

Help Me Figure Out How to Best Teach Science-1A Online

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Web page: <http://yosemitefoothills.com/Science-1A-Fall-2020> (**still under construction**)

This message is for all registered and wait-listed students for the coming Fall 2020 semester. Its purpose is to help me best organize my online teaching. When I had to switch to online teaching last March, I chose to use e-mail communication via the above addresses and to make postings on my web server at <http://yosemitefoothills.com/Science-1A> . Only reply if you wish to help guide my planning; replies or lack of replies will not affect your course grade.

The school wants to have a record of all student communications so please use the above science1a@yosemitefoothills.com address and also CC your communications to my school address craig.vandegrift@sccd.edu .

Last Spring I avoid using Zoom because I was afraid that its closed-source commercial software was not secure. That turned out to be true, but Zoom now claims to be far more secure and I have now dared to buy a webcam and install Zoom on my home system. So, I can now Zoom, but probably will be quite limited by my slow rural network bandwidth. On hot days, it also can overheat my computer if I use its "share screen" capability. I have never used Canvas, but may make friends with it this summer.

For Science-1A, I require the following textbook:

Physical Science, 11th Edition by Bill W. Tillery (McGraw-Hill), ISBN 978-0-07-786262-6 .

Although this text is very expensive, I like many aspects of its presentations and the flow of Science-1A follows the text chapters dealing with Physics and Chemistry. The last half of this text about Astronomy and Earth Sciences is likely to be useful for when you study those topics. It is also important to own a science textbook for reference after finishing college. **Earlier editions are so similar, you should feel free to buy used earlier editions on-line. The supplementary materials sold in association with this text may be helpful, but are NOT required, and I do not use them.**

The questions that I have that are most urgent are the following:

1. Do you have a printer? I have about 200 pages of supplementary notes that I usually hand out during my lectures. I also put them on <http://yosemitefoothills.com/Science-1A-Fall-2020> , but they are designed to be printed on full size papers and would be very difficult to always view on a cell phone. Perhaps I can get the school to print them and make them available for pick-up at the start of the semester. Here is a sample page of notes so you can see how they look on your viewing device: <http://yosemitefoothills.com/Science-1A-Fall-2020/Handouts/Week-02/Chapter-2-Notes.pdf> .

2. How do you like using Zoom? Most Science-1A students are juggling jobs and family obligations that make regularly scheduling of lectures difficult. I think regularly scheduling of mass Zoom sessions are likely to be impractical, and are probably too demanding for my limited home network bandwidth.

I expect that I might use it primarily by an e-mail prearrangement with individual students for help with understanding some particular aspect of the course material that they find challenging.

I also expect to prepare short video explanations that can be downloaded from my website.

Science-1A, with its total of about 50 students, is a challenge, but I have no other classes or obligations except for work around our small ranch. We do not use air-conditioning so the best working time on hot days is in the middle of the night and the best sleep time is from 5 AM to 1 PM. Using e-mail to contact me may get a quick response in the middle of the night or afternoon, but a delayed response other times. I do not have a cell phone and have no cell phone service where I live. I check my e-mail at my convenience, not when messages arrive. So quick replies should not be expected.

When doing in-person lectures, I prance around to do lots of quick demonstrations and use vocal emphasis and hand waving to make the explanations less boring. That will be hard to emulate on Zoom or in video clips.

3. If you would like to meet me on Zoom for a get-acquainted session, let me know by e-mail when that might be convenient for you. I am 75 years old and learn by reading not listening, so do not expect me to remember everything unless I take notes or you have sent me an e-mail with your notes.

4. In your reply to questions 1 and 2 above, feel free to add a note about things I should know that might help me design the course better to fit your needs.

We are all in this together and need to make this work.

Craig