

My Advice to Incoming CHM 4 Students (from Student #7)

While taking CHM 4 I learned that I would have to change some of my old habits to do well in college courses. I came into CHM 4 confident that I would receive a good grade in the class because I enjoy chemistry, and have done well in all of my classes in college so far. During the first day of lecture and countless times throughout the course, Dr. Paradis informed the class that we would need to really put time and effort into this class to do well. Normally, I think "Oh, every teacher says that," but I learned that his advice should not be ignored. I am one of many students that thinks, "I can get through this class by doing things last minute and just attending the lectures." That will not fly in this class. This course is set up in a way that not only do you have to attend all the lectures, but you must also do your online homework on time, do your reading before class, seek extra help if you do not understand the material, and study efficiently for exams and proficiency quizzes.

I cannot stress how important it is to take Dr. Paradis' advice. He lays out to you all the things you need to do to pass, and even receive an A in the course. The most helpful piece of advice Dr. Paradis gave is to come to class prepared, with your calculator, clicker, other materials and reading done. If you do not finish your reading before class then you will miss clicker points for not knowing the answer, and you will not know how to do the homework once lecture is over because you were not able to understand it during class. I admit that occasionally I came to class unprepared, but I suffered the consequences. For example, after forgetting to read I would be lost in class, miss clicker question points, and had difficulty completing my homework that night. It should not be hard to come to class prepared because what you need to do before and after class each day is posted up on Dr. Paradis' website under "calendar." Make sure you do the things he posts on the website, like printing worksheets and bringing them to class or doing multiple practice exams prior to the exam (everything you need is provided on his website).

Some other things you can do to do well in the course is going to the Chemistry Help Office, which Dr. Paradis will encourage you to do. Even if you understand the material, it is helpful to sit in the Chemistry Help Office with your laptop while you work on your homework or are working on practice exams, just in case you have any questions. I wish I would have gone to the help office more frequently because I didn't start going until after the second exam. In addition to seeking extra help, it is important to study after class. Printing out the clicker questions after class and working them out on your own will help you do well on exams because you will know how to do everything, and this gives you extra practice. Also, if you are having trouble understanding things in class, you can do extra problems at the end of the chapter of the book to get good at those. Know your weaknesses so you know what types of problems to practice for the exams.

Lastly, I want to stress the things you can do to balance your academic, social, family, and work life. Dr. Paradis will mention several times that you need to make sure you are studying a certain amount of hours per week. I only studied about 6-8 hours a week for CHM 4, but that should definitely be more on weeks prior to exams. In order to have enough time for all of your classes, not only CHM 4, you should work no more than 20 hours per week. I even recommend 15 hours or less if you are a full time student. However, everyone is different, and I am not implying that it is impossible to do well working this much, but it will be difficult. I have a friend from CHM 4 who worked over 20 hours a week and had a really hard time studying for exams and keeping up with the homework. A few of the homework assignments are really long and require about 3-4 hours of your time. Your family life is obviously very important, but if family members are asking too much of you then it is either time to explain to them your commitment as a college student or take CHM 4 next semester. Social activities obviously should be a privilege. Tell yourself, if I get my studying done, then I can attend social activities. This is something I need to work on because social activities are very distracting! You will do great in CHM 4 if you come to class ready, study hard, and take advantage of extra help.