



**Thames at Mitchell College
The Science of College Syllabus
Summer 2026**

Course Title:	The Science of College
Course Number:	
Class Meeting Time:	9 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. Individual Social Advisory Sessions as scheduled
Classroom:	NH 201
Instructor:	Shelagh A. Smith, Mystic Aquarium
Office location:	No set office hours. Email to set an appointment.
Phone number:	860.572.5955 x435
E-mail Address:	ssmith@mysticaquarium.org

Additional Readings: As assigned

Required Materials for Every Class: Folder or notebook with pockets, notebook paper, writing utensils, laptop (charged). Close-toed shoes.

Catalog Course Description

In this course, students will demonstrate fundamental skills required for successfully attending and performing in college classrooms. Students go to the Mystic Aquarium to participate in an introductory course designed to support skills necessary for a college-level science class. Working with staff at the Aquarium, this unique opportunity offers a hands-on, interactive experience focusing on:

- Scientific Inquiry—Developing proficiency in science inquiry, lab techniques, and scientific writing
- Field Work—Exploring the Long Island Sound ecosystem
- Lab Skill Development—Advancing scientific skills from observational studies and microscope use to field-based ecology studies and analyses

General College Policies

Civility

It is the right of every college student to be educated in an environment that is free of distraction from the educational activities being conducted in the classroom. To support a student's right to a distraction-free educational environment, students engaged in any type of disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and will be counted as absent from the class.

Communication

Students are required to obtain and use a Mitchell College e-mail account for all departmental and College communications. Students are responsible for monitoring email for classroom instructions. All assignments/information will be posted on Moodle.

College ADA Statement (effective August 2021)

Mitchell College complies with the mandates created by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In accordance with these laws, Mitchell College is committed to ensuring that no otherwise qualified student, on the basis of their disability, will be denied access to course content, materials or activities.

Students who believe they need accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 860-701-5790. Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be provided by faculty based upon disability until the Letter of Accommodation has been issued by Accessibility Services. Letters of accommodation must be updated each semester. If students have questions or concerns, they should contact the Office of Accessibility Services. More information can be found in the Course Catalog and by visiting the Accessibility Services webpage at www.mitchell.edu/access.

Policy on Academic Honesty

Penalties and procedures regarding academic dishonesty are defined in the College Catalog. Academic dishonesty includes the following: using the work of another individual – including another student – as one’s own, using non-approved resources during quizzes or exams, submitting the same research paper for multiple classes and/or the unauthorized use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). Please refer to the College Catalog for the procedure required when an instructor has evidence of academic dishonesty.

As described in the Mitchell College policy manual, “students at Mitchell College are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct.” By enrolling in this course, students agree that they understand and swear to adhere to those rules. Failure to adhere to these rules will affect a student’s grades. Cheating and/or plagiarism on any assessment will result in a score of zero for that assignment, and the incident will be reported to the academic dean. Cheating on the final exam will result in course failure.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person’s words or ideas in your writing. If you use any ideas, thoughts, writing, quotes, or even paraphrase some other writer’s thinking, you must acknowledge the source. Whether conscious or unconscious, plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Consequences for plagiarism can range from failing the assignment to failing the course. Please familiarize yourself with the college’s policy. You can access the policy as well as resources to help you avoid plagiarism on the library’s plagiarism guide at <http://mitchell.libguides.com/CW101>.

Attendance Policy

Penalties and procedures regarding academic dishonesty are defined in the College Catalog. Academic dishonesty includes the following: using the work of another individual – including another student – as one's own, using non-approved resources during quizzes or exams, submitting the same research paper for multiple classes and/or or the unauthorized use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). Please refer to the College Catalog for the procedure required when an instructor has evidence of academic dishonesty.

Anyone dismissed from class will be marked absent for the day. Students who miss two classes will receive an email from their instructor to participate in an academic meeting with the Director and/or Assistant Director of Thames at Mitchell College.

Classroom Participation

In addition to regular attendance, students are expected to arrive on time, be prepared for each class, submit assignments by the due date, and fully participate in class discussions and activities.

