Instructor Introduction:

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Hi, I'm happy to meet you. I'm Jan your professor for this course. I'm a native of Oregon having grown up in Ontario (on the Idaho border) where my parents still live on the family farm there.

After graduating from Ontario High School I went to George Fox University (in Newberg, OR) and graduated with a B.S. in Chemistry and a minor in Math.

After college I attended Oregon State University where I earned a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry.

My Ph.D is specifically in synthetic organic chemistry specializing in the synthesis of natural products.

What that mean is that compounds found in nature (natural products) that have some kind of biological activity of interest (such as an herb that relieves pain, a tree bark that causes tumor cells to die, or a leaf that insects won’t eat etc.) get identified and then made (synthesized) by synthetic organic chemists. Once they are made the compounds may be studied and tested and end up used in medicine or agriculture or wherever.

My fellow grad-mates, if not working in education, are making big bucks in the high stress pharmaceutical industry.

In graduate school I worked specifically on a family of molecules called the Mycosporins. They are sporulating agents found in the fungi that grow on apples and pears. They are also found in marine organisms and act to protect them from ultraviolet light. They have use/potential to protect humans from UV light and learning how to inhibit them can stop our apples and pears from rotting.

I've been teaching chemistry at Chemeketa Community College since 1994. Mostly Organic chemistry and the General, Organic, & Biochemistry courses offered here.

Before Chemeketa I started my teaching career by taking short term assignments replacing professors at 4 year liberal arts colleges who were taking sabbatical leaves to study or do research.
My first teaching stint was 3 years at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; a Norwegian (Norvejian 😊) Lutheran School. (Did you n-oh-tice the accent there?) That was a great learning experience for me and a terrific introduction to both teaching and Midwest culture.

Next I taught 2 years at Wheaton College in the suburbs of Chi-aaaa-go, IL; another great experience. As I was feeling a little far from home I came back to Oregon and took a 1 year sabbatical replacement job at Pacific University in Forrest Grove and then taught 3 years at George Fox University.

I live in Newberg, Oregon. I am single, never married (right man just hasn’t come along yet) but I adopted a little girl from India in 2003. She was almost 4 at the time. She is a delight and we are a great team.

I love my job but also I love having holidays and summers to do other things. I am a Christian. God is important in my life. I travel a lot, mostly doing short term ministry type things. I have friends all over the world with various mission organizations that I love to go visit and help. I’ve taught English in Czech Republic, science to missionary kids and chemistry to health students at a mission hospital in Kenya. I’ve also helped friends in Papua New Guinea, Hong Kong, Chad, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Russia, India, & Mexico. I’ve done whatever needs to be done from just encouraging, playing with orphans, sewing, office work, to even furniture upholstery etc. My daughter is a great traveler and now goes right along with me fitting into whatever culture she’s in.

I love chemistry. I love to know how things work and understand the nature around me.

I love teaching and helping students to understand the world as well. It’s much more rewarding than being alone breathing fumes in a research lab for industry.

I love my students (most of the time😊) and am glad for this terrific job that blends fun science with interesting people interactions.

I hope that as the year progresses you also will catch sight of the beauty and order of the created world as we “brave the elements” together.

😊 Jan