

PLS 101: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

Instructor:	Dr Neil Collins
Email:	neil.collins@nu.edu.kz
Office hours:	By Skype MW 5 – 6 pm, by appointment
Class logistics:	GTA: Akmaral Karabay Akmaral.karabay@nu.edu.kz

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This module is geared to helping you figure out answers to questions such as:

- What are politics? How does politics shape us? How do we shape politics?
- What is political science? How can the study of politics help us better “see”, understand, and evaluate the social world of which we are a part?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the Module, the student will be expected to be able to:

- conceptualise and present their political science analysis in an appropriate format;
- describe and interpret basic qualitative and quantitative data and evidence;
- synthesise arguments within political science;
- access academic literature independently through the library and online sources;
- make their own evidenced-based arguments;
- apply their knowledge to understand political problems by using fundamental concepts and theoretical tools learned in class; and,
- recognise and analyse patterns in the on-going narrative of politics.

Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus. Please remember to check your @nu.edu.kz email and the course page regularly.

*Nazarbayev University provides cost-free mental health services through **the Psychological Counselling Centre** to help you manage personal challenges, including stress, mood swings, excessive worry, eating/sleeping disorders that threaten your personal and academic well-being. For an appointment, please log in to your account at nu.edu.kz, go to the Psychological Counselling Centre section and choose an available time slot.*

REQUIRED TEXTS (will be uploaded to Moodle in pdf format)

Roskin, Michael G. *et al.*, 2017, *Political Science: An Introduction*, 14th ed., London: Longman.

Shively, W. Phillips, 2019, *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Audio presentation: weekly podcasts posted via Moodle.

ASSESSMENT

Mid-term exam (25%): It will consist of 2 essay questions, required word limit is 1000 words per essay. You will be given 4 days to write the essays. Deadline: 19th of September (tentative).

Briefing Assignment (20%): Submit by 29nd of October, comment on the assigned country (2000 words in length; +/-10%).

Your briefing note should be:

- concise: every word is used as efficiently as possible
- clear: keep it simple and to the point; and,
- reliable: the information in a briefing note must be accurate, sound and dependable.

Discussion on Moodle (9%): Students are required to answer questions/engage into topic posted on Moodle Discussion section every three weeks (in total **3** times throughout the course). There is no right answer, students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the theory and application of it into practical examples.

The answer should be:

- concise: every word is used as efficiently as possible
- clear: keep it simple and to the point; and,
- no reference is required
- The deadline for submitting the answer is the end of the week

Online Zoom meetings (10%): attendance and participation in an online discussion every three weeks (in total **5** times throughout the course).

- Quality of comments and questions
- Resource/Document reference
- Active listening
- Attendance

Final Exam (36%) is comprised of three essay questions, the required word limit is 1000 words per essay. Deadline: TBT

SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction and Overview

Required reading: Chapter 1 of *Power and Choice*
Chapter 1 of *Political Science: An Introduction*

Online Zoom meeting (Data: TBA)

Week 2. Models of State

Required reading: Chapter 2 of *Power and Choice*
Chapter 2 of *Political Science: An Introduction*

Week 3. The Process of State Formation (1)

Required reading: Chapter 3 of *Power and Choice*

Discussion on Moodle (Date: TBA)

Week 4. The Process of State Formation (2)

Chapter 3 of *Political Science: An Introduction*

Online Zoom meeting (Data: TBA)

Week 5. Democracy: Liberalism

Required reading: Chapter 7 of *Power and Choice*
Chapter 5 of *Political Science: An Introduction*

Midterm exam

Week 6. Political Parties

Required reading: Chapter 10 of *Political Science: An Introduction*
Chapter 11 of *Power and Choice*

Discussion on Moodle (Date: TBA)

Week 7. Electoral Systems

Required reading: Chapter 10 of *Power and Choice*

Recommended reading: Moser, Robert G., 2008. "Electoral Systems and the Representation of Ethnic Minorities: Evidence from Russia", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 273-292.

Lublin, David, 2017, "Electoral Systems, Ethnic Heterogeneity and Party System Fragmentation", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 47, Issue 2, pp. 373-389.

Barkan, Joel D., Paul J. Densham, and Gerard Rushton. "Space Matters: Designing Better Electoral Systems for Emerging Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 4 (2006): 926-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4122924>.

Online Zoom meeting (Data: TBA)

Week 8. Parliamentary & Presidential Systems

Required reading: Chapter 12 of *Political Science: An Introduction*
Chapter 14 & 15 of *Power and Choice*

Discussion on Moodle (Date: TBA)

Week 9. Bureaucracy

Required reading: Chapter 16 of *Power and Choice*
Chapter 13 of *Political Science: An Introduction*

Week 10. Political Corruption

Required reading: Chapter 4 (pp. 199-207) of *Power and Choice*

Recommended reading: *Corruption Perception Index-2017*. Transparency International.

Dollar, D., Fisman, R. and Gatti, R. (2001). "Are women really the "fairer" sex? Corruption and women in government", *Journal of Economic Behaviour & Organization*, 46(4): 423-429.

Online Zoom meeting (Data: TBA)

Week 11. Reading Week.

Recommended readings: Karp, Jeffrey A., and Susan A. Banducci. "Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour." *British Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 2 (2008): 311-34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27568347>.

Briefing assignment

Week 12. Comparative Politics (1)

Required reading: Chapter 18 of *Power and Choice*

Week 13. Comparative Politics (2)

Required reading: Chapter 17 of *Political Science: An Introduction*

Recommended reading: TBA

Week 14. Feminism

Required reading: TBA

Online Zoom meeting (Data: TBA)

Week 15. Revision

FINAL EXAM: Deadline TBA

Appendix One: Additional Information.

Tentative dates for the exams will be posted on the class website, and exact dates will be confirmed on the second week of the course.

