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BSC 461.01W Biology for Middle School Teachers
COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer II 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Kaitlin Allen-Tapondjou
Office Location: Zoom
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Phone: None
Office Fax: None
University Email Address: kaitlin.tapondjou@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication**:** email
Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours excluding weekends and holidays

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required: Hoefnagels. *Biology: Concepts and Investigations*. 5th ed., McGraw Hill LLC.
Software Required: McGraw Hill Connect®

ISBN: Looseleaf with Connect® access- 9781260542141

Please Note: Course materials and resources are required upon the commencement of the semester. The textbook with accompanying Connect® access code identified on the course syllabus is required for BSC 461.01W Biology for Middle School Teachers. While it is solely the student's discretion to purchase the required textbook with Connect® wherever they choose, extensions on discussions and/or assignments will not be granted due to delay(s) in obtaining the required course materials for BSC 461.01W. In addition to the required textbook with Connect® access, students enrolled in BSC 461.01W must have or have access to a compatible and dependable computer/device and Internet service provider for participation and completion of the BSC 461.01W coursework. A reliable computer/device and access to link with the Internet course is essential for the online course for BSC 461.01W. Students who do not have access to a compatible and reliable computer/device and/or Internet provider may utilize the resources provided by Texas A&M University - Commerce in Gee Library or the various computer labs located on the campus. Please Note: The three-hole punch version textbook with Connect® selected for the course was more economical for students than a hard copy textbook. Students who wish may purchase the eBook with Connect® access from McGraw-Hill upon registering for Connect® assignments through the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online course.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Course Description

BSC 461 - Biology for Middle School Teachers will examine the necessary content for students wishing to teach at the fourth through eighth grade level. This course will combine both content and pedagogy. Emphasis will be placed on the content as expressed in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. This course cannot be used for advanced credit for a biology major or minor.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will understand and be able to effectively apply biological concepts which can be incorporated into their classroom lesson plans, identify the main principles of biology, and become versed in the basic terminology employed in various specialized fields of biology and clarify the process of science. The chapter reading assignments support the Life Science Core Competencies for grades 4 - 8 Science Teachers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

1. Ability to use and navigate MyLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) containing the coursework components.
2. Ability to use and navigate McGraw-Hill's Connect® website containing the coursework Homework Chapter assignments.
3. Ability to effectively communicate in MyLeo Online Discussions for specific pedagogy topics demonstrating critical thinking for appropriate grade level.

Instructional Methods

BSC 461.01W Biology for Middle School Teachers is delivered 100% online, thus students will need an accessible, dependable, and compatible computer/device and Internet connection. Students should check the compatibility of their computer/device with MyLeo Online (D2L Brightspace) and McGraw-Hill's Connect® presented on the course syllabus. BSC 461.01W coursework provides specific chapter readings, assignments, and discussion forums to facilitate students achieving the outcomes/objectives identified for the course. Students will work toward achieving these outcomes/objectives through (1) thorough understanding of the course requirements, policies, and expectations; (2) chapter assignments derived from the assigned chapter readings, and (3) four weekly discussions on curriculum biological topics and their integration into a classroom teaching. The syllabus outlines an explanation of each of the course activities and assignments that include the due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements and expectations.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

1. Students should adhere to the weekly course readings, studying for the course assignments/exams, and completing course assignments/exams.
2. Students should meet the due date and time for the graded course assignments/exams and should not wait until the last minute to complete graded assignments/exams for the course. **The course scheduling allows ample time for all students to meet the due date and time regardless of academic, personal, work, unforeseen life circumstances, device, and/or Internet problems. Late work will not be accepted.**
3. Students should check their MyLeo email daily for pertinent information, notifications, or changes that may be necessitated for the coursework required.

4. Students needing clarification should utilize resources of the instructor and/or the tutors at the Academic Success Center.

Connect® Access and Registration

1. Students need a dependable and compatible computer and Internet access for registration, accessing, and submission to Connect®. Students should check their personal computer and system requirements for Connect® compatibility after registration. Important Note: Students must register in Connect® with the name associated with Texas A&M University - Commerce records. The recognition of nicknames, maiden names, or married names, other than the one associated with their Texas A&M University - Commerce account would not allow for proper application of grades.
2. Students need an access code to register in Connect®. The required access code comes with the textbook if purchased new at the University bookstore. Alternatively, if students choose to buy their textbook from another source which does not include the access code, purchase a used textbook wherein the access code has been previously registered, or choose to use eText, they can buy instant access from the publisher with a credit card during registration.

