

PLSC 101 - Introduction to Political Science SPRING 2022

Instructor: Dr. Syed Rashid Munir

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Office: Room 113-A, E-Block

Office Hours: Monday from 3pm to 4pm (or by appointment)

Required Textbooks

A Course Pack for PLSC 101, comprising of the readings for this course, is available on Moodle. No other textbooks are required.

Course Assessment

This course will assess the students through four different instruments. The breakdown for the course's assignments is given below.

| Assignment Name | Marks Percentage | Mode of Submission |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Attendance & Class Participation | 20% | In-person and online |
| Quizzes (4) | 20% | Online only |
| Midterm Exam | 25% | Online only |
| Final Exam | 35% | Online only |

- Weekly Class Discussions & Participation:** Each week students will participate in class discussions when they are on-campus. These discussions will be held on Moodle through a discussion forum for students who have permission from the Vice Rector's Office (VRO) to take the entire course online. Excluding any special weeks listed in the Reading Schedule, all other weeks will have class discussions that will be graded. Reading the assigned texts before coming to class is required, and students are expected to take part in class discussions based on their understanding of the readings. Before each class, the instructor will ask students to provide questions they have for the week's readings individually, which will be subsequently addressed during the lecture. Students can also post questions in a separate 'Questions' thread on Moodle.

Students' Responsibilities:

Each student must have questions ready that pertain to the week's readings. The instructor may ask each student individually to provide her/his questions before the start of each class. Each student must participate in class and respond to discussion questions (in-person or online on Moodle if semester is being taken completely online). **Completely online students are responsible for participation through Moodle discussion forums only; blended mode students will get their attendance and discussion graded in-class only.** If course switches to fully online instruction for some reason,

then discussions will be held through Moodle forums. The expectations for each mode of learning are listed below.

For blended-mode students: In-class participation will be graded.

For completely online students: Students following along online will have discussion questions posted online as a forum post on Moodle. These forum posts will be online during the entire corresponding week, but will be taken down after the Friday class of each week. Before this deadline, each online asynchronous student must respond at least once to the instructor's original question. Replying to other students' replies is encouraged but is not mandatory. Online students can also ask their own questions in the Questions thread.

2. **Online Quizzes:** A total of **four (4)** online quizzes, based on Multiple-Choice and short questions - will be assigned for the course and held on Fridays of weeks listed in the quiz schedule (below). Quizzes will become available to be taken on Moodle after the last class of the quiz week, i.e., after Friday's class, and may be attempted until 11.59pm of the same day; afterwards, the quiz will disappear from Moodle. Only **one (1)** attempt is allowed; no re-takes will be given under normal circumstances, so ensuring a stable internet connection is the student's responsibility. Policy for re-takes under extreme circumstances is communicated in the course policies section.

Please attempt the online version of the quiz only after you are done with all of the readings for the respective week. Additionally, you should note that each quiz will be made from the readings for the respective week as well as other preceding week's readings. For instance, Quiz 1 will be held in Week 3 of the semester, and will include readings for all preceding weeks as well as Week 3, i.e., it will include readings from Week 2 and Week 3. Similarly, for Quiz 2, all readings from Week 5 and Week 4 will be included (readings that have been used in quizzes before will not be included in the next quiz, although midterm and final exams will include all readings that have been discussed up to that point). Therefore, you should attempt the quiz only after you have read the assigned readings and participated in class/online discussions.

Students' Responsibilities: All students will take their quizzes online. Students will prepare for quizzes based on the respective readings, and take them online on Fridays after class in weeks when quizzes are scheduled (see course schedule below). These quizzes may be completed until Friday, 11.59pm of the respective week. Quizzes will be timed and only one attempt will be allowed.

3. **Take-home Midterm Exam:** The instructor will assign a midterm take-home exam, and submission deadlines will be intimated later on. The midterm exam will make students answer questions based on applying concepts that they would have covered in their readings. The midterm exam will be held in Week 7 of the semester. The answer to the midterm exam should not exceed **five (5) double-spaced pages with size 12 font**. The grading rubric for the essay question in the midterm exam is available on Moodle.

