



# Course Syllabus

## Name of Course

**BSC 2311** / CRN 83227 / Fall 2026

Credit Hours 3/Contact Hours 3

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites - None

## Contact Information

### Instructor

Name: Matthew Crane, MSc.  
Title: Assistant Professor  
Biology/Environmental Science  
E-Mail: [mcrane4@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:mcrane4@gulfcoast.edu)  
Phone: 850-769-1551 Ext 3332

Office Location: NS 214  
Office Hours: M-Th 8:30-9:30 am; M,T  
12:30-1:30 pm; W 1:00-3:30 pm; Th  
1:30-3:00 pm  
Response Time: 48 hours, bar holidays

### Division Chair

Name: Dr. Dana Hutchinson, PT, DPT  
Title: Division Chair  
E-Mail: [dhutchin1@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:dhutchin1@gulfcoast.edu)  
Phone: 850-769-1551 Ext 3848

### Division Administrative Assistant

Name: Kathy Bleday  
Title: Administrative Assistant  
E-Mail: [kbleday@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:kbleday@gulfcoast.edu)  
Phone: 850-769-1551 Ext 3851

## Course Information

### Catalog Description:

An introduction to the features of the world ocean and the major groups of living marine organisms that inhabit it. Physical, chemical, and biological interrelationships are emphasized. This course is not intended for biology majors, nor will it serve as a requirement for marine biology majors.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

**Course Learning Outcomes:** *Upon successful completion of the course student will be able to...*

1. Describe the structure of the ocean and explain how plate tectonics shapes both continents and oceans.
2. Identify different producers and state where they are located in the marine environment.

3. Describe how animals evolved over time and identify where the different animal phyla live in the ocean.
4. Compare the structure and function of different habitats: sandy beaches, coral reefs, and the ocean deep.
5. Describe some of the negative impacts that humans have on ocean habitats.

### Course Materials & Resources:

**Text:** Marine Biology, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, by Castro and Huber, ISBN: 978-0-07-802306-4.

[Do not purchase the 11<sup>th</sup> edition, 10<sup>th</sup> edition or earlier is fine.]

**Computer:** You will need access to a computer to regularly follow along with the online portion of this course on Canvas.

**Recommended:** A dedicated notebook for lecture notes and other materials and some sort of calendar/planner to track course and assignments.

### Delivery Method:

This course meets face to face. Course material, assignments, and announcements may be offered via Canvas as a supplemental approach to learning at the discretion of the instructor. Please make sure that you have access to a computer with a webcam and internet service, in the event a change in course delivery is needed.

### Student Expectations

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC E-Mail or directly through the course. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Active Participation:** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions promptly. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.
- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays), unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively, I will send out weekly reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.

- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week.

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Day	Lecture Material Covered	Chapter	Assignments Due
1	Aug 17	Mon	Intro. to Marine Biology	1	HW 1*
	Aug 19	Wed	Sea Floor	2	HW 2
2	Aug 24	Mon	Chemical Aspects of the Ocean		
	Aug 26	Wed	Physical Aspects of the Ocean	3	HW 3
3	Aug 31	Mon	Fundamentals of Biology	3	HW 4
	Sep 2	Wed	Wrap-up/Review	4	HW 5
4	<b>Sep 7</b>	Mon	<b>Holiday: Labor Day</b>		
	<b>Sep 9</b>	Wed	<b>Unit 1 Exam</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>	
5	Sep 14	Mon	Multicellular Producers	6	HW 6
	Sep 16	Wed	Estuaries	12	HW 7
6	Sep 21	Mon	Microbial World	5	HW 8
	Sep 23	Wed	Life Near the Ocean's Surface	15	HW 9
7	Sep 28	Mon	Wrap-up/Review		
	<b>Sep 30</b>	Wed	<b>Unit 2 Exam</b>	<b>5, 6, 12, 15</b>	
8	Oct 5	Mon	Marine Invertebrates	7	HW 10
	Oct 7	Wed			
9	Oct 12	Mon	Marine Fishes	8	HW 11
	Oct 14	Wed	Marine Reptiles, Birds, & Mammals	9	HW 12
10	Oct 19	Mon	Fisheries	17 <sup>†</sup>	HW 13
	Oct 21	Wed	Wrap-up/Review		
11	<b>Oct 26</b>	Mon	<b>Unit 3 Exam</b>	<b>7, 8, 9, 17</b>	
	Oct 28	Wed	Coral Reefs	14	HW 14
12	Nov 2	Mon	Ocean Depths	16	HW 15
	Nov 4	Wed	Dune Succession & Beach Development	11	HW 16
13	<b>Nov 9</b>	Mon	<b>Unit 4 Exam</b>	<b>11, 14, 16</b>	
	<b>Nov 11</b>	Wed	<b>Holiday: Veterans Day</b>		
14	Nov 16	Mon	Marine Ecology	10	HW 17
	Nov 18	Wed	Resources from the Sea	17 <sup>†</sup>	HW 18
15	Nov 23	Mon	Impacts of Humans on the Sea	18	HW 19
	<b>Nov 25</b>	Wed	<b>Holiday: Thanksgiving</b>		
16	Nov 30	Mon	Climate Change	pp 233-245	