How to Register for Connect® through BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online Course

Connect® access codes are: (1) included with the Biology: Concepts and Investigations 5th Edition from the Texas A&M University - Commerce Bookstore or (2) students may purchase Connect® with eBook access separately online from the publisher. Please Note: You can register in Connect® and have access to the course assignments and course resources without an access code for a "free trial" limited period of two weeks; however, after the two week free trial students will no longer have access to the course materials without purchasing the access code.

Please Note: The two week free trial is only an option that begins with the first date for the semester. Students should pay special attention to the "notes" included to ensure proper course registration.

The following is a stepwise process for registration in Connect®.

1. Mozilla Firefox® or Google Chrome® browsers are recommended for both Connect® and MyLeo Online.
2. Students will register for Connect® through their BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online course. Connect® includes most course assignments for BSC 461.01W. The only exceptions will be the four discussions which will be submitted through the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online course.
3. Under the Content of the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online course, there is course module entitled "Connect".
    a. Click on Connect.
    b. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on McGraw-Hill.
    c. Click on Go to My Connect Section Please Note: When you register for Connect®, students need to enter the name associated with Texas A&M University - Commerce records for proper grading (e.g. recognition of nicknames, maiden names, or such would not allow grading to be associated to the proper student).
    d. Follow the steps to sign in to Connect® (either registering with an access code, register for the "free courtesy" trial, or purchase access for Connect® and eBook from the publisher).
4. If students experience problems with registration or with modules within Connect®, they will need to contact McGraw-Hill's CARE through http://www.mhhe.com/support or at 800-331-5094. Please Note: MyLeo Online (D2L Support) will not be able to assist with the publisher's website. The course information is as follows should you need to contact McGraw-Hills CARE:

a. Texas A&M University - Commerce (Institution)
b. Kaitlin Tapondjou (Instructor)
c. kaitlin.tapondjou@etamu.edu (Instructor email)
d. Summer II 2026 BSC 461.01W Biology for Middle School Teachers (Course Identification)

Connect® Support
If students should have issues while registering or using Connect®, they should contact McGraw-Hill's CARE through http://www.mhhe.com/support or at 800-331-5094. To avoid problems related to unexpected technical issues, students are advised not to wait until the last minute to complete assignments. The technical support team at Connect® can take care of problems students might incur. Please Note: MyLeo Online (D2L Support) will not be able to assist with the publisher's website.

GRADING

The graded course components for BSC 461.01W include:

1. **28 assigned textbook chapter readings for the semester**. For each assigned chapter reading, there is a corresponding chapter assignment. All chapter assignments are derived from the required Connect® website. In an effort to allow students to best individualize the course chapter readings and assignments based on their personal schedule, all chapter assignments are available upon the commencement of the course with a final due date for all chapter assignments when the semester ends. Although the instructor encourages students to follow the weekly **COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR** for the chapter readings and corresponding chapter assignments, each student will ultimately decide the schedule that works best for the completion of the textbook chapter readings and the corresponding chapter assignments. The final grades for the course will be entered the morning after the final due date and time for the chapter assignments.

   Chapter assignments have the following format
   a. Twenty-five (25) random questions from a question pool for the corresponding chapter.
   b. Allows one (1) attempt (with the exception noted under Connect® registration for Chapter 1)
   c. After submission, shows total score, question responses with scores, correct or incorrect indicators, and explanation. **Note**: The following is a YouTube® link that shows "how" students can review submitted assignments. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yA4oap2nnvM
   d. Late work is not accepted for the coursework for BSC 461.01W Biology for Middle School Teachers. The BSC 461.01W chapter assignments allow adequate time to complete, thus as such students should not find it necessary to miss the scheduled due date and/or timeframe.

