Here” folder to familiarize yourself with the process for downloading the Respondus Lockdown Browser.

### **Respondus LockDown Browser Information**

This course requires the use of LockDown Browser for online exams. Watch this short video to get a basic understanding of LockDown Browser and the optional webcam feature (which may be required for some exams).

Next download and install LockDown Browser from this link:

<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=231117566>

To take an online test, close all programs connected the Internet, start Blackboard and navigate to the exam. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this Student Quick Start Guide (PDF)

When taking an online exam:

Select a location where you won't be interrupted

Before starting the test, know how much time is available for it, and that you've allotted sufficient time to complete it

Turn off all mobile devices, phones, etc. and don't have them within reach

Clear your area of all external materials — books, papers, other computers, or devices

Remain at your desk or workstation for the duration of the test

LockDown Browser will prevent you from accessing other websites or applications; you will be unable to exit the test until all questions are completed and submitted.

### **Midterm and Final Exams and Lab Practicals**

The mid-term and final exams and lab practicals are proctored exams. You MUST schedule a time at an approved testing center to take these exams. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this requirement. Refer to the posted calendar in the “Start Here” folder for appropriate dates. The mid-term, final and lab practicals are multiple choice and short answer. Each exam and the practicals are graded based on the number of questions and the possible points awarded. The number of points per question will be represented in each exam.

### **Laboratory Component**

The “lab” component of this course will consist of online and hands-on laboratory activities through Science Interactive Lab Kit for Microbiology:

5% Identification of Bacterial Unknowns Connect Virtual Labs and ID of Bacterial Unknown Quiz

15% Carolina Kit Online and hands-on Lab Reports

10% Lab Practicals (lab practical one and lab practical two taken at the proctored testing location).

The labs within this course are important learning activities to help you master many of the learning outcomes in the course. To receive credit, all short-answer questions should be answered using complete sentences in your own words describing work that you have completed. Labs are graded based on documented evidence of completion of the lab exercise. Many labs require photos to be uploaded, data tables to be completed, and successful answering of questions presented. When photos are required as a component of a lab submission, work submitted without photos uploaded will receive an automatic zero. Completion of data tables is equally important. An icon for photo submission and data table completion is labeled "Data" and is located in the lower right corner of your lab experimentation page. Lab Reports that show evidence of being copied from any web site or are identical with any other submitted reports will be given a grade of zero. Lab reports will generally be graded within a week of submission and feedback on your techniques or results will be included.

The Carolina Lab Kit contains almost all the materials that you will need. There are a few items that you should be prepared to supply to complete some labs. These include but are not limited to the following: access to a microwave oven or hot water bath; isopropyl (rubbing alcohol); local tap water, household bleach, etc. Please be sure to review all the materials in your lab kit and check them off with the list of the content that is included to be sure you have all materials. You should contact Carolina if there are any missing components of your kit, and Science Interactive will replace the missing items.

### **Communications:**

NTCC email is the official form of communication used by the college. Please check your NTCC email daily for any important announcements or communications from me. I will post important announcements each week based on the topics that are to be studied. You should receive an email notification of these announcements as well. I encourage you to contact me with any questions that you have about the course through email. I will respond to your email within 24-36 hours but generally much sooner. We will also try to use Microsoft TEAMS as needed throughout the semester.

Discussion Board responses, emails, and all other correspondence among faculty and students enrolled in this class are expected to conform to the level of conduct that would be expected in a regular classroom. Students should feel free to express disagreement with the instructor and other students, but it must be done in a manner which is not verbally abusive, threatening, or harassing. Communication among students is encouraged but must end if one of the party's requests that it be terminated. Students will not send unsolicited email espousing a cause, religion, or activity to other class participants and will not add other class participants to any listservs or other entity which distributes unwanted email or material.

Violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action against the offending student. This action can include termination of the student's participation in the class and a grade of "F". Please read the entire Netiquette guidelines document that is also posted in the START COURSE HERE folder.

### **Student Responsibilities/Expectations:**

Northeast Texas Community College is a "community of scholars". Please remember that you and all the students in this class are pursuing very important goals in your lives. As scholars, I expect every student to be courteous to other students and the instructor in all online experiences.

As your instructor, I will make a conscientious effort to provide you with a variety of teaching and learning formats to help you in your efforts to be successful in microbiology. I deeply care about your learning experience and your success in this course, however that ultimate success does depend largely on YOU. Your success can be maximized and your potential achieved by making the commitment to meet these online expectations:

Schedule and plan to complete all lecture and laboratory assignments and submit them when they are due. Be sure to print off the calendar to help you keep up with assignment due dates.

Be sure to do all your own work. Collusion and plagiarism are acts of academic dishonesty.

For any questions that you may have concerning NTCC established student policies, please consult the Student Handbook.

### **Additional Information:**

The Blackboard gradebook will be used to record all your graded work. You will see a category named "CURRENT GRADE". This number represents your current average based on the work that you have submitted at that point in the semester. Any grades that have not been submitted will not be averaged into the current grade unless a score of "0" has been entered. The current grade is fluent (a running total up to that point) and can change daily based on the work that you submit. If you have any questions about your current grade at any point, you should certainly contact me with your question. A mid-term grade will be submitted to the Academic Success Team based on your Current Grade at that point. The last day to drop the course with a grade of W is 11/24/2026. If circumstances require you to withdraw from this course, you must do so by that date. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the withdrawal with the registrar's office. Failure to officially withdraw will result in your receiving grade of F.

