

CH 301 Random Musings, November 25, 2008—Turkey Day

1. Have you ever stopped to think that in a class of 500, someone is having a birthday in here, just about every time we hold class. So if that person would like to stand up, we will sing happy birthday.
2. Coach Sherman uses Bunsen burner again to spur Aggies. As an avid lurker on football message boards, I came across this fascinating story on Aggie football and heat capacities. I will let the article speak for itself.

COLLEGE STATION, Texas—A Bunsen burner has turned into a handy motivational prop for Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman.

A few weeks ago, Sherman talked about using one of the open-flamed contraptions to illustrate that hot water boils with only a small increase in temperature, drawing the parallel with players' levels of effort.

He pulled out the burner again at another recent team meeting and heated up a marshmallow, a jelly bean and a steel ball, comparing how each object reacted to the heat with how players handle pressure.

The marshmallow melted immediately, the jelly bean withstood the heat for a few moments before burning up and the steel ball absorbed the heat and lost its impurities in the process.

"You talk about three different types of people: marshmallows, jelly beans and rocks," Sherman said Thursday. "What are you? You take a marshmallow, the heat gets turned up, adversity's in your face and the pressure's really high. Are you a marshmallow? You put the marshmallow over the Bunsen burner and it ignites almost simultaneously. Who's a marshmallow?"

"If a kid doesn't have a great practice, or doesn't demonstrate the integrity of practice," Sherman said, "maybe he even finds a marshmallow in his locker."

Sherman said he tries to come up with creative ways to make points to his team to break up the monotony of the long season.

3. It is a Thanksgiving tradition that we have pie and ice cream. As you can imagine, pie and ice cream for 500 is a bit of a trick unless you all are going to be a lot of help. I plan on us making, serving, eating and cleaning up in less than 25 minutes. So I will need about 50 of you to help make this work. Please come when called.

Step one, I need about a dozen of you making sure everyone ends up with:

A plate for pie, a cup for ice cream, a napkin, a spoon or fork, a scantron.

Step two: I will need about 20 helpers to make the ice cream as well. Come on down. After a bowl of ice cream is made you will take it to a row and send it across.

Step three: I will also need a dozen helpers to dole out the pie. Where you sit determines your kind of pie—but remember it is about the experience, not whether you get your favorite, so don't go screaming for pecan when someone hands you cherry.

Step four: I will need help with the chocolate and strawberry sauce.

Step five: I will need someone to pass the trash bags along. By all means, clean up after yourselves.

Step six: I will need people to explode the Thanksgiving hydrogen turkeys.

4. After pie and ice cream we will have a quiz. We will not be holding office hours on Wednesday or academic communities on Wednesday. We will be back to a regular schedule after the break.
5. Because Sunday evening will find many students returning late from Thanksgiving, I have moved the review session to 9 pm. It will still be in this room and I will cover the 30 question types during that session.
6. Remember that I posted the following useful information last Thursday in the musings:
 - The 60 question types on the final exam (a good thing to learn over Thanksgiving as you prepare for the final)
 - The 30 question types on exam 3
 - The 8 question types on quiz 6
7. Extra Credit Opportunities. I am providing two extra credit opportunities this semester. The first was already presented—the science hater extra credit.

Extra Credit 1—Converting a Science Hater

- I want you to teach a science-hater something interesting about chemistry that you have learned in this class. The person you teach has to say to you, “gee, I had no idea chemistry was that interesting” when you have finished (you can make them say it even if they don’t mean it.). You can choose what you teach but I would recommend that it be something of interest and utility. This year I am not providing ideas because last year 80% of the students used one of my three examples and I was deeply saddened by the lack of originality. This year you are on your own so choose anything from the course and have a fine conversation.
- Submit the assignment as simple text in an e-mail (no attachments)
- Use the specific text written below as the subject heading of the e-mail:
thanksgiving extra credit—your uteid
and send it to dalaude@mail.utexas.edu.
- If you do not use the correct e-mail subject title and provide your UTEID you will not receive credit.
- Due Date: Friday, December 5th at 5 p.m.

Extra credit 2—core course assessment on Quest.

- A second extra credit worth 1% of your grade is earned by participating in a brief core curriculum assessment survey implemented through Quest. Every year the university is required to demonstrate that its students are learning and part of this effort includes assessment of core curriculum courses like CH301.
- This assessment is done on-line following an e-mail prompt from Quest to participate in the survey—you should receive the prompt today or tomorrow. The survey consists of a short series of five multiple choice chemistry questions. It should take only a couple of minutes to complete the survey and when finished you are done with the extra credit and will earn back 1% of your course grade—how you do on the survey (although I encourage you to do your best) has no impact on your grade or your extra credit. Just complete it and you get the points. You needn’t e-mail me to let me know you have completed the quiz, Quest will automatically.
- You need to complete the survey over the Thanksgiving break with a due date of November 30 at 11:59 pm.