2. **"Virtual learning" classrooms consisting of four scheduled weekly discussions.** The four weekly discussions ***do*** have specific due dates and timeframes for submission, thus students should refer to the course syllabus to ensure submissions comply with the course schedule. During the first four weeks of the semester, there will be a specific discussion topic which is a ***graded*** component for the course which has a due date and time for responses. The earned point value for the discussion postings will be based on the following: (1) reflect good communication and writing skills; (2) thoroughness and accuracy; (3) creativity, and if appropriate (4) proper referencing. Students are invited to comment on the postings of other students; however, students are expected to comply with the University's adherence to follow

the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment in their virtual communications. The instructor will be reviewing weekly discussion forums to answer questions and/or to learn along with students.

Weekly discussion topics are as follows:

Week	**Discussion Topic**	**Due Date at 11:59 p.m.**
1	One of the Life Science Core Competencies is describing characteristics of organisms from the major taxonomy groups, including domains and kingdoms and using these characteristics to construct a dichotomous key. The discussion posting for this week is to describe how you would incorporate this learning into your classroom. This could be a learning activity, YouTube® video, or other creative learning tool.	July 11
2	As humans, we are 99.9% alike in our genetic information and the 0.1% creates the genetic diversity between us. Understanding the 0.1% genetic information variance in individuals leading to diseases such as Tay-Sachs, cystic fibrous, and Alzheimer's disease is the focus for research. For the discussion this week, you are to find a recent interesting research wherein genetic engineering is being investigated as the key to finding a cure.	July 18
3	Evolution is a core theme in biology. Humans and chimpanzees share ~96% identical genetic information and on average the protein-coding regions of the mouse and human genomes are 85 percent identical. Some feel the topic of evolution contradicts their religious faith. The role of an instructor is to present not only knowledge but to instill the curiosity and openness of learning. How would you as an instructor overcome opposition to the teaching of evolution in your classroom?	July 25
4	The survival of all living organisms is influenced by and dependent upon their environment. Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) was developed in the early 1940s as the first of the modern synthetic insecticides. Initially, DDT was used and effective to combat malaria, typhus, and the other insect-borne human diseases among both military and civilian populations. In the United States, DDT was effective for insect control in crop and livestock production, homes, and gardens. DDT's rapid success as a pesticide and broad use in the United States and other countries led to the development of resistance by many	August 1

	insect pest species. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the early 1970s issued a cancellation order for DDT based on adverse environmental effects of its use, such as those to wildlife, as well as DDT's potential human health risks. Studies continued to uncover a causal relationship between DDT exposure and reproductive effects. Currently, DDT is classified as a probable human carcinogen by both U.S. and international authorities based on animal studies in which some animals developed liver tumors. (http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/ddt-brief-history-status.htm).Your discussion for this week should focus on a current factor affecting our environment and its causal relationship to humans.	

Grades for BSC 461.01W chapter assignments and discussions will be based on a percentage scale. Following is an explanation of how the course discussions and chapter assignments will reflect towards the final course grade. Once completed, students have access to the individual chapter assignment grades through the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online grade book. The grades from the Connect® website will update to the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online grade book upon completion and submission.

BSC 461.01W Course Grade Determination	
28 Chapter Assignments	90%
Four Weekly Discussions	10%
Final Course Grade	100%

Students are expected to utilize either the course syllabus, the BSC 461.01W Biology for Middle School Teachers MyLeo Online course, or other elected means such as a calendar to ensure due dates and timeframes for discussions and assignments are met. Late work will **not** be accepted for BSC 461.01W coursework.

The final grade for BSC 461.01W will be based on the following scale:
A: 89.5 -100
B: 79.5 - 89.4
C: 69.5 - 79.4
D: 59.5 - 69.4
F: 59.4 or lower

Please Note: The rules of "rounding" apply in determination of the course's final grade (e.g. 89.4 would constitute a final grade of B in the course whereas 89.5 would constitute a final grade of A for BSC 461.01W). Grades are available in the grade book of the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online course. Students can track their progress in the course in "real time" as the points for each test and discussion assignment is reflected in the criterion of the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online grade book.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

BSC 461.01W Course Resources

The following are course resources for BSC 461.01W:

1. Students should utilize the instructor as a course resource if needing guidance and/or clarification on: 1) course discussions and/or assignments; and/or 2) course policies, guidelines, and/or expectations.
2. Students may take advantage of free tutoring provided through the Academic Success Center at Texas A&M University - Commerce leading to BSC 461.01W course success. Students should refer to the course syllabus for contact information for the Academic Success Center.