### **Institutional/Course Policy:**

For questions concerning NTCC established student policies, consult the NTCC Student Handbook.

### **Alternate Operations During Campus Closure and/or Alternate Course Delivery Requirements:**

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Northeast Texas Community College to move to altered operations. During this time, Northeast Texas Community College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to, online through the Blackboard Learning Management System, online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor NTCC's website (<http://www.ntcc.edu/>) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, Blackboard for each class for course-specific communication, and NTCC email for important general information.

Additionally, there may be instances where a course may not be able to be continued in the same delivery format as it originates (face-to-face, fully online, live remote, or hybrid). Should this be the case, every effort will be made to continue instruction in an alternative delivery format. Students will be informed of any changes of this nature through email messaging and/or the Blackboard course site.

### **Statement Regarding the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology:**

Employees and students shall be permitted to explore artificial intelligence (AI) and implement its use in and out of the classroom in accordance with policy and administrative regulations. The use of AI shall only be as a support tool to enhance student outcomes or as necessary to engage in research and shall never take the place of faculty, staff, and student decision-making. Any use of AI must comply with law, policy, and administrative regulations relating to student and employee privacy and data security. A student shall only use AI tools with faculty permission and shall be expected to produce original work and properly credit sources, including AI tools used in creating the work.

Example:

APA (7th edition)

OpenAI. (2026). ChatGPT (March 25 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>

MLA (9th edition)

OpenAI. ChatGPT. 25 Mar. 2026, <https://chat.openai.com/>.

Employees or students who use AI tools to deceptively harm, bully, or harass others shall be disciplined in accordance with policy. [See DH, DIA series, FFD series, FFE, FLB, and the FM series] AI Use by Employees and Students. Northeast Texas Community College 225500 TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CRB ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (LOCAL) DATE ISSUED: 12/8/2025 1 of 1 UPDATE 50 CRB(LOCAL)-AJC Adopted: 12/16/2025

### **NTCC Academic Honesty/Ethics Statement:**

NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. The college expects all students to engage in their academic pursuits in an honest manner that is beyond reproach using their intellect and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. This course will follow the NTCC Academic Honesty and Academic Ethics policies stated in the Student Handbook. Refer to the student handbook for more information on these subjects.

**ADA Statement:**

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodation as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodation. An appointment can be made with the Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in Student Services and can be reached at 903-434-8264. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the special populations page on the NTCC website.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.

**Eagle Assist:**

At Northeast Texas Community College, we understand that students often need support that extends beyond the classroom. "Eagle Assist" is the place to start when looking for that type of assistance. Our support system is here to help you succeed in both your academic and personal growth.

Mental Health Counseling (visit [www.thevirtualcaregroup.com/ntcc](http://www.thevirtualcaregroup.com/ntcc) to activate your account)

Classroom Accommodations

NTCC Care Center Food Pantry

NTCC Care Center Hygiene Closet

NTCC Care Center Cook Nook

Financial Literacy

Child Care Assistance

Emergency Aid

Send us a message at [eagleassist@ntcc.edu](mailto:eagleassist@ntcc.edu)

### Tentative Course Schedule:

2026 Fall Semester Academic Calendar: <https://www.ntcc.edu/sites/default/files/2026-04/2026%20-%202027%20Academic%20Calendar.pdf>

| Module / Period             | Lecture Readings                  | Connect Assignments / Exams                                      | Labs                                                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Module 1<br>8/24-9/19/2026  | Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6        | Connect Assignments due 9/19/2026<br>Exam 1: 9/20-9/21/2026      | Labs due 9/19/2026                                   |
| Module 2<br>9/21-10/4/2026  | Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 11          | Connect Assignments due 10/3/2026<br>Exam 2: 10/4-10/5/2026      | Labs due 10/3/2026                                   |
| Midterms<br>10/5-10/9/2026  | Review Units 1 and 2              | Midterm Exam: Units 1 and 2<br>Approved Proctored Testing Center | Lab Practical 1<br>Approved Proctored Testing Center |
| Module 3<br>10/12-11/2/2026 | Chapters 12, 13, 16, and 17       | Connect Assignments due 10/31/2026<br>Exam 3: 11/1-11/2/2026     | Labs due 10/31/2026                                  |
| Module 4<br>11/2-11/23/2026 | Chapters 18, 19, 20, and 21       | Connect Assignments due 11/21/2026<br>Exam 4: 11/22-11/23/2026   | Labs due 11/21/2026                                  |
| Finals<br>12/4-12/10/2026   | Comprehensive Review of Units 1-4 | Comprehensive Final Exam<br>Approved Proctored Testing Center    | Lab Practical 2<br>Approved Proctored Testing Center |

**Important: Students are responsible for monitoring Blackboard for detailed assignment instructions, testing information, and any updates to due dates.**

Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule, assignments, exams, laboratory activities, policies, and due dates as necessary. Any changes will be communicated to students in a timely manner through official course announcements or email.