SCIENCE

T H E S T U D Y O F O U R W O R L D

Mr. Syracuse

Welcome to Mr. Syracuse’s Science class! During this academic year, we will be making a survey of various phenomena on our planet and beyond. Using what you know and what you don’t know, we will discover together the wonderful diversity of living things around us, and look into their inner workings and mechanisms. We will investigate how the laws of physics apply in everyday life, and how that knowledge can lead you to a deeper understanding of just about anything. We will also look at how humans have shaped and changed the globe, and where the future lies for us. I hope to dispel many rumors and un-truths about scientific concepts, as well as provide you with valuable and useful facts that you will find not only relevant but indispensable as you leave high school and become a responsible world citizen. I wish you the best of luck!

**ATTENDANCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

You must attend all classes. If you know that you will be absent, talk with Mr. Syracuse before to find out what you need to do. Assignments not completed due to an absence with a valid excuse (e.g. “I had ebola.”) will not have points taken off, but will lose points with an invalid excuse (e.g. “I got turned into a newt…but I got better….”).

If an assignment is late, no matter what the reason, you must fill out and attach a Late Assignment Ticket to it. These can be found in a folder in the classroom, or under the “important course documents” section of the class website.

Late assignments will be accepted for one calendar week (seven days) after the due date, at a penalty of five points per day (without a valid excuse – no penalty for a valid excuse), including weekends, snow days, holidays, etc. After that, they will not be accepted and you will receive a zero for the assignment, except under extenuating circumstances (e.g. extended illness), and only at Mr. Syracuse’s discretion.

If you miss a test, quiz or lab due to an absence, see Mr. Syracuse at once to make it up as soon as possible. Without a valid excuse, you only have seven calendar days to make up a missed test, lab, or quiz. After seven days, the grade becomes a zero with no chance to change it, except under extenuating circumstances.

**WEBSITE AND HOTLINE**

The website for this class is located at **www.mistersyracuse.com**. You are not required to have internet access for this class. Everything that you need to succeed will be provided in paper form.

The website has all the handouts and assignments that are given out in class, so if you miss a day, or if you lose an assignment and need another, you can download it from the website. It also has interesting links, videos, and other information to enhance your science experience. Parents and guardians as well as students should check it out!

Each assignment handed out in class contains a quick response (QR) code. If you lose your assignment, simply scan the code from a friend or from the master notebook with your mobile device and you will be whisked to the right page on the website. In addition to being able to download and print a new copy, you’ll be able to see any additional resources that pertain to the assignment. You can always access the website without scanning, of course, to find the same information.

You may access Mr. Syracuse’s Science Hotline at any time by calling **607-699-1Mr.S (699-1677).** This recorded message is updated after school every day, and has assignments, class updates, and yet another chance to hear Mr. Syracuse’s voice should that need arise. You may also leave a message if you have a question or concern.

**MATERIALS**

You are responsible for maintaining a 3-ring notebook with space for all your class notes, labs, handouts, worksheets, quizzes, and study guides that Mr. Syracuse will provide. A 2-inch notebook (of any color) will be sufficient. Your notebook must have your name on it in permanent ink so that if it is lost it can be returned to you. You may decorate your notebook in any appropriate, scientific way.

Your notebook will be graded twice each marking period, based on its completeness and neatness. That is, if it is missing a section or assignment, or if it is disorganized, you will lose points. An easy-to-follow rubric will be provided to aid you in achieving a perfect score on notebook checks. A master notebook that contains everything in the proper order will be maintained in the lab for your reference.

A pen and pencil are mandatory equipment every day. If you lack either one, they can be purchased in the classroom for $0.25 or 5 points of your work ethic grade for the day.

A lab coat is not necessary, but is helpful and stylish. If you choose to purchase a lab coat, you may store it in the laboratory. Recommendations and sizing information will be provided in class.

Everything – pens, notebook, pencils, etc. – must be brought to class EVERY DAY.

**GRADING**

Mr. Syracuse only determines your grade. That is, he does the math at the end of each marking period to figure out a number. What that number becomes is determined by you. Extra credit assignments are not given, but extra effort is always welcome. Your grade is determined by a number of different criteria (see below), so take full advantage of all opportunities given to you.

Your grade for each marking period is determined by the number of points that you earned divided by the total possible points. Assignments on which you can earn more points (e.g. labs, projects) are therefore more important, but small assignments (e.g. quizzes, homework) add up and can greatly affect your grade.

Your grade will be made up mainly of labs and projects. There are no tests. We will have quizzes before each lab and at the end of some units. Homework will be given when necessary

Your assignments will never be graded on a curve; you are to compete against only yourself and not others in the class. If you really, really want an assignment to be graded on a curve, you may draw me a picture of a parabola and it will be placed under your paper while grading it.

**WRITING**

Throughout the year, you will be assigned various written tasks. When writing, please be sure to use the conventions of standard written English. Even though this is not an English course, you are expected to be able to write clearly and correctly. You will also be learning about various styles of scientific writing, and how they compare and contrast with standard prose. Please keep yourself aware of these differences as you discover them and are implementing the styles.

When writing creatively, please make sure that you use your imagination. Don’t worry if you think that what you are writing is silly, because often it is from the silliest things that we remember the most. And remember to have fun with your papers!

When writing for any assignment, please make sure that you have accomplished all of the tasks set forth on the rubric, as that is how you will learn the most and achieve the highest grade. If your handwriting is messy, improve it. Mr. Syracuse will not grade what he cannot read.

**LABORATORY**

Laboratory activities allow you to experiment and explore equipment, concepts and phenomena. Please treat all laboratory equipment and time with respect.

