CHEM 321: Guidelines for writing the **Introduction** section of a lab report

**GOAL:** Preface the report with the scientific importance of the experiment.

The introduction section answers the question: “What were the objectives that this experiment was designed to address, and how was this done?” *Note: Do not explicitly type out this question in your report.*

To answer this question, you should

1. Explain the *chemical concept(s)* that were illustrated in the experiment (these should be phrased as generic goals)

2. Mention by name, and give the purpose of, any *NEW synthesis, purification, and characterization techniques* introduced in the laboratory or explicitly listed in the protocol. A *chart that shows most of the common organic chemistry techniques is available on the course website:* [http://www.linfield.edu/chem/assets/files/Courses/CHEM%20321/Flowchart_tech.pdf](http://www.linfield.edu/chem/assets/files/Courses/CHEM%20321/Flowchart_tech.pdf).

3. *Briefly outline* the specific method used to illustrate the goals in this particular experiment

4. Include the balanced chemical reaction if there is one (no spectator ions). It should be formatted as a figure (see “Figure Guidelines” document on course website). Later in the semester, the balanced chemical reaction will take the form of a “reaction mechanism,” a concept that you will learn in due course.

Use third person passive voice in scientific writing, *i.e.* do not use pronouns like: I, my, we, our, etc.

- **Wrong:** I thought one objective we had for this experiment is to illustrate an E2 reaction.
- **Right:** One objective of this experiment was illustration of an E2 reaction.

The only exception to this would be a case where you personally need to claim *originality* of approach or interpretation of results.