

**SEVENTH GRADE SCIENCE**  
2011-2012  
**Ms. Sandra L. (Smith) Cunningham**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to the foundations of chemistry, while also touching on topics in biology and physics, within the general context of environmental science. Often, this course will focus specifically on water, freshwater ecology, and the Great Lakes system. In dealing with these topics, our course will be based on inquiry, observation, and classroom discussion. Numerous laboratory and field experiments highlight the course, including a comprehensive two-part stream study of Scajaquada Creek and an opportunity to raise trout in the classroom. These extensions allow students to apply the knowledge that they have gained over the course of the year to relevant, real-world situations occurring outside of the classroom.

The direction of this course will be determined largely by the students' inquiries about the topics we cover. Because this course is dynamic and continually evolving, students will use a three-ring binder in place of a standard textbook. This approach allows the students to add pages to the text where needed, each generating their own portfolio.

**II. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

- A. RESPECT classmates and their property
- B. Arrive at class on time
- C. Listen and follow directions
- D. Participate in class discussion
- E. Homework should be quality work and must be brought to class everyday
- F. In a laboratory setting, students must behave according to the lab contract
- G. Homework and class notes will be posted on the webpage. **Students who miss class are responsible for visiting the webpage and retrieving all material and homework covered during their absence.**

**III. GRADING**

- A. Students will be graded on understanding and application of the material
- B. Students should expect a quiz every week and a test at the end of each unit
- C. Positive participation, thoughtful inquiry, and organization are important and will be reflected in the student's final grade
- D. Other non-traditional assessments such as projects, presentations, and labs will factor into the student's final grade.
- E. Each task in class is assigned a certain amount of points, including homework. Homework is collected each day and graded on this scale: 10 points if it is neat and fully completed, 5 points if it has been attempted but is incomplete, and 0 if it is not done at all. **No late homework will be accepted after 2 days.** The student's grade will be calculated by dividing the total number of points earned by the total number of possible points.