HOW TO STUDY ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

The volume of material covered in this course is quite large. As each chapter builds on the preceding chapters, it is very important to develop a consistent work-ethic if you desire to master all of concepts in this course.

You should plan to spend at least two hours per day (10-14 hours/week) studying the material covered in this class. Past experience shows that this is the best way to go about it.

The Chapter Outlines and Worksheets are designed to help you cover the important material efficiently.

How to "tackle" a chapter and master the material:

1. Skim through the entire chapter so that you have an idea what is covered.
2. Read the chapter thoroughly for content.

Read with in an effort to answer specific questions. Reading them becomes an active search for answers, rather than a passive activity.

WRITE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE — DIAGRAMS, ANSWERS TO PROBLEMS, STRUCTURES, FLOWCHARTS, ETC.

Usually each paragraph focuses on a single topic. Identify that topic, formulate a question concerning that topic, and use the information presented in that paragraph to answer the question or questions you have formulated.

See the Chapter Worksheets for the most important "questions" that are raised in each chapter.

3. Do the problems in the chapter as you come upon them. Answering these problems will reinforce what you just read. [Don’t allow a problem to distract you from your primary goal of
getting through the material. If you encounter a tough problem and can't get the answer, mark it for latter consideration and get on with your learning.

4. Outline the chapter as you go through it. The Chapter Study Guides will help you focus on important topics in each chapter. Why is the material presented in the order that it is?

Try to reduce the chapter to the concepts upon which it is based. Make comments on what you think are the important points of the chapter. Approach the material with the question "What could be asked on a test concerning this material?" Make review sheets so that you can quickly to over all of the material just prior to a test. It won't serve you very well to have to plow through the text again. You want to have the condensed facts immediately available to you for instant recall. Both the process of this outlining and the utility of the product which you prepare will serve you well in the learning endeavor.

5. Do the problems assigned as Student Self-Tests — see Chapter Study Guides. Each self-test contains a mixture of the various types of problems common to each chapter. Working problems is essential to the testing of your understanding of the material. However, it is more important to learn the content of the text, so successful completion of the problems doesn't necessarily mean you understand the fundamental concepts of the chapter. While it is useful to do all of the problems, it is more important that you develop an understanding of the material.

6. Explain to someone else in the class what you have learned. One of the best ways to test your true understanding is to discuss the questions on the Chapter Worksheets with someone else in the class.

7. Some students find it useful to prepare flash cards containing information concerning reactions and mechanisms. I found it useful to use a spiral-wire bound stack of 4x6 cards, thus allowing for convenient studying in any position. Use your creativity!

8. Avoid "cramming" for tests. Careful organization of the material will allow you to calmly review the required material just before the test. While it may be possible to do well on some tests using the "cram" method, this method usually doesn't lead to true learning, which, after all, is the goal in any class for both instructor and student.