Grading: The Cutoffs

8. I remember the glory days when being pre-med meant being able to calculate your grades to several decimal places in your head—this were pre-calculator days, though, and nowadays there seems to be less enthusiasm for the math involved in figuring out how you are doing in a course. Kind of sad.

So provided below is a master scoring table for people who don't like calculating their grades in this course themselves. Note that there are three ways to earn your grade, and depending on whether you did the extra credit, two sets of cutoffs for those three grading schemes. These are the number you should be evaluating as you stare at your Quest test and quiz scores. Don't use the Quest's idea of a grade. It is not based on my grading schemes.

course grade	no extra credit submitted			two extra credit submitted—2% reduction		
	exemption (700 points)	cumulative (1000 points)	final (300 points)	exemption (700 points)	cumulative (1000 points)	final (300 points)
A	630	900	270	616	880	264
B	x	800	240	x	780	234
C	x	700	210	x	680	204
D	x	600	180	x	580	174
F	x	<600	<180	x	<580	<174

Grading: Information on Exemptions.

9. When your score for Exam 3 is posted on Wednesday evening next week, the scores for exams 1-3 and quizzes 1 through 6 should be available to you--this should be enough information to determine exemption unless you have grading errors that have resulted in incomplete or inaccurate Quest scores.

10. Remember that in order to be exempt from the final you must score either 630 or 616 points out of 700 depending on whether you turned in the extra credit. The point totals to be used are the three 180 point exams and your four highest of six quizzes (a cumulative score of 700 points). Please don't use all six quizzes in determining your exemption status!!!!

11. If you are exempt, you will receive an A for the course without taking the final. Period.

12. There are a few special circumstances (people adding the course late or missed quizzes for nonacademic reasons) for which I will allow fewer than 630 or 616 points to be exempt.

13. Some of you are concerned that you may miss the exemption by just a few points. It is possible that I will lower the cutoff a bit but I won't know till all the grades are in. I typically have about 180 students earn exemption and that will be true in this class as well. Please don't hassle me about this and contact me only if you believe there was a grading error in determining your exemption status.

Grading: Information for those taking the cumulative final exam.

14. If you are not exempt, you must take the final exam.

15. Don't worry about which grading scheme I will use when you take the final exam. If the final exam for everything gives you a higher score, I will use that. If the cumulative score with the final gives you a better

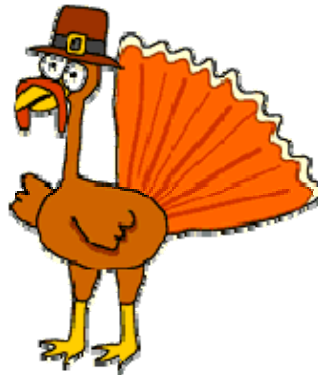
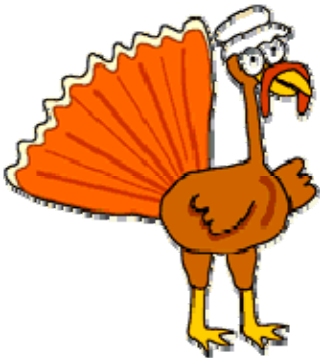
grade, I will use that instead. Unless you are exempt, there is no grading scheme that doesn't include your final exam score.

16. Public Service Announcements.

On December 1st, 7pm at the FAC Atrium(419), there will be public lecture by Twegie Jackson Kaguri, Director of the Nyaka School for AIDS Orphans in Uganda (www.nyakaschool.org), and a program on World AIDS Day. There will be variety of food, including pizza and Tiff's cookies, and prizes will hand it out at the end. This event is organized by committees from a UGS course, The HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Global and Local Perspectives, to help honor World AIDS Day, and in hopes to support the Nyaka School on their education for AIDS orphans.

17. Poetry corner. A return to happy poetry. By the way, you are incredibly blessed to be sitting in this little corner of the world at UT eating pie and ice cream and watching hydrogen turkeys explode and heading home for the holidays soon. Thanksgiving is a good time for remembering this perspective. Travel safely and study hard (or hardly study, your call). Finals are almost upon us.

And now, a little Thanksgiving ditty:



A turkey is a funny bird,
Its head goes wobble, wobble,
All it knows is just one word,
"Gobble, gobble, gobble."