ALL LABS MUST BE DONE IN PENCIL. If you do not have a pencil, you can purchase one in the lab for $0.25 or 5 points of your work ethic grade for the day. The penalty for a lab done in pen is five points off.

Music will be provided during lab time. Mr. Syracuse chooses the music and volume. If you have a school-appropriate suggestion we can try it out, but Mr. Syracuse reserves the right to final judgment on everything that is played.

You must follow all the rules set down on the laboratory safety sheet. These rules are in place for your safety and the safety of those around you. Being unsafe in lab is inexcusable, and you will be immediately removed from the room and given a zero for the lab for any unsafe behavior, no matter how small.

**BEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES**

You will demonstrate respect to all forms of life, the school, yourself, the subject of biology, the materials and equipment in the lab, your teachers, and each other at all times. If you think that you have a reason to not show respect to someone or something listed above, speak to Mr. Syracuse as soon as possible, and he will tell you why you are wrong.

All members of the class will follow the guidelines in George Washington’s The Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation. Written in 1746, this set of rules about how to act around other people still provides excellent suggestions on how not to be rude and obnoxious. A copy is available in the classroom and on the website if you wish to peruse it.

Any failure to adhere to any of the rules set forth in this syllabus will result in crunchy detention with Mr. Syracuse. Be warned that if you receive crunchy detention, Mr. Syracuse will be sure to bring something very crunchy to eat, and will chew very loudly and with his mouth open. Crunchy detention takes place after school hours at your home school. If you make Mr. Syracuse drive to your school to chew on croutons while you sit in a room because you can’t respect the rules, he will not be very happy. And when Mr. Syracuse is not happy, nobody is happy.

**MEASUREMENT**

Do not use the F words. Any data provided in ***F***eet or ***F***ahrenheit will not be accepted. The metric system must be used in this class, because it is easier, more fun, and the wave of the future. So get on your surfboard and get with the program.

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

I. All your work is to be your own. If you use the work of another person, that person needs to be given proper credit. Group work must physically demonstrate an equal effort of every group member.

II. If you need to leave the class, you must ask Mr. Syracuse, who reserves the right to say “no,” so that you will be able to learn as much as you can. If you are leaving through the construction technology classroom you must wear safety goggles.

III. All equipment, books, facilities, and school property should be treated respectfully and used properly, and with the knowledge that future generations must also enjoy them.

IV. Mr. Syracuse does not assign grades, you earn them.

V. If you do not understand something, it is your responsibility to ask a question, because chances are that there is someone more timid than you, but who is befuddled for the same reason. You are allowed to be afraid and confused, but only for a little while; you have to find a way to become confident and clearheaded.

VI. Mr. Syracuse will help you in any way that he can. You can always come and see him with a question, or if you need further explanation. Your lack of planning, however, will not become his emergency. If you wait until the day before an assignment is due, there is only so much that he can do.

VII. No food or gum is permitted in the lab for your own safety. Water in closed containers is welcome, but must be put away during labs.

VIII. You must learn. Anyone caught not learning at any time will immediately be taught something useful. Failure to comply will result in further information being provided.

IX. Cell phones and other digital devices (PDAs, pagers, blackberries, iPhones, blueberries, Wiis etc.) are to be used only under the direction of the teacher (e.g. for quizzes, as a calculator, etc.) Any digital device being used for any other purpose will be confiscated by Mr. Syracuse and turned over to the main office for a parent or guardian to pick up.

X. Be in your seat and ready to learn at the beginning of class. Just like on the court, we will go “buzzer-to-buzzer” in this class. DO NOT begin packing up until class has ended. DO NOT line up at the door. If you are late, have a pass, and take your seat without interrupting the class.

Please read the information on the following page carefully and completely. Collect all the necessary signatures and turn in the form to Mr. Syracuse on or before the date specified below. Please note that our very first quiz will be on the material in this syllabus, so make sure that you actually read it!



Please return by:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parents and guardians are encouraged and welcome to contact Mr. Syracuse with any questions or concerns by any of the means below:

E-mail: dsyracuse@tstboces.org

Telephone: 607-257-1551, ext. 338

Postal mail: TST BOCES

Attn: Mr. David Syracuse

555 Warren Road

Ithaca, NY 14850

Twitter: dsyracuse

Mr. Syracuse’s Science Hotline: 607-699-1Mr.S (699-1677)

Website: www.mistersyracuse.com

**TO THE STUDENT**

As mentioned earlier, you are about to embark on a fascinating journey through the world of Science. There will be difficult times along the way, but the policies and procedures set down in this document are designed to make those tough times as fair and productive as possible. These are only my ideas, however. In class, we discussed what kind of expectations you have for me, and any that you have of the class. I will provide you with the complete list of the expectations that we discussed as soon as possible. By placing your signature below, you indicate that you are willing and able to abide by all the expectations in this document, as well as those that we discussed in class.

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Printed Name

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Signature Date

**TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN**

Your student is enrolled in Mr. Syracuse’s Science Class. In order to ensure the safety of your student, as well as his or her right to a productive and appropriate learning environment, I have developed the policies listed above. We have discussed these, and added some others to which each student in the class has agreed. A complete list of these expectations will be provided to your student as soon as possible. By placing your signature below, you indicate that you have read and understand the expectations set forth here, and that you will, to the best of your ability, be an encouraging and supportive person during your student’s study of science. You may contact me at any time with questions, comments, or concerns. If you would like to receive occasional updates on our class, please *clearly print* your e-mail address in the space below. If you would prefer to receive a paper copy, please write “paper copy” on the line, and one will be sent home with your student.

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Printed Name

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Signature Date

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E-mail Address