



Welcome to Organic Chemistry I

Prof. Chad Landrie

Introduction

Welcome to Organic Chemistry I (CHM 223) at Oakton Community College. My name is Dr. Chad Landrie and I am going to be your fearless leader this semester. Like you, I was once a beginning orgo student and I remember how anxious I was walking into this class, especially after hearing the horror stories from my peers. You, however, have nothing to fear! I'm confident that I can help each of you be successful in this course regardless of your background. You are about to undergo an exciting transformation. This course will train you to think differently. You will learn to apply just a handful of concepts to explain a limitless number of phenomena in organic chemistry. That type of application and critical thinking is why you're here.

While I'm confident in my ability to teach you effectively, your success also depends upon your preparedness, your ability to follow instructions carefully and your willingness to work diligently outside of class. Below you will find a short to-do list that should be completed during the first week. Following that is a cheesy, nerdy, eye-rolling, metaphor for how to succeed in this course: the Simmons-Smith Cyclopropanation, a chemical reaction we'll learn later this semester.

If you have questions, concerns or need help navigating your way through Oakton, don't hesitate to stop by my office (307 Lee SHC at Des Plaines), call (848-376-7439), Skype (clandrie) or send an email (clandrie@oakton.edu). I look forward to meeting you all as we begin this exciting journey.

To-Do List

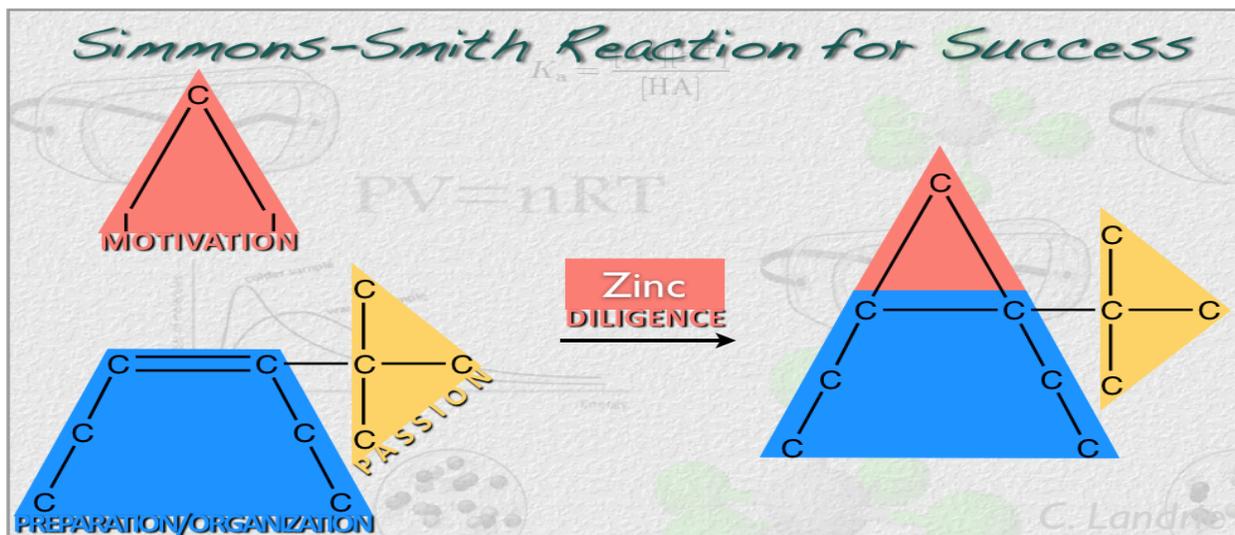
1. Obtain the [required and recommended resources](#) for the course including the textbook, laboratory manual, laboratory notebook and goggles. The full list is in the syllabus, which can be found on the [course website](#) in [HTML form](#) or downloaded as a PDF from the [Download Center](#) or [D2L](#). There are two versions of the textbook in the bookstore. One is a hardcover, the other is a loose-leaf version. The loose-leaf version is significantly cheaper! Both have the same content and same page numbers. We are currently using the 9th edition of McMurray.
2. Decide now whether you intend to purchase your own i>Clicker or whether you will use a loaned i>Clicker that must be returned after each class. For more information, read the section on i>Clickers in the course syllabus.
3. Access the syllabus from [D2L \(https://d2l.oakton.edu\)](https://d2l.oakton.edu) or the [course website](#). Read it carefully to familiarize yourself with the course requirements, schedule and policies. I will ask if there are any questions or clarifications needed on the first day; however, I will not methodically present the entire syllabus during class time. I also will not print hard copies unless requested.
4. Setup your D2L notifications so that you are alerted when a new News Item is posted (e.g., text message). I post several per week during the semester, some right before class. You can adjust your D2L notification settings so that these News items are sent to your email or phone as a text message (recommended). For instructions on how to change your notification settings, watch the [Updating Your D2L Notifications Settings](#) within D2L or on [my YouTube channel](#).
5. Take the [Pre-Class Questionnaire](#). This is required and you get points for it!
6. Schedule an appointment to meet with me for 10-15 minutes during the first week of class. This