Classroom decorum during the instructional process is based on mutual respect: instructor for student, student for instructor, and student for student. Respect for one another is demonstrated by the following behaviors: listening attentively when another person (student or instructor) is speaking, staying alert, paying attention and contributing to class. Sleeping, talking inappropriately, using cellphones, or doing other work during a lecture or video will result in a zero for the day, which will affect the participation grade for the course. No warning will be issued. Anyone dismissed from class will be marked absent for the day. No one will be readmitted without meeting with the instructor beforehand.

Leaving Class

Students leaving class for breaks are not expected to ask permission. Phones should be left in the classroom. Extended absence from class time will result in a .5 reduction in attendance.

Cell Phone and Computer Use Policy

Cell phones are to be put away in backpacks and silenced before class begins. If this becomes a problem, students will be asked to place phones on the instructor's desk. If a student has an emergency, phones should be placed on vibrate, and the instructor should be notified before class begins. Laptop use will be at the discretion of the instructor. If laptops are being utilized for notes, other websites should not be accessed during class time.

Course-Specific Information

Technology Use During Class

Fully charged laptops are required in class. Assignments are intended to promote reflection and critical thinking and provide opportunities to practice written communication. Unless specifically allowed by the instructor, AI may not be used to complete any assignments in this course. AI is often a useful tool, but final submissions must be the original authentic work of each student. If AI is allowed to be used for an assignment, it should be cited using APA citation methods.

Written Assignment Formatting

All written assignments must be typed and formatted using MLA style. Please refer to the MLA Guide on Moodle. Papers should be proofread for spelling and grammar prior to submitting. Credit to outside sources must be cited appropriately. Points will be deducted from your grade for any errors or omissions of the above requirements.

Assignments Submitted on Moodle

Unless otherwise notified, all assignments must be submitted on Moodle. Assignments should be opened in your classroom file and saved as the name of the assignment.

Schedule - Summer 2026

	Date	Lesson	Focus Skills
1	Monday July 13	• Introduction & Expectations • Overview of the Scientific Method • Aquarium Tour	• Classroom Etiquette • Syllabus intro • Critical Thinking/Active learning • Behavioral Expectations
		Afternoon Skill Session: Intro to College Classrooms • Time Management • Appropriate use of technology	
2	Tuesday July 14	• Animal Behavior • Animal Training • California Sea Lion Show	• Notetaking • Observation • Participation
		Afternoon Skill Session: Assessing Popular Science Media • Annotation • Critical Analysis • Preparing for a class discussion	
3	Wednesday July 15	• Overview of microscopes • Make cheek cell slides • Marine Animal Rescue & Veterinary Science • Article Discussion	• Active Listening • Notetaking • Engagement • Focus • Teamwork • Following Directions
		Afternoon Skill Session: Answering Reflection Questions • Using notes to answer questions • Writing complete answers to questions	
4	Thursday July 16	• Introduction to microbiology • What is 'aseptic technique' • Start microbe cultures • Gram Stain activity	• Notetaking • Following Directions • Analyzing Results
		Afternoon Skill Session: Answering Reflection Questions • Problem Solving • Troubleshooting • Self-Critique	

5	Friday July 17	• Shark Tagging & Conservation • Sustainable fishing activity • Water temperature & salinity	• Notetaking • Inferencing • Collaboration • Review and Revision
		Afternoon Skill Session: Reflection Response • Detail and Elaboration	
6	Monday July 20	• Identify and count micro plates • Freshwater Ecosystems & Sampling Methods • Water Quality testing demo & water sample examination	• Following Protocol • Focus and Perseverance • Demonstrating Understanding • Accurate Measurements
		Afternoon Skill Session: Individual Goal Setting	
7	Tuesday July 21	• Animal classification • Invertebrate Lab • Dichotomous Key	• Following instructions • Time Management • Observation • Flexible Thinking
		Afternoon Skill Session: Animal/Plant Identification Lab Harkness Beach • Sustained Attention • Observation	
8	Wednesday July 22	• Whale Evolution (modified) • Beluga Echolocation	• Observation • Critical Analysis • Collaboration
		Afternoon Skill Session: Presentation Work • Planning/Prioritization • Editing • Groupwork	
9	Thursday July 23	Presentation to class	Public Speaking

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at any time as required by the instructor