Chemistry – Study Tips

- **Attend class.** Attendance is essential to a good grade. It has been shown that the most successful students attend every lecture and lab. If you must miss class, read the chapter/sections that you missed, borrow notes from another student and attend office hours to ask questions.

- **Review class notes and examples.** I recommend going over your notes and worked in-class examples ASAP after lecture. There is a huge difference between understanding a problem I do in class and actually being able to solve it on your own. Reviewing your notes/examples soon after lecture will let you know what concepts you truly understand and those you might not.

- **Read the textbook.** Your textbook has been selected to complement the material presented in class. Reading the book prior to coming to class helps you to better understand the material.

- **Do worked examples.** Your textbook has many worked examples throughout the chapter. Don’t just look over them; make sure you can do them and arrive at the correct answer without looking at the solutions.

- **Get help during office hours.** Office hours have been set aside for helping students. To best help you, first attempt to solve problems on your own, then I can help you from there. I check email multiple times a day, so do not hesitate to email me with questions. I have no way to know if you are struggling to understand important concepts if you do not communicate with me.

- **Homework.** Do your homework!!!! I keep the homework assignments open after they are due so you can use them for practice. I will also give you more problems during the course of the lectures to use as practice. There is a reason why I give you practice problems! I cannot stress the importance of working and understanding how to solve chemistry problems is to being successful in college level chemistry.

- **Learn to use a calculator.** Many students struggle with using a scientific calculator when scientific notation, dimensional analysis, logarithms, square roots, and exponents are involved. If you are unfamiliar with any of these operations, get help early on. Do not wait until the day before the first exam.

- **Study.** The general rule of thumb for university courses is three hours of studying per each hour spent in lecture. We meet 2.5 hours a week, therefore a minimum of 7.5 hours per week of studying outside of class should be expected to do well (grade of C or better). Everyone learns differently – find out what works best for you. Come to office hours, form a study group to work on homework problems, utilize all the resources you have available to you in order to do well in the course.

- **Don’t get behind.** If you don’t keep up with the pace of the course, you will struggle to catch up. It is impossible to cram for a chemistry exam. You absolutely cannot teach yourself chemistry in one day. Remember that the material is taught/learned in a progressive manner, meaning that memorize then forget it won’t work. Each chapter will build upon material learned from previous chapters.

- **Don’t freak out!** Don’t panic, take a deep breath. Many students feel intimidated by the chemistry subject matter and some (totally not true!) horror stories told by previous students. For most of you, the material will be completely new and somewhat challenging, but that does not mean that you cannot be successful. Learning chemistry takes effort, patience, and time but it is not impossible. Get involved – asking questions and participating in class will help you understand the material better and emphasize concepts you need to spend more time studying. Lastly, have confidence in your ability to do well in this course!