

A Very Brief Random Musings—April 29, 2008

1. My deal with the Registrar is that I can offer the make-up on Sunday night but only to students with a validated conflict. So you are expected to take it Thursday night unless you e-mail me with a really good excuse. Only students who have my approval to take it Sunday will be allowed into the examination room.

2. I have put an updated review of the 30 question types on my web site under the course notes. It includes new material and hints on main group chemistry that should reduce your struggle in learning the material on exam 3.

3. I will have a massive random musings for the class on Thursday to explain everything about the upcoming exams, finals, grading. Also I will give you a chance to indicate to me whether there is anything I need to know about grades or nonacademic stuff on a form you will return. Oh, and liquid nitrogen ice cream.

4. A chance for a scholarly lecture:

Physicist Kip Thorne

When: 3:00pm Friday, May 2nd

Where: WEL 2.224

There is a Warped Side to our Universe: objects and phenomena that are made from warped space and warped time. Examples include black holes and the big-bang singularity from which the Universe was born. The ideal tool for probing this mysterious Warped Side is radiation that itself is made from warped space-time: "gravitational waves". Thorne will describe the warped side of our universe and the quest to probe it with gravitational waves.

In the 1960s Thorne studied under the tutelage of the late John A. Wheeler at Princeton. Today he is the current Feynman Professor of Theoretical Physics at Caltech and one of the world's leading experts on the astrophysical implications of Einstein's theory of general relativity. A longtime friend of Stephen Hawking and Carl Sagan, Thorne's ideas about wormholes and time-travel have been used in the movie Contact and in the upcoming film produced by Steven Spielberg, Interstellar. Not only is Thorne a renowned scientist, he is also an exceptional teacher. He has long been applauded for his ability to communicate abstract astrophysical ideas in a way that is easy to understand and entertaining to listen to.

With John A. Wheeler and C.W. Misner, Thorne authored the definitive textbook Gravitation. Kip Thorne also wrote the best-selling book Black Holes and Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy. Thorne was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1973 and (as a foreign member) the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1999.

5. Poetry Corner. As a class you have set the all time record for writing poetry about my class. I guess I feel honored except that the poetry has titles like "Pronounced Dead".

Pronounced Dead as of May 13th 2008

As the death of finals creeps over me
I sit and wonder how this can be
Why did I not try a LITTLE harder to exempt
Study a LITTLE bit more, the pain would have been temp.
But now, I must suffer through this chemistry smog
It's hurting my brain; I need a catalytic converter to clear the fog
And I'm regretting all of those stupid decisions
Because now I have no choice but to learn about molecular collisions
And rates, and methods of reactions galore
Good thing Ochem isn't as hardcore
What keeps me going is after this test I will be free once again
To live my life, go out and have some fun with my friends!
I'll say goodbye; RIP general chemistry 302....
Until the MCAT where I will meet the ghost of you.
--Anonymous

