COURSE INFORMATION/POLICY/ADVICE

Instructor: Dr. Don DeCoste
Office: 367J Noyes Lab
e-mail: decoste@illinois.edu

Office Hours: Unless otherwise stated, I will be in my office to answer questions immediately after lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00-4:00 pm.

By appointment (send me an email with times that you can meet).

I also have an open door policy as well – if I am in my office please feel free to come in and ask questions.

Course Web Site: Go to chem.illinois.edu; select “Course Web Sites” (on the left menu); click the link for “Chemistry 102B”. Class announcements will be posted and the site includes links to the online homework (Lon-Capa), course information, TA information, lecture slides, and the gradebook

WHEN AND WHERE
Lectures: 2:00-2:50 am Tuesdays and Thursdays, 100 Noyes Lab
Discussion Sections: Wednesdays and Fridays, rooms and times vary

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
2. Calculator: Any scientific calculator (log function required)
3. i-Clicker: Available at the bookstore

GRADING:

Hour Exams (3 total) 35%
Final Exam 35%
Quizzes (6 total) 15%
Online Homework 10%
Discussion/Text homework 5%

EXAM DATES:
There will be 3 hour exams during the semester. These will be given from 7:00 to 8:30 PM on:

Tuesday, February 16
Thursday, March 17
Thursday, April 28

Conflicts for exams will be given from 5:00-6:30 pm on the same dates and must be arranged ahead of time. If there is a problem in scheduling the exam or conflict exam see Dr. DeCoste immediately. If you miss an exam with a valid, documented excuse (see University regulations) the other exam scores will be prorated. If you do not have a valid excuse and miss the exam, you will receive 0 points for the exam.
FINAL EXAM:
7:00-10:00 PM, Tuesday, May 10

The final exam will be cumulative. There is no scheduled conflict for the Final Exam. Do not make plans to leave campus before the Chemistry 102B final.

LON-CAPA (ONLINE SYSTEM):  The link for Lon-Capa can be found on the course website. Sign in with your Illinois netID and your AD password.

Online Homework
You will generally have access to a given homework assignment for at least a week (usually longer) before it is due. You can complete part of an assignment and your work will be saved. You also have immediate feedback and an “unlimited” number of attempts (the default setting is actually 99 attempts but this number should never be approached – ask for help well before this). This means that everyone should have a homework score of 100%.

While we encourage you to work with someone if you are struggling with a particular problem, realize that you will be taking the exams by yourself and need to get into the habit of being able to solve a problem in its entirety on your own. These homework assignments are good practice for this.

Late assignments are not allowed (when the deadline is reached the assignment is no longer accessible). In addition, since there is always at least a week allowed for an assignment, excused absences are not accepted for Lon-Capa homework.

QUIZZES
During the semester you will take six ~30 minute quizzes on dates to be announced and during your Discussion section. The purpose of the quizzes is to help you prepare for hour exams (content and time management). All missed quizzes will result in a grade of zero, unless excused by Dr. DeCoste. In order to receive an excused grade, you must have a documented excuse or a letter from the Emergency Dean stating the reason for your absence. If you receive an excused quiz grade the average grade of all your other quizzes will be assigned for the excused grade.

TEXT HOMEWORK:
In addition to online homework, there are homework problems assigned from the text (see the “Suggested Homework Problems” link under “Course Information” on the website). Attempt to solve all the assigned problems, as most will emphasize different perspectives on a topic. The online homework sets are not inclusive of all the types of problems expected for you to master. This is why additional homework problems are assigned from the text. To do well in this course, you must take both formats of homework seriously.

Solutions to all of the assigned problems in the textbook are available in the Student Solutions Manual for Chemistry. Please use this resource in a mature way. Copying the solution to a problem to satisfy a homework assignment does not provide the practice required to gain proficiency and to perform well on exams. In order to acquire problem-solving skills (numerical and conceptual), independent problem solving is required. This is the ultimate purpose of homework.
Learning Chemistry
Learning chemistry is not a passive event in which you simply absorb facts given by the teacher like a sponge absorbs water. Learning chemistry requires you to take an active role. In fact, in a very real sense you must construct your own version of chemistry and store it away in a form that is meaningful to you.

We are here to help you in every way we can, but ultimately you bear the responsibility for learning chemistry and making it your own. To do this you must go beyond simple memorization of facts to a real understanding of the concepts of chemistry. We want you to learn to “think like a chemist” – to understand the concepts of chemistry in a way that enables you to solve problems because you understand the fundamental ideas not because you have memorized a particular solution. This is a lofty goal – it is not easy to achieve this kind of understanding. So how do you do it? You do it by

1. **listening** to (not just hearing) the overview of the concepts given in lecture
2. **reading** the appropriate sections of the textbook (several times)
3. **struggling** with homework problems
4. **having discussions** with your peers and your teachers
5. **studying to learn** instead of simply to achieve a certain grade

The purpose of **lecture** is not to give a detailed account of a particular topic. In lecture we will generally give an overview of a topic, showing how a particular topic fits in with previously learned material and why the concept is important. While there will be times in which we go over detailed solutions to particular problems we will usually talk in general terms about how to think through the problems associated with that topic. Although there will be a great number of students in lecture, you are still expected and encouraged to take an active role.

The **textbook** is a source of detailed information about a particular concept and about the problems associated with that concept. Understanding the material in the textbook requires repeated readings and thorough study. The text is dense with ideas that require slow, careful consideration. It is a good idea to be familiar with the material in the text **before** coming to lecture, and then read the text in more detail after the lecture.

The **homework** (both online and from the text) in this course requires you to provide the overall strategy for solving the problems. This will show whether you understand the concepts well enough to think your way through an entire problem with no hints along the way. If you cannot do this, you are not ready and have not mastered the concepts.

The **discussion** section provides an opportunity for you to interact with other students and the teaching assistant. **This is not a session in which the TA does the homework while you listen.** In fact you should have your homework completed **before** you go to class. You will be expected to assume an active role in your discussion section. A central feature of these sessions will be group discussions in which you and three or four other students will consider questions that test your understanding of the fundamental concepts of chemistry. It turns out that one of the best ways to find out if you truly understand a concept is whether or not you can explain it clearly to your peers. Teaching is one of the best ways to learn.
A percentage of your grade depends on your attendance and participation in your discussion section, and the completion of your text homework. You are expected to attend discussion section and to show up on time and participate in class discussions.

In summary, to learn chemistry effectively requires that you must take an active role. You must take responsibility for participating in the activities described above.

While we cannot learn the material for you, we are enthused to help you. Please do not hesitate to come talk with me anytime you are struggling. The earlier you talk with me (or your TA), the sooner you can get help.

Also, the staff in Student Services, 601 E. John Street, offers counseling, study skills, and advice/tips for test anxiety. If you need help, please seek it out.

We hope you have a great semester.