BIOLOGY 351 – THE BIOLOGY BEHIND THE NEWS

Summer 2020
Department of Biology, University of Victoria

Course Description
An examination of the biological science that bears on current environmental, social, ethical, political and personal issues. Emphasis on how an understanding of the science might inform rational decision-making.

Instructor
Dr. Greg Beaulieu.
Email: gregoryb@uvic.ca. If you send an email, please put "Biology 351" in the message line.

Office hours
I will be making Zoom appointments for office hours. I will also be happy to answer questions by email.

Prerequisite
Third year standing.

Lectures
There will be no set lecture times.

Every week, on the CourseSpaces site for Biology 351, I will post new chapters of lecture notes and an associated narrated PowerPoint lecture. The PowerPoint will be converted to an mp4 file, and it will be viewable on the CourseSpaces site through the Kaltura tool. You will not need either PowerPoint or Kaltura on your computer.

You will be able to look at these materials on your own schedule.

Readings
I will also be posting pdfs of readings that will be relevant to the topics as I discuss them.

Evaluation
Online Midterm Exam (Friday, July 31) 40%
Online Final Exam (Friday, August 21) 60% (cumulative)
The midterm and the final exam will be accessible though the Quiz tool on CourseSpaces. Both exams will be open to you on the days listed from 12:00 noon to 11:59 PM.
Both exams will be mixed format – multiple choice, short answer, longer answer.
Course Topics (aspirational)

Introduction
Seeing reason

Molecules
The chemistry of life, here and elsewhere
Biofuels
DNA markers and DNA fingerprinting
CRISPR

The Human Organism
The immune system in fact and in fiction
COVID-19
Concussion and sports

Environment
Biological consequences of climate change