

From your TAs, Sheetal and Humza:

We both took this course last semester and found it to be one of the best biology classes that we ever took. Dr. Stark is one of the fairest professors that we have had in our undergraduate careers and really tries to make the class as enjoyable as possible.

This class is fairly low stress but you are treated as an adult in the classroom. Many of the things that were hammered into your heads as Bio 104/106 lab students, you are expected to know by this point.

We will give a brief description of the different components of the class and how to approach them to best get that dazzling A.

The class consists of two exams (midterm and final), two lab reports, and the lab notebook.

Lab notebook:

The lab notebook is simply keeping your binder together. Each week just print out the lab before class and fill it up as we perform the experiments.

The labs are all graded very leniently so there shouldn't be any reason to miss too many points in this section. Make sure you are putting in a sufficient amount of effort so you don't get under the skin of your lab partners!! However, this is not to say that the labs should be blown off as you should still know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how it relates to the lectures as these are the fundamentals for what Dr. Stark's exams are based off of. This is by far the easiest part of the class.

You will probably also receive 100% or close to it for the home work.

You may also want to add in various points that we may present (or Dr. Stark/Genevieve) that may not be elaborated on well in the handouts for the exams.

Lab reports:

The main thing to take away is that IT IS NOT ABOUT THE LENGTH OF YOUR REPORT BUT RATHER QUALITY OVER QUANTITY. In fact, there is even a page limit. We will let Genevieve elaborate more on this section since she is the one who will actually be doing the grading. You will be writing two reports from two different labs that we perform. Make sure to follow the lab report guidelines that you should have on the different sections of the report.

You will be doing FULL lab reports (abstract, intro, methods, results, discussion, references) so anticipate this taking a decent amount of time. Make sure to put in effort though as you want to have as much of a buffer for the two exams as possible.

Exams:

The format of these exams did scare us at first since it is 50 free response/short answer questions. Focus mostly on Dr. Stark's lecture and the actual labs. There will be some general questions about techniques on iWORX and anything else we will use but the vast majority of the questions won't be related to this.

The way that we approached them was to first look at Dr. Stark's posted old exams to get a feel for how the questions will be worded and the type of material he is looking for and then created a study plan according to this. This is really the only "hard" part of the class so do not wait till the last day to start studying for them. Treat this just like any of your other lecture exams. Anything that is on Dr. Stark's physiology website (outlines/review questions/Powerpoints) is fair game for the test. We know it may seem broad but really anything that he goes over could potentially show up on the exam. Pay attention to the areas that Dr. Stark emphasizes on his lectures as those will be what he will most likely test you on. The exams were fair and should accurately reflect how much you learned in the class and how much effort you put in studying.

Print out the lecture notes before class as well and take notes while Dr. Stark or the guest speakers are presenting (similar to how you would approach an MCB lecture) so that when test time comes you aren't learning it for the first time. Do not leave anything blank on the exams because there is partial credit. There isn't Tegrity for the class but there are online podcasts of his lectures that we highly recommend listening to at least briefly. An easy way to stay on track with the course is by reviewing the lab in its entirety within a week of its completion; this includes notes from the pre-lab lecture, the in-lab, any post-lab calculations, and related past exam questions from the website. This half hour to an hour process while the lab is fresh in your mind will make studying for exams so much easier, and help with your overall understanding of the labs.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us (at sethupathi@slu.edu or humzaahmed@slu.edu) if you have any questions at all. Good luck and we look forward to a great semester with you all!