

A "Message in a Bottle" to the CH 221 Fall 2024 class from the CH 223 Spring 2024 class

Section 01 students:

Focus on conversion rates from a starting point and/or the finishing point. Take lots of time to understand gas law equations and know when to use them for the correct situations. Most importantly, learn how to find pH, pOH, or concentrations of hydronium and hydroxides when learning titrations. It was a very fun 2 terms with you and the rest of the students! I wish I could have taken you also for CH221!

Whether you are only taking part of the CH221-223 series or the whole thing, it is important to hit the ground running. Do ALL of the extra credit because it could be the difference between a letter grade. Also, if you are confused with a concept, go get help, go to the tutoring center or Dr. Russell's office hours. Lastly, make time for this class, if you think you need to study for a quiz or test then do it. Sometimes you need to sacrifice plans with friends or family if you want to excel in this class. Good luck!

Dear students, first, I would like you to know that you are in good hands. Dr. Russell is an excellent, knowledgeable, and accredited teacher who knows his stuff. At this time, I am nearing the end of my third term of chemistry, and I am about to take my cumulative final exam, which you will have to take if you choose to do the whole sequence. To prepare you, this exam will be over the whole year and not just the one term. With that said, pay attention! Everything you learn from those significant figures you are about to despise all the way to determining the electron configuration of complex ion and the degrees of the angles of their molecular structures, you will need to learn, not just hear. A few things that helped me during my time were notecards, I am racking over 250 notecards now, but you may not need to go to that extent. Do whatever you know to learn the topics such as notecards, concept maps, bullet points, etc. Also, this will be a fun class, there are so many experiments to do. Honestly, if I could go back, I would have loved to actually learn the experiments rather than solely doing them for the grade, which will be tempting at times. I would participate more during class and ask more questions, because likely someone else had the same question but they aren't confident enough to ask it. Don't worry too much about memorizing the information, retention is much more important than black-and-white memorization. You want to be able to assimilate the information so that you not only memorize the information, but also understand it, which is much more important. Also, utilize Dr. Russell's resources! He has a library of lecture videos for every chapter he is going to teach you, he has loads of extra credit which you need to take advantage of and use as many of the concept guides and practice problems he provides. One thing that you need to know is that the things you learn in this term of chemistry, you need to fully understand. And I mean, fully because later you will begin to learn concepts that you will not understand unless you know what you're about to learn. Put in at least 10 hours a week studying just for this class, though don't be surprised when you're putting in 30. Other than that, I am glad that you are embarking on this journey, just be consistent and be prepared every day. I am even more happy that you are all in good hands, take care of your grades and your teacher, they both matter a lot.

Welcome to the most fun, entertaining, educational, and taxing class you will ever take in your community college career! I took CH151 in the summer, and the CH221 – CH223 sequence. I have loved my time with chemistry and over the course of this full year, I have learned that it is SO INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT to get assignments started as soon as possible. Work on the lab report throughout the week after the lab took place instead of waiting till the last minute, complete as much of the problem set throughout the week, do ALL the extra credit possible (Dr. Russell has a ton on his website, and it has saved me), and laugh at his rock band and sci-fi references (*haha* I enjoyed them). In addition, if you get stuck on an assignment, or are even just working on homework, go do it at the tutoring center, and visit Dr. Russell's office hours to receive some sort of feedback on how your work is looking. Make friends in this class and form a study group - it helps with the possible mental struggle and the course load. Make as much time for this class as possible and don't lose your motivation! If you do all of this and just keep your head in the chemistry game, you'll be "taking care of business"!

Chemistry is tough but on the bright side it is not boring! You learn how the things around us work and why certain things are the way they are. I took the entire chemistry series in person, and I found it very important to review and stay on top of assignments right away! Going to class is not enough so make friends with your peers, your amazing teacher who is determined to help you succeed, as well as utilize the tutoring center! Mr. Russell's chemistry website is also extremely helpful especially the handouts, sample exams and quizzes! If you are also planning to take the whole series do not throw your stuff away.. I learned the hard way You got this! Don't give up!

Dear Fall 2024 Class, I know Chemistry must seem very daunting! It does to a lot of students. But Dr. Russell is a very good professor! He teaches the material well and really cares about you understanding it! Now, I did not take the class from the other professor, so I might totally be biased :), But the way he does his class helps you pass! I would give some advice to you all if that is okay with you. My first piece of advice is to go to his office hours!! When I went with my questions, he never said I was dumb or slow at getting the material (even though I was, haha) but helped me understand the material in a matter of minutes! All it took was walking over there during office hours to ask! My second piece of advice goes along with studying. This class needs studying. You need to learn how to study and what works for you. (I am still learning that, unfortunately :) But there are lots of practice problems, practice problem sets, and quizzes. Do them!! The practice helps A TON! When I did practice problems, I understood it way better and felt more confident. When I didn't however, I struggled a lot more. My other piece of advice would be to read the textbook. Several of my classmates never touched the textbook, but I found that it helped. You don't even have to read diligently and thoroughly! I would try to understand the gist first by taking notes and then watching Dr. Russell's videos. After that, I would suggest solving those practice problems. I did not do enough practice problems during my Winter and Spring terms with him. And that really hurt me and my understanding. Sooooo don't be like me, and don't avoid the practice problems! They seem like so much work, or you don't want to feel dumb and like you don't know anything, but trust me, it will pay off in the end. I personally did well

in the Fall term, but after I slacked off, things were hard, and I was busy with my two jobs. But these were good lessons for me to learn. Take my advice on this, though: don't take on too much that you can't handle! You can do this class. And you can do better than me :) This class requires dedication, studying, and effort, not crammed in at once but over the whole term. That is a recipe for success! I was in the face-to-face section, where lectures were given three days a week, and lab and recitation were given just once a week. I think this was really good set up if your schedule allows it. Good luck!! :)

