

ORGANIZATIONAL BLURB FOR CHEMISTRY 0226, 2017

Organic Chemistry, Spring, 2017

TISC UC50

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Recitation Leaders

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Office Hours for MJ by appointment.

General Course Description: Our goal is not to transmit facts to you. Facts will inevitably be forgotten, and have an uncomfortable way of changing with time. Instead we will focus on learning how to “think organic chemistry,” on how to become a good problem solver.

The first semester of this course covered structure, bonding, spectroscopy, and the fundamental building block reactions of organic chemistry: substitution, elimination, and addition reactions. In this semester will cover approximately 11 chapters, 13 -20, 23,24. There is a detailed schedule posted, but keep in mind that the details are certain to change as we go along.

Texts: The texts will be “Organic Chemistry, Fifth Edition,” Maitland Jones, Jr., and Steven A. Fleming, W.W. Norton, New York, and the Study Guide, also published by Norton, by Jones, H.L. Gingrich and Fleming. The Study Guide has elaborate answers to all the problems in the book, and is utterly essential. The text and lectures/problem sessions are separate parts of the course. There will be material covered at length in the book that we do not touch on in lecture, and vice versa. The Classes site will have general chapter and page listings, but these are meant to be neither inclusive nor exclusive. You are expected to forage widely in your readings, using the index as well as other texts. We can recommend Marc Loudon’s fine book, “Organic Chemistry, Fourth Edition,” Oxford as a book that can be profitably consulted for another view on things.

Classes Site: Everything is under “Resources.” Here you will find suggested problems for each chapter, old and current exams and answers, readings, assorted handouts and announcements, and, sometimes, Opportunities for additional Hour Test points. Check it often.

Problem Sets: The Classes site has suggested problems for every chapter. Unfortunately, we do not have the manpower to grade these, so they are not required. However, you will find that doing problems is vital in preparing for exams. You are urged in the strongest terms to do those problems and to do them without the aide of the Study Guide. The

effectiveness of working problems drops precipitously if you do not do them first without the Study Guide. There will probably be too many problems in the book for you to do them all, especially as the semester proceeds and demands on your time increase. One obvious solution is to do only some of the problems. That technique seems easy, but many people are intimidated by this simple idea and just abandon the problems until panic time. There is nothing wrong with doing every other problem! The best way to do the problems is to do them in a group, with each member of the group having the task of doing one or two problems and then explaining it to the group. If you adopt this method, you will find that the “explaining” part is an extraordinarily effective way to learn.

The problem sets, especially the later ones, do not contain “drill” problems. Such exercises are common in the book, however. It is very important that you be in control of the basic parts of the course before you attempt the “think” problems on the problem sets of in the exams.

Exams:

Dates provided by the Deans. Please note that we do not pick these dates. They are inflicted on us (and you). The exam schedule is far from ideal.

Exam 1 Friday, February 17, 2:00-4:00, place TBA

Exam 2 Friday, March 24, 2:00-4:00, place TBA

Exam 3 Friday, April 28, 2:00-4:00, place TBA

On the exams, resist the temptation to over-analyze. Thinking “simple” is usually the right thing to do. As Ted Williams once said, “If you don’t think too good, don’t think too much.”

Unfortunately, on the "Final," NYU, in its infinite wisdom, mandates no more than 1 hour 50 minutes. We must go along with this regulation, no matter how much we disagree with it.

Final May, place, time TBA

Please note that all exams are cumulative. Recent material may be emphasized, but you are responsible for all the material covered so far.

Quizzes: There will be roughly one quiz a week. The best 8 of 10 will count. See Schedule.

Office Hours: Office hours do not work in large classes such as this one. For example, if I schedule two hours, what happens is that 20-40 people show up, lined up in the hall. Each person takes a minimum of 15 minutes. Thus, almost everyone waits in vain. The result is dissatisfaction, frustration, and anger on your part – and mine. Instead, I will

hold an extra question session roughly once a week. I will try to vary the time, but NYU is very, very stingy with rooms, and it is difficult. Basically, I have to take what I can get.

Grades, Grading Schemes, Psychopathology, and Competition: At almost every school, the course in organic chemistry has the reputation of being very hard and, often, destructively competitive. Moreover, it is widely held that success in “orgo” is essential to gaining entrance to The Medical School Of Your Choice. We can do nothing about the last notion, as it is utterly external to our efforts here. **Most Important:** In this course, you are not in competition with your neighbor. What he or she gets has NO- repeat: NO - bearing on your grade. There is NO curve, which simply means two things: 1. There is no pre-set number or percentage of A’s, B’s and so on. There can be a year in which everyone gets an A. 2. Exams will not be scaled to some pre-set number. We aim for a median of about 65 on all exams. Historically, 65 has been *roughly* the B – B minus divide. There are two methods of calculating your score. You will get the better of the two possibilities. 1. We drop the lowest score on the three in-term exams. The average of the remaining two counts 60%. The Final counts 30% and the quiz grade counts 10%, 2. We count all three exam grades. The exam average counts 65%. The Final counts 25% and the quiz grade counts 10%. Your overall grade is made up of 75% course grade and 25% lab grade.

HOWEVER, you must pass both components of the course. An F or D in the lab will not be offset by a higher score in the course, and *vice versa*.

I am going to supply some rough historical grade cutoffs. If this information generates too much wear and tear through complaining, it will not be repeated. Please read the following information carefully. **WATCH OUT!** These numbers refer to the *course* part of the grade – this year, for the first time, the lab will be factored into the overall grade.

ROUGH historical grade cutoffs: Nota bene: There is a price to this information. Cutoff lines are drawn where there are breaks, not at arbitrary scores. Those breaks vary a bit from year to year. DO NOT - repeat: DO NOT! - send me an email that says something like, “You said the cutoff for an A was about 81 and I got a 81.0001 and therefore I demand a grade change.”

Lowest A about 81-82
Lowest A minus high seventies
Lowest B plus 72-73
Lowest B about 65
Lowest B minus about 61
Lowest C about 46-47
Lowest D about 40

Some Things Not To Do:

1. Do not take an exam, hand it in, and then plead for a makeup. If you are sick, or have an academic conflict we will do our best to accommodate if you let us know, but if you decide to take the exam, it counts, period.
2. Do not, after the course is over, petition us to change the whole grading system.
3. Do not, after the course is over, petition us to create a special grading system just for you.
4. Handing in a regrade request is just fine, but do not be combative or nasty. No one is out to get you. Graders do make a few mistakes - that's part of the human condition - but that's all it is, a simple error. Be especially wary of saying "My answer is exactly what the answer key says." It is almost never true, and when it isn't true, that statement antagonizes the re-grader (me). Please do not make regrade requests before you have got your exam back or before the answers have been posted.