

# Organic Chemistry:

It Doesn't Have to Be THAT Bad!

The three elements to success in Orgo:

- \* **Understanding**
- \* **Memory**
- \* **Reasoning Skills**

Focus on **understanding** key concepts that define the reactions and formulas you ought to memorize.

If you know the principles behind the reactions, then remembering the specific reaction will not be as critical.

**Memory** depends on **understanding** *first*, then converting the ideas in your short-term memory into stored, long-term memory.

In order to do this effectively:

- 1) Read the text for lecture the night before: it's not that long (10-15pp) and will benefit your understanding during lecture.
- 2) Take comprehensive notes in class (it also helps if you *go to class!*)
- 3) Review those notes within 24 hours. This reaffirms what you learned.

**Reasoning Skills** develop by doing problems frequently.

Extra Tips:

- 1) **Don't pull all-nighters for exams!**
- 2) Consistently keep up with the work: review your notes, do problems, read the book, attend lecture. Don't fall behind because rushing and cramming is useless.
- 3) Study your notes and the text, but **pay particular attention to what the professor has lectured on**; if he presented a concept that was not in the text, learn it!  
When in doubt, do things the professor's way, and not according to the book.
- 4) Do problems in the book without using the answer key/study guide until you've finished. Keep trying to answer a difficult problem and don't look at the answer until you've completed it: this will store the problem in your memory longer and be more helpful in test taking.