

My Advice to Incoming CHM 4 Students (from Student #2)

In order to do well in Chem 4, you always have to keep up with the material; that includes doing all the readings, homework, practice exams, and more. When you are able to do those, the chances of doing well will increase because you are able to understand the material more and will be able to do well on exams. If you don't do those things, you **will** fall behind in class, and consequently, your grade will start dropping. The homework may seem long, especially with the practice problems, but as you do each and every one of those problems, you get more comfortable with knowing how to do them. Reading and taking notes are a must in class as well, but you cannot just end it like that. You have to review all notes before and after class or else you will forget. Clicker questions are also important because it allows us to see how we're doing in the class on a daily basis. Sure, you can work with students around you, but does that really help you in trying to understand it on your own? That's why you always have to review before and after class in order to compare what you knew *before* lecture and what you knew *after* lecture.

Another advice is to attend every single lecture. When you do that, you and your professor will get a sense of how you're doing through the clicker questions. In addition, when going to lecture, Paradis emphasizes what you are learning by giving examples and by showing you how to do certain problems step by step. You can't just read the book and expect to get 100% on the homework problems or to ace the exams. For my first exam, I did horribly, but little by little, my grade improved. I studied harder, I read more carefully, I did everything I possibly could to improve my grade. I also learned to always read the questions carefully on the exams and even if they seem simple and easy, you should always make sure that you are 100% confident in that answer. If you aren't, go back to it and try to figure it out, if there is still time available at the end. When you check your exam to see what score you got, always redo the problems that you did wrong to understand *why* you got it wrong or why you didn't understand it.

When studying, always have a quiet place where you will not have any distractions. For me, I did the ones I knew how to do first, then eventually went back around to try the ones I skipped over before. By doing the ones that I knew first, I was able to leave some time to try to do the hard ones at the end, instead of trying out a problem I didn't know how, and possibly being stuck on it if it were the actual exam. Furthermore, by doing the practice exams by yourself, you are in a sense, really testing yourself in your strong and weak areas. If you are not able to figure out certain problems, don't be afraid to ask for help. There are a lot of resources that you can take advantage of, so please use them. There is Dr. Paradis, the chemistry HELP office, and your fellow classmates. If you feel like you are struggling, please use those resources. They are there to help **you** pass the class.

In addition, Dr. Paradis always holds review sessions before each exam and even posts up practice exams—do those and be prepared to ask questions during the sessions. Having those review sessions help immensely because it gives you a chance to ask questions about things you don't understand before the weekend hits. That way, you have time to review over the weekend and will be well prepared for the upcoming test.

Some last minute thoughts! You may be overwhelmed by the expectations of the class, because I've been there, but Dr. Paradis sets everything up for you; he has assignments, readings, clicker questions, exam dates, practice problems—literally everything, posted up online in order to help students pass the class. His class is as organized as it can get in order to aid us in passing. If you do not keep up with checking what needs to be done, you are likely to fall behind. So let's not have to go through Chem 4 several times; finish it in a semester. Read and take notes efficiently for preparation, review on a daily basis to understand, do homework and practice to be familiar with materials, take practice exams by yourself to see how well you understand the materials, and get help.