

NSM 12X Peer-Assisted Learning (for Chem 6A)

Faculty contact and Instructor of Record: Dr. Jennifer Lundmark, lundmark@csus.edu

Section Leader: *your PAL facilitator*

TEXTS: Assigned study sheets

COURSE FORMAT: Discussion, two hours per week

COURSE DESCRIPTION: NSM 12X is designed to give students the opportunity to participate in conceptual problem solving within the field of introductory chemistry. Conducted under the direct supervision of a trained student (PAL facilitator), PALs use problem sets designed by the Coordinating Professor in your regular class. Concurrent enrollment in that class is required, as problem sets will correspond to information presented there. Students will be evaluated on the basis of attendance & participation in problem-solving exercises. Credit/No Credit; 1 unit

PAL FACILITATORS will provide support to students as they work through problems and may facilitate their success by modeling effective approaches to problems. NOTE: PAL facilitators are students, not teachers, so they should not be expected to lead a class as an instructor might.

WHY TAKE A PAL? Peer-Assisted Learning is a highly effective strategy that is used by dozens of universities around the country. Students who engage in PAL sessions build confidence and experience solving tough problems that will enable them to succeed in the discipline. The highly supportive structure of the small group makes all students feel welcome.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

<u>Students will:</u> Work collaboratively with others to find solutions to challenging problems in chemistry	<u>Measured via:</u> Attendance and participation of all enrolled students will be tracked by PAL Facilitators and the instructor (30% contribution to grade)
Recognize effective strategies for learning chemistry	Students will be evaluated by PAL Facilitators regarding their approach to problems (70% contribution to grade)
Assume greater responsibility for their own success in chemistry	Student approaches and attitudes towards learning chemistry will be assessed by Facilitators

EVALUATION will be based on the following:

- 1. Attendance:** Regular attendance is essential for students to reap the benefits of the problem-solving sessions. Very late arrival may be interpreted as an absence. This will be determined by the session leader and will be defined as the student missing a significant amount of the day's material. ***Students who have 4 or more unexcused absences during the course of the semester will earn a grade of "NC" in the course.*** If you have a verifiable emergency (illness, etc.), inform your PAL facilitator as soon as possible.
- 2. Preparation/ participation:** Students are expected to be reasonably prepared for the problem-solving sessions, which includes (at minimum) completion of appropriate assignments for the regular lecture course. Students are further expected to put forth a

sincere effort in working through the problems, and to work cooperatively with other students during the sessions. Students may be counted as absent if they consistently do not participate in the sessions.

3. **Completion of success-promoting assignments from PAL Facilitator** (examples may include demonstration of organization of course materials, exam corrections, etc.).

STUDENT CONDUCT

Students enrolled are expected to arrive at all sessions on time and to remain for the full period. Students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner during all class activities, and to respect the opinions of other students within group situations.

Cell phone use is not permitted during PAL sessions for any reason. If you have a legitimate emergency, please inform your PAL facilitator BEFORE the session begins, and then step out into the hall to use your phone.