is required and you'll get points for it! I just want to chat to get to know you a little better. No pressure. Please schedule your appointment at <http://chadlandrie.youcanbook.me>.

7. Take [Quiz 1](#) and [Quiz 2](#) by the end of the first week. These are both online D2L quizzes and are short.
8. Study sections 1.1-1.5; 1.11, and 1.12 in your textbook. The majority of the first chapter is a review of general chemistry topics and will be covered quickly. I recommend not only reading the sections, but also attempting some of the inner-chapter practice problems, the end-of-chapter problems and formulating a list of questions you'd like to ask during lecture.
9. Print the [modified version of the first lab experiment](#). Read through it carefully and bring it to the first class.
10. Attend the first class! Attendance is required and important for your success. We will be using i>Clickers beginning on the first day of class and your attendance is recorded each time you vote.

Metaphor for Success

As we'll learn later this semester, the Simmons-Smith reaction is performed by combining diiodomethane (Motivation) with zinc (Diligence) to create a highly reactive carbon atom. This reactive intermediate (that's You!) then combines with double bonds (Preparation and Organization) to form 3-membered rings called cyclopropanes (your success, A+). Are you rolling your eyes yet? It's okay; I'm guessing you'll be doing a lot of that as I attempt humor this semester. Anyway, take away the nerdy metaphor and you have the characteristics that in my opinion define a successful student in organic chemistry.



Probably the most important of these is motivation. This is also the hardest for me as an instructor to instill. Teaching content is easy, but empowering students to believe that they are going to be successful in a new and challenging subject is tough. We'll talk more about motivation and success during our first class, but let me get you thinking by asking a few provocative questions:

- What groups of people perform better in chemistry courses (e.g., men, women, African American, Asian, rich, poor etc.)?
- Is intelligence primarily fixed (e.g., genetic) or malleable (e.g., can be improved through practice)?
- How much struggle and difficulty is reasonable in a chemistry course?

- In your previous chemistry classes have you felt like part of the group or an outsider, someone different?
- Do you trust your instructors to help you in any way they can to help you succeed? What has to be done to gain your trust?

Once we are interested, motivated and engaged, then we need to ensure that our environment and study habits support our goals. Enter Preparation/Organization. When we prepare for something, we start by asking questions that test our readiness for a task, such as:

- When is the first quiz?
- What material do I need to review before lecture?
- How do I write a laboratory notebook entry?
- How much time will I need to complete the homework assignment?
- What is my current grade?
- Where is my instructor's office and when can I visit if I need help?
- Are there study groups or tutors available?
- What are the course policies I need to know?

Once we've answered these questions and constructed a list of tasks that need to be completed, then we need to organize the information we've gained as well as our time. We all organize information and time uniquely, but below are some best practices that I believe we should implement.

- Develop a personal schedule. Time management is crucial in ensuring you can complete the tasks for all your courses to the best of your ability. Make your schedule as detailed as possible by including time for class, work, studying and homework. Reserving Sunday to do everything is a recipe for disaster.
- Make weekly to-do lists. There's nothing more satisfying for me than checking off the last item on a to-do list however short it may be. Just the act of making the list helps us ask and then remember what needs to be done.
- Know your course progress. Frequently check your scores and course grade on D2L. See your instructor right away when you are not meeting your goals so that together the two of you can formulate a study plan.
- Reorganize notes into categories that make sense to you. There are many ways the information in this course can be organized; the order of the sections in the textbook is not the only or necessarily the best way. For example, midway through the course you may want to make a list of all reactions you've learned that proceed through a carbocation intermediate. The act of reorganizing notes and creating new notes will help you form connections between topics, which will increase your understanding and retention.