Rebecca's Advice for College Students

General good college student habits/practices

- Read the syllabus thoroughly, and be familiar with all the rules/expectations.
- Keep the syllabus to refer to when you have questions, and check it BEFORE you ask your instructor about class policies (this shows you are aware of the information that is provided to you, and demonstrates a level of organization that is critical to your success).
- Know the class schedule, including all exam dates, and schedule your study time – studying independently and studying with a partner/group are both important.
- You may end up with exams for different classes on the same day or within the same week. Do not expect instructors to reschedule exams – balance your study time and become proficient at time management. Schedule study time beginning in the first week of class. DO NOT TRY TO "CRAM." Exercise and get enough sleep (this is critical to how your brain functions in learning).
- If your class uses Canvas, or other technology, be sure you familiarize yourself with it well ahead of assignment due dates.
- Get to know some of your fellow students, have their contact info so you can connect for study groups, getting notes when you miss class, etc.
- Become proficient at seeking out resources. In BIOL 2 and 4 you'll be expected to use the resources required for the class, AND find additional ways of approaching the material that are most helpful to you. In some cases you'll earn points for this.
- Listen to your instructor. I promise to be completely straightforward about my expectations and how you can meet them.

How to appropriately use office hours

- ALWAYS show up to office hours prepared. Know what you need and ask for it as explicitly as you can. I will be more than happy to help you when you demonstrate that you are prepared.
- Ask specific questions – this helps me understand what you need, and I can help you more effectively and efficiently. Don't simply say, "I don't get this." Tell me what you do know, or what you think you know, or what specific topic you find confusing, and we can work from there.
- Feel free to use this time to review models and other visuals, especially if you missed a lab.
- Invite other students and hold a study group.
- Let me know if you want to have a private conversation. Generally other students and faculty will be around the lab, but we can look for a more private space if you prefer.

What to do if you miss our class

- If you have a planned absence, be aware of what will be covered (check your syllabus/schedule) and plan to review your notes before returning to class.
- If you are unexpectedly absent, your first step should be checking your syllabus/schedule for what topics you missed, then contact a fellow student if you would like more detail about what was covered, or you need to borrow notes.
- AFTER you have looked over notes and consulted your fellow students, you are welcome to come to office hours with questions.
- Note that in BIOL 2 and 4, absences, regardless of reason, are not "excused." You are allowed to miss a certain amount of class (see syllabus for details).

So, what is this thing called studying??

Studying happens in stages, and *is not the same as reading the book*. While reading is a necessary component of studying, it is only a small part. "Cramming" is not studying, and I guarantee it will not work with the volume of material covered in A&P. Your study goal should be to take things step by step, building a framework over time. If you work through the steps below, you are headed for success!

Stages of studying

1. Prepare appropriately for class
    a. You should show up having some idea of what is being covered that day and what supplies you need
2. Attend lecture/lab and take notes
3. Review your notes
    a. Use your textbook figures and tables to help you with visualization and general concepts
    b. Look up terms you are not yet familiar with, and make sure you know how to use those terms correctly and in the appropriate context
    c. Look up concepts you are not yet clear about, the text or another source may offer a different explanation of material
4. Create study tools
    a. Use your text and other materials that are required for the class
    b. Flashcards are good for small things, like definitions of terms or functions/locations of tissue types (stuff that is more memorization, not so much conceptual)
    c. Visuals are important – draw out a process as a flowchart showing how things are connected, draw structures or copy figures from the text
    d. Once you've gathered/made your tools, you can begin to work on aspects of the material that require memorization (definitions of terms, names and correct spelling of bones and muscles, etc.)
5. Ask questions (office hours, during lab, during a lecture break)
    a. After a thorough review of your notes, you'll be able to form specific questions. Avoid saying, "I don't get it." Do the background work so you know what specifically you need help with. Instructors can be much more effective when we understand your specific needs. If we have a conversation, that helps me determine what pieces you are missing so we can fill in the gaps together.
    b. Don't be afraid to be wrong! I will not judge you for not knowing something, though I will expect you to do the work of learning. Often, learning comes after many tries and many mistakes. I would much rather have a student enthusiastically give an incorrect answer, than be unwilling to say anything for fear of being wrong. Our classroom is a supportive environment where mistakes are welcomed as part of the learning process.
6. Study!
    a. The real studying comes AFTER you have prepared by following the points above
    b. True studying requires noticing patterns, synthesis of concepts, and critical thinking
    c. Pick a topic from your notes. How would you explain that topic to someone else? If you try to explain it (feedback from a study partner or group is ideal here) you will know immediately if you understand it or not. If not, go back to the previous steps – look things up, ask questions, etc. – then try again! Explain things in your own words, while using the correct technical terms (don't just memorize the notes).
    d. You may never feel like you are "done studying." When you are able to explain concepts to someone else, you know the material well enough to take the test successfully.