Section H1 students:

In order to understand and succeed in chemistry, there are a few basics to know. First, take your own handwritten notes on every lecture video and read the textbook to fill in the gaps. Second, do all the extra credit you can. The online extra credit is great practice for quizzes and exams and the chemical of the week is just fun. Third, do every practice question you can, and if you get it wrong or refer to your notes, do it again. Practice over and over again. Don't be afraid to ask questions and spend time in office hours and the tutoring center. This class is hard but if you take the time and put in the effort, it will pay off. Don't be afraid to struggle, it will work out. Good luck!

If I were to advise a future Gen Chem student how to be most successful in this class, I would tell them to buy a 1.5" binder. No bigger no smaller. Unfortunately, I learned the hard way. I would also tell them to get a hole puncher to keep all the papers received in one place. Additionally, building relationships with classmates, made everything simpler and enjoyable. Lastly, working ahead is easy in this class and you never know when life will happen, so take some time before the term starts to work on the easier assignments like the paper and presentation. And of course, get your hands on as much extra credit as you can get!

My main piece of advice for incoming CH221-W1 students would be to GET AHEAD IN THE CLASS as soon as possible. Chemistry is absolutely my favorite subject (tied with Calculus), and I learned best when I was enjoying the learning experience. Rather than concerning myself with efficient study techniques or delaying my work to cram last minute, I learned best when I took my time to peruse the textbook, watch several lecture and screencasts, and enjoy my time learning about the subject. This would not have been possible if I was preoccupied with deadlines, so remove that stressor by trying to stay at least a week ahead on your assignments at all times!

To the students like me taking the hybrid chemistry class. I have only 2 solid pieces of advice. When you study, make sure you take notes with you and make a notes sheet for every quiz and exam. They will be extremely useful in recalling all the information. I would also like to recommend writing all the formulas with an example problem in each of them, so you understand where to go during their exam if you are stuck. The second piece of advice is to study more than you think and to ask the professor questions on where to go if you are stuck. I often times found myself going to the office hours before class started to discuss the problem sets, and even just show my thinking so the professor could help steer me in the right direction. While it may be a difficult endeavor, its a worthwhile adventure.

To be successful in general chemistry, it is vital to find study methods that best work for you. For many people, general chemistry is the very first, challenging course that they take in college. Coming from a person that always took hybrid classes for general chemistry, it is important to make sure to watch all the lectures and complete all problem sets to not fall behind. Asking questions can save you from getting missed points on exams, labs, and quizzes. Always make sure to do more than is necessary to get an A in the course. For example, do not only do the required homework but look at extra assignments (practice questions/quizzes). Those questions are normally on quizzes and exams and can help prep you. Make sure to dedicate a certain amount of time per week to review and challenge yourself, it will cement it in your memory and help you to be successful.

Hey, I took both Dr. Russell's CH222 Hybrid class and his CH223 Hybrid class. I have few tips for people coming into chemistry on how to be successful. First, take notes often; even if you had already written it down once, or if you think you know where to look to find that information again, it really helps cement the knowledge into your brain. Another tip is get started on the presentation early. Writing a little bit at a time during your first few weeks will really lighten the load. Also, become friends with your lab partners. It can sometime be a huge help to talk over calculations and post-lab questions with them. Have fun in chemistry! It can be hard work, but the payoff is great and you will learn to enjoy your labs.

In the next sentences, I will provide you with what has helped me get through the tough and fun course of Chemistry, so take notes (if you like). First, be willing to take yourselves out of your comfort zone and talk to your fellow classmates, they will be your "comrades" in arms and can be your saving grace throughout the term. Second, do your very best to make it to lectures, even though you don't have to be there, and even though some days, you will just feel so burn out from life circumstances; Dr. Russell does his best to try to make the subject not boring, even if it is at times. Third, there are many extra credits opportunities that are available, try to finish at least the chemical of the week and the discussion page. Finally, the year will go by so quickly before you know it, so enjoy the friendships and laughers that you can have in the class, if you choose to perceive it as a life experience instead of an agonizing chemistry course!

There are two things that I learned from CHEM221-223: 1. If you don't spend at least 15 hours or more in the tutoring center, you WILL FAIL. 2. Your Extra Credits guide is your bible. Dr. Russell is great, he will help you with whatever you need. Go to his office hours, email him, attend every lecture and lab session, DO ALL EXTRA CREDITS offered to you and you will make it through the class. YOU WILL FAIL, if you don't make an effort in this class."

Section W1 students:

To future student, from a section W1 student: This class will be challenging but not impossible. I found it extremely important to allow enough time to work through the problems and labs. As someone who struggles with procrastination, this was difficult for me, but you will thank yourself when you inevitably get stuck on a problem. What's great about this class is there are multiple avenues to learn and practice the concepts. Explore the website and figure out the best method for you. While I rarely reach for textbooks, the CH223 textbook has tons of worked out problems I found helpful when working through my own. Don't be afraid to reach out if you have questions- MHCC tutoring can be a great resource. Also, don't skimp on the extra credit! I wish I read through everything in the beginning of the semester. There are some great opportunities to make up points. Best of luck!

After being in section W1 of the CH220 series, the biggest piece of advice I can give is to utilize the companion! All the pages from the lecture slides are included in the companion and are fantastic for taking your own notes on. In addition to this, there are handouts that can help to organize key information in a concise way and can sometimes be easier to understand. As far as the classwork, make sure you are watching the week-by-week schedule so you can plan accordingly and know when the class presentations are due. One thing that helped me with this was checking off the assignments as I completed them on the syllabus. My final piece of advice would be to ask questions, and if you get stuck on a problem, email Mr. Russell!

As a former online (section W1) student, I wanted to share some insights that might help you succeed in this class. What worked well for me was working ahead as much as possible, which was made easy by Russell's fantastic website. Having the stress of deadlines (especially towards finals) is greatly mitigated by being at least a little bit ahead of the assignments. One thing I wish I had done differently was to seek help from the tutors and the teacher's office hours sooner. I used to think that tutoring and office hours were only for people who NEEDED it or were struggling but I realized connecting with teachers and tutors makes like much easier. The tutoring center at MHCC is also pretty amazing and is the best spot on campus to do homework. Good luck!

One of my biggest weaknesses is mathematics in academics. I struggled many times this year especially with a burn out. There were many ways I've combated my weakness is taking advantage of going to the tutoring center at least once a week, watch the lecture videos and taking notes, study the notes consistently (consistency is key!), practice problems, use outside sources such as khan academy and youtube (highly recommend The Organic Chemistry Tutor!), and don't be afraid to ask questions by emailing the instructor. I highly also recommend taking breaks between studies (especially in Chemistry) to let your brain rest before going back to studying to prevent burn outs.

Hi CH221 student! This is a message from a CH221-223 W1 taker. For context, I'm a dual enrolled student so this last year I took about 3 courses at MHCC and 4 classes at my high school each term. That, along with my other activities, really tested my time management skills and led to some sacrificed sleep...but I definitely learned strategies that helped me stay productive throughout this year without feeling burnt out or stuck. To learn the material, I mostly relied on watching the screencasts and taking notes on my iPad for later review. This was easiest for me! I was at my high school most of the time so I was lucky enough to have my old chem teacher (who used to teach at MHCC) to ask if I had any questions on the material. For general productivity, I found that having something to look forward to the next day really helped with staying on task. For me, I would decide what I want to cook for breakfast the next day and it would excite me to wake up lol. I think the elevated mood let me work better. I also liked writing down a set time for each assignment/test just so I could keep myself accountable, especially since I was online. I didn't know this about me before, but I work really well when I have a schedule and routine. Of course, this is only what worked for me so take what strategy you need, and GOODLUCK!

As a W1 student, I didn't get the opportunity to learn in person for the lecture and the lab due to personal circumstances, however, Professor Russell made sure to keep me updated with what was going on during the week and when the deadline was. His chemistry website is easily accessible, simple to navigate, and provided so many materials and videos for each chapter. For future students who are taking CH 221 in the fall, I would recommend reaching out to Professor Russell (by email or during office hours) whenever you have any questions or you're stuck on your assignments. For me, I get anxious when talking to my professors, even by email for some reason, but I reached out to Professor Russell when I got stuck on my assignment and he was so helpful and gave hints to where I made a mistake. So! Take advantage of Professor Russell for those who are either doing in-person or hybrid and always ask for help when you need it. Don't be afraid! He's here to help you understand the material better because chemistry is not an easy subject to understand.

Dear student: As someone who has recently completed the CH1511-CH223 online sequence at MHCC, I wanted to send you this message to offer some insights and advice for your upcoming journey. First, online classes require a lot of self-motivation and organization, I encourage you to get a planner to help establish a structured and disciplined study routine. Make use of the online resources that Dr. Russell and MHCC have made available to you, take advantage of the video lectures, chapter guides, and podcasts in the class portal. In hindsight, I wish I had set aside more dedicated time each week to delving into these resources to get a better grasp on some of the core concepts, so I highly recommend incorporating consistent practice and review sessions into your weekly study plan. And finally never hesitate to reach out to Dr. Russell directly, he's an excellent resource and cheerleader who only wants you to succeed and be the best chemist you can be. Remember, just because you're physically distant, you're a part of the vibrant learning community that is MHCC, embrace the opportunities that online learning offers, and make the most out of your learning experience.