Course Outline/Calendar

The instructor will make every effort to adhere to the BSC 461.01W course calendar as noted below; however, the instructor reserves the right to change the schedule if a circumstance(s) necessitate. The instructor will send communication of any change(s) through the BSC 461.01W MyLeo Online Course Announcements and/or to the student's University email.

Discussions, Chapter Readings, and Connect® Chapter Assignments Schedule

Week 1 - Monday, July 6 through Saturday, July 11
Chapter 1 - The Scientific Study of Life
Chapter 3 - Cells
Chapter 4 - The Energy of Life
Chapter 5 - Photosynthesis
Chapter 6 - Respiration and Fermentation
Chapter 7 - DNA Structure and Gene Function
Chapter 8 - DNA Replication, Binary Fission, and Mitosis
Discussion Topic Posting (Refer to the syllabus for this week's topic)

Week 2 - Sunday, July 12 through Saturday, July 18
Chapter 9 - Sexual Reproduction and Meiosis
Chapter 10 - Patterns of Inheritance
Chapter 11 - DNA Technology
Chapter 12 - The Forces of Evolutionary Change
Chapter 13 - Evidence of Evolution
Chapter 14 - Speciation and Extinction
Discussion Topic Posting (Refer to the syllabus for this week's topic)

Week 3 - Sunday, July 19 through Saturday, July 25
Chapter 15 - The Origin and History of Life
Chapter 16 - Viruses
Chapter 17 - Bacteria and Archaea
Chapter 18 - Protists
Chapter 19 - Plants
Chapter 20 - Fungi
Discussion Topic Posting (Refer to the syllabus for this week's topic)

Week 4 - Sunday, July 26 through Saturday, August 1
Chapter 21 - Animals

Chapter 22 - Plant Form and Function
Chapter 23 - Plant Nutrition and Transport
Chapter 24 - Reproduction and Development of Flowering Plants
Chapter 36 - Animal Behavior
Chapter 37 - Populations
Discussion Topic Posting (Refer to the syllabus for this week's topic)

Week 5 - Sunday, August 2 through Thursday, August 6
Chapter 38 - Communities and Ecosystems
Chapter 39 - Biomes
Chapter 40 - Preserving Biodiversity

* **Note**: Discussion postings are **due on the week in which they are assigned**. All Connect® Chapter Homework assignments are due at **11:59 p.m. on Thursday, August 6**.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool
https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

McGraw-Hill Connect® 24/7 Technical Support

If students should have issues while registering or using Connect®, they may contact McGraw-Hill's CARE through http://www.mhhe.com/support or at **800-331-5094**. To avoid problems related to unexpected technical issues, students are advised not to wait until the last minute to complete assignments/exam. The technical support team at Connect® can take care of problems students might incur. **Please Note**: MyLeo Online (D2L Support) **will not** be able to assist with the publisher's website or likewise the McGraw-Hill Connect® team will not be able to assist with the MyLeo Online (D2L) platform.

BSC 461.01W Course Student Support

If students have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material or policies, please contact your instructor at kaitlin.tapondjou@etamu.edu

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Technology-Related Issues

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and McGraw-Hill's Connect® containing the coursework components.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements:

- View the Learning Management System Requirements Webpage.
- Learn more on the LMS Browser Support Webpage.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found on the Brightspace Support Webpage.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor's primary form of communication with students will be through the ***Course Announcements*** and/or the University email system. Any changes to the syllabus or other course information will be disseminated to students in these manners via the MyLeo Online course and/or the student's official University email address available to the instructor through the MyLeo Online course. It is the student's responsibility to check the ***Course Announcements*** and their University email regularly for pertinent information relating to the course assignments/exams and/or due dates/time. If a student emails the instructor during a typical class week, they can expect a reply within 24 hours.

Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line
- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
- Proper email etiquette (no "text" emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
- Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail online in the Student Guidebook.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette Webpage for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the Attendance Webpage and the Class Attendance Policy

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03

Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: Office of Student Disability Services

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University

Department and Accrediting Agency Statement:

School of Music Mission Statement:

The School of Music at East Texas A&M University promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression.