

Welcome to the First Exam!

BNFO 301: Introduction to Bioinformatics

The primary purpose of this exam is to serve as an educational tool. With this in mind, you should not be surprised if some of the problems go beyond your present abilities and try to connect things that may not yet have been connected. Nonetheless, most of the elements have been drawn from the problem sets and study questions. If you ask yourself, “*Have I seen something like this before?*” the answer is almost always yes. But if you disagree and you think you've reached the end of your rope, *call for help*. Our goal is not to measure your abilities but to extend them.

Don't allow yourself to get stuck! There are always ways of getting through or around a problem.

RULES OF THE GAME

- **Available resources:** This is an open book exam. It is an open notes exam. It is an open web exam. Most important, it is an open brain exam.
- **Unavailable resources:** Needless to say, it is not an open people exam.
- **Major exception:** Ranya and I *are* open resources for this exam and would be delighted to meet with you. You may consult with me any time you feel the need. In fact, I'd be surprised if you can get through this exam *without* a consultation.
- **Ask not what your instructor can do for you but what you can do for your instructor:** Consultations that begin with “*I don't know what is going on*” are likely to end with “*I'm sorry to hear that.*” More successful consultations will begin with your setting forth the problem you're confronting, the steps you have taken to overcome it, and what you feel you need to make further progress.
- **How to consult:** E-mail, telephone, walk-in... all work. To the contact information on the web (click on *Who we are*), add the home phone 285-2447, open for business until 10:30 PM, every day including weekends. I'm usually at VCU on weekends during the day.
- **Where to find the exam and related files referred to in the exam:**
(*relevant material will be e-mailed to you when the time is ripe*)
- **When to submit:** Your responses are to be submitted in two parts:
 - By **5:30 PM Friday, February 18**, you will respond to an on-line questionnaire that asks for each question what, if anything, prevents you from answering the question – e.g., what factual information you see you are lacking. I will respond to each stated need as soon as I can.
 - By **8:30 AM, Monday, February 21**, not later, all your responses to the questions must be submitted Why then? (1) A new unit will begin that Monday in class. A soft deadline might be a temptation to some to trash the class and focus on the exam. We need to move on. (2) We will be rehashing the exam in class on Monday. (3) It is a kindness to have closure to projects that could otherwise go on forever
- **What to submit:**
 - In general, electronic submission is preferred. Hard copy is a distinct second choice, but if for some reason you find it necessary, paper submission will not be refused.
 - If you send one or more attached files, ***be sure that the filename begins with your name*** (so I don't get a mailbox full of files named “Exam.doc”). **Any file submitted whose file name does not contain the name of the submitter will have its spirit extracted and placed inside a doll, which I will then stick pins in.**
 - **Show your thought processes! No answer without reasons.**