A make-up examination will be arranged only if evidence of a valid excuse is presented promptly. If a student misses an examination without a valid reason, the student will receive a grade of F for that exam.

In preparation for the exams, all students must read and understand the **Nazarbayev University Student Code of Conduct** and the following **rules and procedures**:

- Students who are suspected of cheating are liable to disciplinary action including (but not limited to) suspension or expulsion from the University.

CLASS POLICIES

The rules contained in this section may be supplemented by the Nazarbayev University Student Code of Conduct and regulations specific to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Students must familiarise themselves with University's academic rules and procedures. By remaining enrolled in this course, students confirm that they agree to abide by class policies. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in the imposition of penalties including (but not limited to) dismissal from the course with a failing grade in addition to other disciplinary action from the university authorities.

Office hours. Students should send an email at least one day before announcing their wish to come to the office hours. Such requests should always include the course title and a short description of the reason for wanting to meet. Please show up on time, stick to the point and keep your tone and language professional during office hour. If a student is late for more than 10 minutes, the appointment is cancelled with no other opportunity to use office hours. If a student needs to cancel/reschedule a meeting, they need to send a prior notice at least 24 hours in advance.

Email etiquette must be maintained at all times:

- Always check the course syllabus for the answer first. Course instructors will not reply to questions answered in the syllabus.
- Use your @nu.edu.kz account to avoid the spam filter.
- Include a strong and clear subject line so that course instructor can set aside an appropriate amount of time to deal with it.
- Start with a greeting using the course instructor's title and surname. For example: “Dear Professor Collins,” followed by a comma. Course instructors will not reply to emails which have no formal greeting or start with “hey” or “hi” and other forms of impolite greetings.
- Email must contain information on the student's name and the class they have with the course instructor.
- Write in complete sentences, proper spellings, keep your language professional and run your email through spellcheck.

- Make sure you have said exactly what you want from the course instructor at or near the end of the email. For instance, if you want a reply, let the professor know. If you need to meet with them, make that known as well.
- End the email with a salutation. You are recommended to use a formal word like "Sincerely" or "Best," followed by a comma and your full name.

Academic misconduct as defined in Chapter 2 of the Nazarbayev University Student Code of Conduct. It is an act in which a student: (1) seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation ("plagiarism"); (2) uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise; (3) forges or falsifies academic documents or records; (4) intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others; (5) engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of any student's academic performance; (6) engages in any form of cheating on an exam or assignment; (7) assists other students in any of these acts.

Acts of academic misconduct may result in the imposition of any of Category A, B, or C sanctions as described in Articles 3-5 of Chapter 2 of the Nazarbayev University Student Code of Conduct. Each particular instance of misconduct will be judged on its own merits, taking into account the severity of the incident, the existence or absence of a prior record of wrongdoing, and the extent to which the interests and mission of the University are affected.

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own without giving proper credit to the source. Such an action is not plagiarism if it is ascertained that the ideas were arrived at through independent reasoning or logic or where the thought or idea is common knowledge. Acknowledgement of an original author or source must be made through appropriate references, e.g., quotation marks, footnotes, or commentary. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to the following: the submission of a work, either in part or in whole completed by another; failure to give credit for ideas, statements, facts or conclusions which rightfully belong to another; failure to use quotation marks (or other means of setting apart, such as the use of indentation or a different font size) when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or even a part thereof; close and lengthy paraphrasing of another's writing without credit or originality; use of another's project or programs or part thereof without giving credit.

Grade lawyering is the act of a student going to a professor and/or teaching assistant and asking for a grade to be raised for no legitimate reason. If course instructors feel any form of **coercion** on your part to change a grade, they will be obliged to file an academic misconduct report (category B offence) against grade grubber. Please note that coercion includes flattery, insults, tears, threats, and explanations of how your grade not being changed will cause you to lose your scholarship/stipend, not get into graduate school, be forced to leave university, have to return to your hometown, etc.

If a glaring error has been made in gradings, such as points added incorrectly, or a clearly correct answer was inadvertently marked wrong, then, by all means, the student should talk to the course instructors, and they will likely change their grade immediately. Likewise, if a student does not understand why you lost points or want clarification (not justification) of the grading, course instructors are happy to talk to the student. And, if the student wants to discuss the material, learn what they did wrong, or discuss how to do better on future work, course instructors will be thrilled to speak to the student about this.

Non-academic misconduct includes but is not limited to conduct that threatens safety or health of oneself or other students, stalking, bullying, hate speech, rudeness directed at course instructor, teaching assistant or fellow students, grade grabbing, etc. Disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed for non-academic misconduct vary from disciplinary probation and loss of monthly stipend payment to dismissal from Nazarbayev University. For more detailed information on this topic, please refer to Chapter 3 of the Nazarbayev University Student Code of Conduct.

Appendix Two

GRADING SCALE AND CRITERIA

Grade	Meaning	Requirements
A 95-100 A- 90-94.99	very good	The analysis is complex, solidly structured, fully convincing. References are complete and properly handled, and statements from sources are questioned in relation to their context.
B+ 85-89.99 B 80-84.99 B- 75-79.99	good	The analysis is solid and consistent but not compelling. The phrasing is always correct, but not necessarily complex. References are almost always complete and adequately handled.
C+ 70-74.99 C 65-69.99 C- 60-64.99	acceptable	The analysis is understandable but not always adequately supported.
D+ 55-59.99 D 50-54.99	insufficient	The analysis is not clear, and statements lack adequate academic support. References are incorrect or incomplete.
F 50-0	poor	Fail to submit the paper or assignment on time. It is either too long or too short. Plagiarism of sources, missing references, cheating. Lack of internal coherency, severe inconsistencies in the analysis.