

## CH302 Random Musings April 24, 2008

1. Much thanks to the 13 of you who attended the focus group yesterday. Plans are already underway to implement much of what you recommended with respect to improving the quality of the information access. For example, next year you will be able to link to Quest, my downloads and the e-book from one page. Also, streaming video and free podcasting of the lectures will be available.

2. Time is growing short—here is the rest of the semester in bullet form:

- Today, April 24: musings, a lecture on main group chemistry, and quiz 6.
- Sunday, April 27: practice exam 3 generated and question type review at 6:30 in this room.
- Tuesday, April 29: lecture on main group chemistry
- Thursday, May 1: famous chemistry stuff, like batteries and catalysts, plus liquid nitrogen ice cream, musings on grading and final exam prep, “what you want Dr. Laude to know” forms
- Thursday, May 1: Exam 3
- Friday, May 2: Exemptions cutoffs announced, all extra credits due
- May 7, 8, 9, 12 of finals week –Lunches with Dave to review for final exam
- Tuesday, May 13: Final exam

3. You have three extra credits. Get them in. It is worth your while to see the cutoff for your grade lowered by 3%. I have to have the extra credits by the time I do exemptions, which means, Friday, May 2 at 5 pm. Please make sure you follow instructions on how to submit your extra credits. You have to have the correct subject heading so that I can filter for you extra credits. Go back and make sure you have done this correctly.

4. Note that exam 3 is coming soon and that I will have a review session on Sunday evening in this room. I will prepare a last worksheet that will be a practice exam 3 and have it ready for this weekend.

5. My office hours next week will be in the classrooms as interest in studying chemistry awakens with the upcoming exam.

6. A comment on the new material from exam 3. Note that a reading through the material from chapters 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 is immense, like all of chemistry. So I can't practically make you learn everything. Instead, the last 13 questions will be built solely on my lectures. So it would be a good idea to attend them.

7. Travis offers Nuggets of Grading Truth:

- Truth Nugget the First: I will kill questions as soon as possible and no sooner. That feature is still in the works on Quest.
- Truth Nugget the Second: Quiz 5 grades are uniformly messed up. I've asked the programmers to look into it. We will resolve this soon, but no, you don't get 200 points on a 40 question quiz.
- Truth Nugget the Third: Regrade requests must be submitted no less than two weeks after the assignment date. I would just as soon avoid a huge mess at the end of the semester where people too foolish/lazy/scared to check their grades come whining to me to fix them. So next Tuesday will be amnesty day. You can submit regrade requests late next Tuesday only. Also, requests of the form "I know I bubbled such and such in, but Quest says I bubbled something else in," should be avoided. In 3 years of TAing (and Dr. Laude's 20 years of teaching), I have yet to find a scantron that has actually been misread - ever.

8. **Poetry Corner.** Arbor Day just happened. Did you know we have Nebraska to thank for Arbor Day? Arbor Day is a nationally celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and tree care. It was started by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska in 1872. Although the actual day changes from state to state and even city to city, National Arbor Day is celebrated each year on the last Friday in April. (Arbor Day is not to be confused with Earth Day which is celebrated in many countries on April 22—I think it is possible for Earth Day and Arbor

Day to occur on the same day, and like, wow, I can't even comprehend what that might mean.) Anyway, the first Arbor Day was celebrated in the state of Nebraska in 1872, in response to a state proclamation urging settlers and homesteaders in that prairie state to plant trees that would provide shade, shelter, fruit, fuel, and beauty for residents of the largely treeless plains. Evidently Arbor Day failed in Nebraska. By the way, do you have any idea how much poetry has been written about trees? Ranks right up there with love poetry I think. To give you an idea, I can actually find poetry by species of tree. For example, listed below is some oak tree poetry. For the tree huggers, a poem by Walt. For those of you who have been dying because of all the oak pollen or those of you who have to rake oak leaves, which simply refuse to be raked, a poem with at best a tinge of grudging admiration from Edna.

What category do I fall in? Well by default I am a tree hater because I at one time consorted with a known tree killer. The story is long and complicated, and basically forced me to take a stand (that would be a stand in a criminal court proceedings) for the integrity of science over the integrity of the Treaty Oak. Yes, at one time in my life, I was the only witness called to defend the man who danced naked around Austin's once-glorious Treaty Oak, chanting black magic incantations and pouring gallons of herbicide on the poor tree so he could win back a spurned lover. I got sucked into it because I was asked to argue that the way the herbicide was tested wasn't valid scientifically. I didn't realize at the time that I was the only one in Austin defending a man that most people wanted to execute. It didn't help that as I left the stand, the guy jumped up, grabbed my hand, and said, "thank you for believing in me." Not when it made it on to the evening news. Somehow I still got tenure.

**Walt Whitman- "*I saw in Louisiana a Live Oak Growing*"**

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,  
All alone it stood and the moss hung down from its branches,  
Without any companion it grew there uttering joyous leaves of dark green,  
And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself,  
But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves standing alone there without its friend near,  
for I knew I could not,  
And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,  
And brought it away, and I have placed it in sight in my room,  
It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,  
(For I believe lately I think of little else than them,)  
Yet it remains to me a curious token, it makes me think of manly love;  
For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana solitary in a wide flat space,  
Uttering joyous leaves all its life without a friend or lover near,  
I know very well I could not.

**Edna St. Vincent Millay- "*The Oak Leaves*"**

Yet in the end, defeated too, worn out and ready to fall,  
Hangs from the drowsy tree with cramped and desperate stem  
above the ditch the last leaf of all.  
There is something to be learned, I guess, from  
looking at the dead leaves under the living tree;  
Something to be set to a lusty tune and learned  
and sung, it well might be;  
Something to be learned--though I was ever  
a ten-o'clock scholar at this school--  
Even perhaps by me.

But my heart goes out to the oak-leaves  
that are the last to sigh  
"Enough," and lose their hold;  
They have boasted to the nudging frost  
and to the two-and-thirty winds  
that they would never die,  
Never even grow old.  
(These are those russet leaves that cling all winter,  
even into the spring,  
To the dormant bough,  
in the wood knee-deep in the snow  
the only coloured thing.)