

**MVLA
2024-25
COURSE INFORMATION SHEET**

Course Title: Agroecology

School: Los Altos High School

CTE Pathway Sequence (if applicable): N/A

UC/CSU requirement: This class satisfies one of the two science classes required to graduate. At the college level, this course meets the “Subject Area D: Science” requirement for UC or CSU admissions.

Textbook and/or other learning resources: No textbook is required for this class. The Garden and Classroom Laboratories will be our main learning resource.

Course Description/Student Learning Outcomes:

Agroecology is the scientific study of sustainable agriculture, and models the French Intensive method of organic farming brought to the University of California by Alan Chadwick. Human actions are considered sustainable when ecosystem resources are used without depleting the ability of said resources to meet the needs of future generations. This study and method treats the farm or garden as an ecosystem and considers all the interactions between the living and non-living aspects of the environment.

Agroecology will focus on the cultivation of annual edible and ornamental plants. As each plant goes through its complete lifecycle, we will have the opportunity and privilege to observe and document all the stages of its life, from seed to seedling to mature plant to reproductive stage.

Agroecology emphasizes the art of actively creating and constructing our food instead of passively consuming it. This ideological framework can then also be applied to education, entertainment, mental and physical health, relationships, travel, and almost all areas of life.

Course Outline/Units of Study/[CTE Industry Standards](#)(If applicable to your course):

CLASS TOPICS MAY INCLUDE:

- Animal husbandry
- Biodiversity's importance in organic agriculture
- Composting theory and techniques
- Conventional agriculture problems and issues
- Drip irrigation
- Ecology of soil and garden
- Frost protection
- GMOs in our food supply
- Growing and caring for annuals and perennials
- IPM (Integrated Pest Management)
- Journaling (recording data)
- Mulching
- Nature appreciation
- Nutrition
- Observation and experimentation using the garden as a living laboratory
- Plant anatomy and physiology
- Plant classification (families of plants and plant ID)
- Plant reproduction, both sexual through flowers and asexual with cuttings
- Planting calendars (when to plant what)
- Preparing in-ground garden beds
- Recipes for eating and tasting what we harvest

Assessment and Grading (BP 5121 / AR 5121): To ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning, the course instructors implement aligned grading practices and common assessments with the same frequency.

1. Grading categories and their percentage weights:
 - a. 30% GARDEN ECOSYSTEM
 - b. 30% CLASSWORK
 - c. 40% CLASS PARTICIPATION
2. Achievement evidence collected within each grading category:
 - a. **Garden Ecosystem:** Includes the health of your individual plot. Are weeds present? Are the plants all getting watered/irrigation? Have you been controlling pests? Are you harvesting appropriately? Are you transplanting and labeling plants correctly?
 - b. **Classwork:**
 - i. Includes the Agroecology science notebook with write-ups of investigations, journaling, etc.
 - ii. Assessments will be given. They will all be open note (mostly from your science notebook or other sources available to you).
 - iii. An important part of "Classwork" is creating appropriately prepared and labeled six pack seed trays for germinating, flats of seedlings, and transplants (potted up seedlings).
 - c. **Participation:** This is a measure of such things as being on time, bringing materials to class such as something to write with, paper, and your binder. It also includes mature behavior, trying to do well, and getting along with everyone. It also covers your assigned garden supervision task. NOTE: If you are not in class, it is exceedingly hard to get points for class participation.

Participation in the garden is graded according to the following rubric each day:

20%: 1 point. There was a discipline issue that day, or you actively were a bad influence on other people's garden time.

40%: 2 points. You brought your body but chose to spend garden time relaxing instead of working.

60%: 3 points. You did the bare minimum in the garden (watering and transplanting), and then only with "encouragement".

80%: 4 points. You watered, transplanted, and weeded all without "encouragement". You also checked in on your greenhouse seedlings, and cleaned up your tools.

100%: 5 points. You worked under your own initiative, did all the basics, then found other ways to be helpful to the garden community.

IN REALITY: PARTICIPATION POINTS ARE SUBTRACTED FOR ANY DISCIPLINE ISSUE INCLUDING PERSONAL CELL PHONE USE, BEING TARDY, OR EXCESSIVE SOCIALIZING AND LOUNGING IN THE CLASSROOM AND GARDEN.

3. Grading scales:
 - a. **A = 100%-89.5%**
 - b. **B = 89.49%-79.5%**
 - c. **C = 79.49%-69.5%**
 - d. **D = 69.49%-59.5**
 - e. **F = 59.49% and below**

4. Homework/outside of class practices ([AR 6154](#)): We will rarely have a task to complete outside of class.
5. Excused absence make up practices ([Education Code 48205\(b\)](#)): Any assignments or activities missed during normal class time should be completed during Academic Collaboration Time (ACT).
6. Academic integrity violation practices ([LAHS Academic Integrity Policy](#)): It's very hard to cheat off of another student's garden plot. Please inform me if you figure out a way to do this!
7. Late work practices: You will have the same number of school days you missed due to an excused absence to complete and turn in an assignment for credit earned. If you simply didn't do an assignment with the time provided in class, there will be a loss of 10% of credit earned for each school day that passes after the due date. After 5 school days and beyond, you will earn 50% of the credit earned for the assignment. If you want that 50%, the assignment must be of excellent quality!
8. Revision practices: No revisions. I am happy to check your progress on an assignment before it is due - just ask.
9. Extra credit practices: No extra credit opportunities are available in Agroecology.
10. Additional grading practices: None.
11. LMS Used: Google Classroom

Instructors' email addresses:

jacob.russo@mvla.net
benjamin.walker@mvla.net
daniel.rodriquez@mvla.net (Instructional Assistant)

Additional information:

We will spend a great deal of the school year in the garden. It's a garden. People get dirty when they garden and the weather is a factor. You should dress appropriately. Always wear closed toe shoes. A hat that provides shade is highly recommended.

A Few Other Reminders:

1. **NO PUT-DOWNS WHATSOEVER** – even if you're friends.
2. **RESPECT** others and **their gardens**.
3. **RESPECT** your own seedlings, they are ALIVE! No seedling abuse. You grow it, you transplant it or pot it up. **DO NOT LEAVE THEM TO FRY IN THE SUN!**
4. Only **one person** should be out for a bathroom visit at any time. Bathroom visits will not be allowed during the first or last 15 minutes of class. Anybody using the bathroom must sign out and back in, this includes using the bathroom **on the way to or from the garden. Bathroom visits are not expected to last more than five minutes.**
5. **No detours** to and from the garden.
6. **Hoodies** isolate students from the rest of the class, and are often used to disguise earbuds. Please push back your hood before class starts.
7. Cell phones will be placed in the classroom cell phone holder before class starts.
8. **Earbuds/AirPods/Headphones** are not fashion accessories, and should be removed before class starts.

Please stay in or at your seats until the bell rings at the end of class... **no flock of sheep at the doors!**