Message from the course coordinator

Dear colleagues:

You are receiving this message because you are scheduled to teach CHEM 129A during Fall 2019 semester. I will be coordinating all lab sections and would like to get started early before the semester starts. I attached the tentative lab schedule, syllabus, and additional documents you shall include as course materials. Below I describe some changes that occur this semester that affect all instructors (migration to Canvas) as well as some things that I do in my sections that are optional for you to adopt.

# Lab sections

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Class | Section | Days | Times | Room | Instructor |
| 74827 | 05-LAB | MW | 09:00–11:50 AM | S1-370 | Tamras, S. |
| 74699 | 06-LAB | MW | 09:00–11:50 AM | S1-372 | Muchalski, H. |
| 74828 | 16-LAB | MW | 01:00–03:50 PM | S1-370 | Tamras, S. |
| 75292 | 17-LAB | MW | 01:00–03:50 PM | S1-372 | Munshi, K. |
| 74698 | 07-LAB | TR | 09:00–11:50 AM | S1-370 | Tamras, S. |
| 75030 | 10-LAB | TR | 09:00–11:50 AM | S1-372 | Chen, M. |
| 75308 | 19-LAB | TR | 01:00–03:50 PM | S1-370 | Vazquez, S. |
| 75608 | 20-LAB | TR | 01:00–03:50 PM | S1-372 | Munshi, K. |

# Schedule

The semester starts on Monday, August 19. First day of instruction is Wednesday, August 21. All Wednesday and Thursday sections shall meet during the first week of instruction.

## Orientation and check-in

The first lab meeting should be focused on general lab orientation and laboratory safety and locker check-in will be on the second lab meeting. Please take time to discuss laboratory glassware in detail. We know the function and purpose behind each design but students don’t. One useful activity is to ask students to work in groups and compare and contrast different variations of condensers, flasks, funnels. I found that this activity makes locker check-in lab more interesting and students remember the differences later in the semester.

## ChemDraw tutorial

The department spends a hefty amount of money each year for ChemDraw license which I believe is underutilized. I will create a tutorial on how to download and install ChemDraw. I will also create an activity for that lab for all instructors to use that day. I require that my students use ChemDraw to generate structures for reports and students who take CHEM 129B are expected to know how to use ChemDraw.

## Thanksgiving week

Monday and Tuesday labs during Thanksgiving week (Nov 25-26) are reserved for lab make-ups. Students who are up to date on their experimental work don’t have to attend. However, it’s a great opportunity to hold office hours. No labs on Wednesday and Thursday of that week.

# Canvas

Blackboard has been replaced by Canvas as Learning Management System (LMS) at Fresno State and all courses will use it during the Fall semester. It would probably be better to have one uniform Canvas page for all sections managed by the coordinator but I’m not sure how to do it and I decided that it’s too late to do it now. Thus, each instructor is responsible to create and maintain their Canvas site. However, sometime next week I will finish building the Canvas site for my section. You will be able to view it and even copy to use your section if you desire.

# Laboratory notebook

I will require that my students buy and use [this lab notebook](http://amazon.com/dp/1930882742) for the course. I think this notebook is a good investment for students taking 129-series of labs. It is also helpful for instructors because each page creates a carbon copy page that you can take home and grade on a regular basis and students retain their copy at all times. This practice also reduces doctoring of experimental data, a practice I observe from time to time. If you have questions about the notebook, please let me know. Bound notebooks or blue books are still OK to use if you want.

# Grading

There are 10 experiments for which students generate results and are asked to interpret them. I suggest that each experiment is worth 5% of final grade which gives total of 50%. For each experiment students are graded on notes, results, post-lab assignment. It’s up to you to decide how much each component is worth.

I reduced the percentage allotted to instructor’s evaluation. Education research shows that it is difficult to be consistent and fair with such subjective measures because each instructor has different standards. Also, students’ technique and work ethic is often reflected in the results (good technique = good yield and purity). You may choose to deduct points for tardiness, unsafe behavior, poor preparation or technique. This way the evaluating is more objective, neutral, and fair.

In the past, the grading scale followed a pattern close to the following: A = 85–100, B 75–84, C 65–74; D 50–64; and F <50. The weight of each assignment group is presented below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Grade component | % (each) | Subtotal |
| Experiments (10) | 5% | 50% |
| Practicals (2) | 7% | 14% |
| Quizzes (4) | 8% | 32% |
| Evaluation | 4% | 4% |

Best,

Hubert Muchalski, Ph.D.