

FIRST YEAR CORE COURSE LEADERS' COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE TOOLKIT

FIRST YEAR COURSE LEADERS TOOLKIT ITEM

*Getting started and
setting expectations*

THE USQ CoPs PROJECT

Faculty of Arts CoP
and
Faculty of Business CoP

<http://www.usq.edu.au/cops>

Getting started and setting expectations: managing student expectations

Teacher: Cassandra Star

Course: POL1000 - Government, business and society

Rationale

The expectations students have are, to a large extent, shaped by prior learning or similar experiences. This is fine as long as their prior experience doesn't give students expectations that either cannot reasonably be met, or which inadvertently lead to poor performance. This excerpt from the course StudyBook is designed to make expectations – of both teaching staff and students – explicit.

Activity

The teacher has included a section on expectations from both the student and staff perspective within a section of the course handbook entitled, 'course communications'. It explains what is expected in terms of student engagement with the course, course materials and their communication with staff. It also tells students what they can expect from staff in terms of communication with students, provision of feedback and course management.

Sample text

From course StudyBook excerpt from introductory section [over page].

Course communications

This course relies substantially on contact with students via email. It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that your student contact details with USQ are current – you can do this yourself when you log into *USQConnect*. Important announcements to all students, questions or queries of individual students, and other course communications are sent via email to the current email details you have registered with the University. Any communications sent out to all students **are assumed to have been received** by all students.

The USQ *StudyDesk* is also substantially utilised in this course. Students are expected to visit the *StudyDesk* at least twice weekly during the semester. The *StudyDesk* contains resources developed to support students in their assessment and the discussion boards are used to address student questions and concerns. Questions that you might have are likely to have already been asked here by another student, or, are addressed in the FAQ (frequently asked questions) section of the discussion board. Reading this **prior to** contacting the course team may answer your question more quickly.

The discussion forums are an important learning tool in this course. Discussions with your course colleagues (or peers) and the course team enable you to explore important ideas in the course, to refine your arguments, and to gain valuable experience for the assignments and the exam.

In general, you can expect a 24–48 hour turn around time for answers to email for the course staff. However, note that the course team does not answer emails on weekends or holidays.

Responsibilities: lecturer and students

In this course both the course team and the students have roles and responsibilities in the learning process. Even with the best course materials and the best efforts of the course team, a student cannot do well in the course without meeting their responsibilities and making the appropriate time and effort commitment. There are different responsibilities for students and the course team.

The **course team** are responsible for:

- being accessible for student inquiries through email, phone or personally **at the designated consultation times**
- providing written feedback on assignments, in conjunction with the marking guide, that explains the reasons for the mark awarded, as well as how to ensure future improvement
- ensuring a reasonable turn around time for assignment results.

At the same time, **students** are responsible for:

- being aware of the contents of the introductory book
- devoting the prescribed time to course study every week – at least ten hours per week
- doing appropriate levels of scholarly research for assignments
- completing assignments in accordance with the marking guide and the assessment guidelines
- bringing problems or issues to the course team's attention in a timely manner
- ensuring personal details with the University are up to date
- visiting the *StudyDesk* at least twice weekly during the semester
- making an appointment if they wish to personally contact the course team outside designated consultation times.