	Dec 2	Wed	Review		
17	<b>Dec 9</b>	Wed	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>All</b>	

\* Chapter reading homework assignments are due before we meet for class.

† Partial chapter (3/11 - pages 387-404; 4/15 - pages 404-408)

## Grading

### GCSC Grading Scale

A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% F 0-59%

### Calculation of Grades

Activity	Number of	Points	Percent of Final Grade
Homework	19	10	20%
Unit Exams	4	100	60%
Comprehensive Final Exam	1	100	20%

\* This point breakdown is tentative. Additional course work/homework may be assigned.

## Course Policies

### Accessibility Statement

Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. Please visit [GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource \(SAR\) webpage](#) to learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email [sar@gulfcoast.edu](mailto:sar@gulfcoast.edu) or call 850-747-3243.

### Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which they are registered.

You are expected to know the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus for each course. In the event of absence, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible to indicate the reason and to inquire whether make-up work is possible. (Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of your professor.)

If your absences in a class become excessive, as stated in the course syllabus, your professor may contact you, indicating that further absence may result in your withdrawal from the course. Your professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission.

Instructors will monitor attendance at the beginning of each semester. If you are not in attendance during this period, you may be withdrawn from the course. You will be financially responsible for the course and a "W or NS" will appear on your transcript. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid.

## Withdrawal Policy

Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. After that, a grade will be assigned. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. It is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.). There are two kinds of withdrawals---student and administrative.

- *Student Withdrawal (W1)* - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal deadline will be recorded as a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.
- *Administrative Withdrawal (W2)* – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy in which case the student will receive a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

## Academic Integrity

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college's mission. Academic misconduct, including cheating or plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. GCSC professors report every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion on the student's records. Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

"Cheating"

includes but is not limited to use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.

"Plagiarism"

includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment as well as the purchase of papers or projects. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by

an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult your course syllabi for your instructor's guidelines of AI material.

"Self-plagiarism"

occurs when a student submits the same or considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion they originally wrote for an English class, this is self-plagiarism. Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"

is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images or code, based on user input. These systems are trained on vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function.

Sanctions for incidences of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incidence and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an F grade (or 0) for the test, assignment, or activity, to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

## Classroom Recording

In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students' having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the GCSC Student Handbook.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of generative AI tools in academic work requires clear guidelines to maintain academic integrity. Please review the policy selected for this course regarding the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly's AI features, and similar platforms for assignments, research, and other coursework.

See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Prohibited Use of AI

*The use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited in all assignments, coursework, and throughout all stages of the work process, such as brainstorming, outlining, or drafting. This includes but is not limited to, tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Grammarly's AI function. Use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties, including a zero on the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college's academic integrity policy.*

## Anti-Discrimination Policy

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

## Syllabus Policy

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail or Canvas announcement when changes are made in the requirements and/or grading of the course.

## Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the [Student Services web page](#).

## Course Technology & Support

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- **Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- **Internet Speed:** Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- **Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).

If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7 at (850) 913-3303.