Students' Responsibilities: All students (in-person and online) will submit their midterm exam on Moodle.

4. **Take-home Final Exam:** The instructor will assign a final exam, and submission deadlines will be intimated later on. The final exam will assess students' understanding of concepts through a short essay, the answer to which should not exceed **six (6) double-spaced pages with size 12 font**. The final exam will be held in Week 14 of the semester.

Students' Responsibilities: All students (in-person and online) will submit their final exams on Moodle.

Grading Legend

Below is the grading legend of FCCU (published in all catalogs and available on the FCCU website) as approved by the Academic Council and applies for Fall as well.

| Grade | Point Value | Numerical Value | Meaning |
|-------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| A | 4 | 93-100 | Superior |
| A- | 3.7 | 90-92 | |
| B+ | 3.3 | 87-89 | Good |
| B | 3 | 83-86 | |
| B- | 2.7 | 80-82 | |
| C+ | 2.3 | 77-79 | Satisfactory |
| C | 2 | 73-76 | |
| C- | 1.7 | 70-72 | |
| D+ | 1.3 | 67-69 | Passing |
| D | 1 | 60-66 | |
| F | 0 | 59 or below | Failing |

Important Course Policies

- **Mode of Instruction:** This course will be taught **in-person and online asynchronously**, and will heavily make use of Moodle and Microsoft Teams (for individual online meetings); kindly ensure that you are familiar with using both. Students will require access to internet and access to a PC for successful completion of assignments.
- **Discussion Blocks:** From time to time, the instructor will set aside time for students to ask questions about the week's readings and other related matters. These discussions will be held in class during class times, and students following online will be able to take part through online Microsoft Teams meetings simultaneously. In other words, the instructor will start a Microsoft Teams meeting in class and all students will be able to discuss the week's readings and ask questions related to the course. The links for the online meetings will be posted on Moodle before the class, and the details will be communicated through email beforehand.
- **Asynchronous Online Notification:** If you have permission from the Vice Rector's Office (VRO) to attend the course online asynchronously for the entire semester, please contact the course instructor immediately.
- **Contacting the Instructor:** The best way to reach the instructor is through email. During the scheduled office hours, the instructor will respond within 45 minutes of the query being sent; response time outside of office hours is 12 hours max. If a student is participating in the course online, individual meetings can be arranged online via email. The instructor will be readily available for such meetings during office hours (listed above) and all a student needs to do is send a request for an individual meeting through email. The meeting link will be provided shortly afterwards, via Microsoft Teams. Online meetings outside of office hours will depend on instructor availability.
- **Response Time for Emails:** The instructor will **only communicate with students on their official FCCU email addresses**, and respond to all emails during 9am to 5pm during Mondays to Fridays, with a maximum reply time of 16 hours. If you have urgent matters that need discussion, try to participate during scheduled office hours (in-person or online). The instructor is not responsible for responding to queries between Friday evening after 5pm and Monday morning before 9am.
- **Submission of Assignments and Plagiarism:** All written assignments must be submitted through Moodle, and will be checked for plagiarism via TurnItIn. This software ensures that the work submitted is the student's own, and plagiarism and cheating in any class discussion or assignment will be dealt with a failing grade, and further disciplinary action will be taken according to FCC policies. Please read the relevant sections in your Student Handbook for further details.

