BCH 403/503: GRADING POLICY AND GENERAL INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION:
The course has three sections including macromolecular structure and function (taught by Dr. K. Blumenthal), metabolism (taught by Dr. G. Willsky), and gene expression (taught by Dr. M. Taub). Each instructor is responsible for administering their section of the course, including the grading of their examinations. For each of the 3 sections, handouts are made available online in Blackboard. In addition there is an assigned textbook. Students may use either Biochemistry, 3rd Edition, by Mathews, van Holde, and Ahern, or Biochemistry, 4th Edition by Mathews, van Holde, Appling, and Anthony-Cahill (available at the Medical Bookstore).

Students are responsible for understanding the material presented in the lectures (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00-9:50 a.m. in Diefendorf 147), as well as assigned course materials, which may include reading, and problem sets. Students are expected to solve problems based upon the course materials. To facilitate this process, help sessions will be held (either Wednesday at 9:00-9:50 a.m. (K.Blumenthal), or Thursday from 3:30-4:50 p.m., in Diefendorf 147 (G. Willsky; M. Taub)). These recitations are designed as “help sessions” where the instructor goes over problems and answers questions. Attendance is optional, but strongly encouraged. The goal is to develop student autonomy in the learning of biochemistry. Course materials, such as problem sets, will be posted in UB Learns, on Blackboard. The course lectures and recitations are digitally and visually recorded, and are located at the website http://its.buffalo.edu/services/audio/digirec.shtml.

Students with a disability (physical, learning, or psychological) which makes it difficult to carry out the course work as outlined, and who require special accommodations such as note takers, readers, or extended time on exams and assignments, should contact the Office of Accessibility Services (25 Capen Hall, 645-2608), Beth O’Brocta (eobrocta@buffalo.edu) in the Biochemistry Department Office, and the pertinent instructor responsible for the exam (either Dr Blumenthal (kblumen@buffalo.edu), Dr. Willsky (gwillsky@buffalo.edu) or Dr. Taub (biochtau@buffalo.edu)) to make arrangements. Individual instructors should be contacted with an appropriate lead time prior to each exam to make special arrangements.

EXAMINATIONS/GRADING POLICY:
Grading is based upon the scores obtained in each of 6 examinations (two exams in each section of the course). Each examination is taken during one 50 minute lecture period. There is no cumulative final. The exams may include True/False, multiple choice, and short answer questions, at the discretion of the instructor. After each exam, answers to the exam questions, the exam grades, and the grade distribution for the exam will be posted outside 140 Farber Hall (the location of The Biochemistry Dept. Office). Consistent with the goal of developing student autonomy in learning biochemistry, students are expected to independently determine the basis of the correct answers on each exam. Generally, answers to exam questions can be found in the material presented in class, answers to problem sets, and assigned reading.
Students are guaranteed that their letter grade on each exam will be no lower than the guaranteed cut-offs listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Cut-offs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>65-74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>55-64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 55%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the instructor has the option of additional curving of each exam.

*Each student is expected to take all six exams*, as the score on each exam contributes equally to the final grade. Each exam is worth 25 points. Thus, there are 50 points/section, and 150 points for the entire course.

Each student’s final grade will be determined by adding the points earned on the six exams, and comparing each student’s point total to the summed letter-grade cut-offs from the six exams. As stated above, individual exam scores may be curved. However, further curving of grades in the A, B, C, D and F range is not guaranteed at the end of the course. There will not be “+” or “-” grades given for the 6 individual exams. However, final grades of A, B, and C will be subject to “+” or “-” grading.

**MAKE-UP EXAMS/OTHER CONCERNS:**
If an examination is missed, a make-up exam will be given *ONLY IF YOU HAVE A WRITTEN EXCUSE FROM A PHYSICIAN OR IF A WELL-DOCUMENTED CRISIS OCCURS. THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.*

1. Students are expected to notify by email the individual instructor administering the exam as well as Dr. Taub (cc: Dr. Taub) within 24 hours of any exam which is missed in order to be eligible for such a make-up exam. Students should consult with that individual instructor regarding a make-up exam.

2. The individual instructor administering the exam is expected to make a decision regarding whether the student who makes the request can have a make-up exam, as well as the time of the make-up exam.

3. If an email response to the student is not made within 2 days of receipt of the student’s email, the student will be eligible for a make-up exam.

**QUESTIONS REGARDING THE GRADING OF AN EXAM MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE INSTRUCTOR’S ATTENTION WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE POSTED EXAM GRADES.** Students are required to submit in writing any questions regarding grading to the individual instructor(s) administering the examination. Regrade requests regarding the validity of the answer(s) of exam questions will be evaluated based upon a statistical analysis of the entire class’s answers to each question. As stated above, *students in* the course are expected to develop autonomy in learning biochemistry, and thus are similarly expected to determine underlying logic by which the correct answers are obtained on examinations.
REQUESTS TO CHANGE ENROLLMENT STATUS TO S/U OR AUDIT WILL BE CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY POLICY. Students selecting S/U or Audit grades must notify the Student Response Center and complete a form. This must be completed before the end of the second week of classes.