

**SEVENTH GRADE SCIENCE**  
2009-2010  
**Ms. Sandra L. Cunningham**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces basic concepts of biology, chemistry, and physics within the general context of environmental science, at times specifically focusing 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. 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. WHAT WE WILL COVER**

Seventh grade students will begin the year with an introductory section that addresses how we, as scientists, gain knowledge by asking questions. The introduction will also include an investigation into the environment, ecosystems, and habitats. We will then engage in a unit on the principles of chemistry, narrowing specifically to the chemistry of water. The next chapter will deal with specific aquatic environments and introduces biological and chemical water quality analysis. A unit focused on pollution and watershed areas follows, touching on areas of local and national concern as well as government and citizen response to these issues. The year ends with an in-depth look at the various freshwater resources in Western New York, specifically the Great Lakes. This unit allows the students to apply the knowledge that they have gained over the course of the year to situations occurring in our area. In addition to our curriculum this year, students will again participate in raising and releasing brown trout as a part of Trout Unlimited's "Trout in the Classroom" program.

**III. 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. Binders and notebook must be brought to class everyday
- G. In a laboratory setting, students must behave according to the lab contract

#### IV. 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, notetaking, and organization are important and will be reflected in the student's final grade
- D. Each task in class is assigned a certain amount of points, including homework, quizzes, and tests. Homework will be collected everyday and will be 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 trimester grade will be calculated by dividing the total number of points during the term earned by the total number of possible points.