- **Late Submissions:** Late submission of the midterm exam and research paper will result in automatic penalties. Each day that passes after the deadline for submission will result in a 5% overall grade reduction. Submitting an assignment at 12.01am when it was due at 12.00am will be considered to be late by a full day. No late submission for class discussions (if class held asynchronously) or response papers is allowed in any case.
- **Re-take Policies:** Absolutely no re-takes for any assignment are allowed, and no extensions will be given for any assignment as well. Under extreme circumstances beyond the student's control - such as electric or internet outages during online quizzes - s/he should inform the instructor. Retakes may be allowed in such cases, but will be subject to reduced grades/penalties. For instance, if a student requests a retake for a quiz, the total grade for the quiz will be reduced by 30%, i.e., no student will be able to retake the quiz with the assignment counting as 100% towards the course grade.
- **Participation Etiquette:** Students are expected to come to class on time; failure to do so will result in reduced points for participation. Personal attacks on other participants - including the instructor - through class discussions or other means will garner strict punishments. A written warning will be issued after one transgression, and further transgressions will result in an automatic failing grade in the course.
- **Electronics Policy:** Usage of cell phones and other electronic or recording devices is strictly prohibited in class. If you need to use your laptop or tablet to take notes, please see the instructor to obtain permission beforehand.
- **Language of Instruction:** The language of instruction for the course is English, as required by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). As such, the instructor is not responsible for delivering the lecture or disseminating class-related reading materials in a language other than English; however, reasonable accommodations can be made on an individual basis. All assignments are to be completed and submitted in English as well. Students facing difficulty with the medium of instruction should contact the instructor and seek help during office hours (or by appointment).
- **Accommodation for Disabled Students:** If a student is facing difficulty in the course due to a disability or handicap, please contact the instructor immediately to arrange for an appropriate instruction method.
- **Health Emergencies:** If a student or a student's family member encounters a health emergency that can have significant impact on the student's performance in the course, s/he should immediately inform the instructor. Failure to do so will result in absolutely no accommodations being made towards the course assessments.
- **Modifications in Syllabus:** This syllabus was designed to convey course information and requirements as accurately as possible. It is important to note however that it may be subject to change during the course depending on the needs of the class and other situational factors. Such changes would be for the students' benefit and they will be notified of them as soon as possible.

Strategies for Success in the Course

- This course is reading-intensive. This means that students are expected to do the readings for each week beforehand, and engage in class discussions. In order to get a reasonable grade, students must do the readings regularly, and not fall behind. The readings for each week are listed in the Course Pack.
- Participating in class discussions is a major chunk of the grade for this class. Therefore, students are expected to contribute to these discussions and demonstrate their understanding of the course material. Regular participation in class discussions is definitely a good way to go for this course. Be mindful of other participants' viewpoints during class discussions (see penalties related to class discussions in the above section).
- Ask questions and engage with the instructor over the course material. As no prior knowledge of the course material is required, students are bound to get confused from time to time. A good way to gain clarity is to ask questions from the instructor. The instructor's contact details and office hours are mentioned at the top of the syllabus. Students are advised to communicate with the instructor with respect in a formal manner.

- Try to work in a smart manner: focus on the key themes for readings and ask yourself if you understand what is being discussed. Your focus should be on understanding the concepts being discussed.
- If you find yourself stressed out due to the course's workload, discuss the difficulties you are facing with the instructor.

Reading Schedule

See Course Pack. Please note that we will start our class discussions from day 1 of the semester, which means that there will be no introductory classes. All students are expected to come to the first class having done the readings, based on the following schedule:

(All readings are available in the course pack)

Week 1 - What is Political Science

Weeks 2 & 3 - Political Concepts

Week 4 - Regimes

Week 5 - Democratic, Authoritarian

Week 6 - Class Activity

Week 7 - Midterm (no readings for this week)

Week 8 - Parts of Government, Legislature

Week 9 - Executive, Judiciary

Week 10 - Multilevel Governance-Federal State, Unitary State

Weeks 11 & 12 - Political Dynamics, Elections, Political Parties

Week 13 - Introduction to Global Politics

Week 14 - Final exam (no readings)

Quiz Schedule

- **Quiz 1 - to be held in Week 3** (submission deadline for online quizzes is Friday 11.59pm of Week 3)
- **Quiz 2 - to be held in Week 5** (submission deadline for online quizzes is Friday 11.59pm of Week 5)
- **Quiz 3 - to be held in Week 9** (submission deadline for online quizzes is Friday 11.59pm of Week 7)
- **Quiz 4 - to be held in Week 12** (submission deadline for online quizzes is Friday 11.59pm of Week 12)