

CHEM2008A: PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Principles of Physical Chemistry

Subject Code

CHEM - Chemistry

Course Number

2008A

Academic Unit

Chemistry (CHEM)

College/School

College of Science (SI)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

BCH2008A Principles of Physical Chemistry

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Additional Information

Note: CHEM2008A does not contain any practical component, and has a credit unit value of three (3).

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This aim of the course is to allow students to:

- understand the states of matter through the ideal gas law and real gas equations of states, the kinetic theory and Boltzmann distribution of particles;
- describe the nature of and interactions between radiation and matter through elementary quantum theory;
- identify and comprehend the first and second and third laws of thermodynamics;
- apply the principles of introductory kinetics to analytical procedures in chemical reactions.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1 Describe the states of matter through the ideal gas law and real gas equations of states, and apply the kinetic theory of particles, Boltzmann distribution and Graham's law of diffusion.	14	x	x	
2 Describe the duality nature of light particles and relate it to the interactions between radiation and matter through elementary quantum theory.	18	x	x	
3 Describe and apply the first, second and third laws of thermodynamics. Critically evaluate the enthalpy, entropy, Gibbs free energy and Helmholtz functions and their physical applications in energetic cycles and thermodynamics.	36	x	x	
4 Relate the Gibb free energy with the spontaneity of chemical changes and equilibrium, and explain the dependence of chemical potential on pressure and temperature.	18	x	x	
5 Apply the concepts of chemical kinetics to determine the rate-determining steps and elucidate the mechanisms of chemical reactions.	14	x	x	

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

	LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures and assignments	Students will learn to explain and identify states of matter.	1	
2	Lectures and assignments	Students will be given lectures and tutorials to comprehend the duality nature of light particles and interactions between radiation and matter.	2	
3	Lectures and laboratory classes	Students will be given lectures about for the explanation of the first, the second and the third laws of thermodynamics and their physical significances and the concepts of enthalpy, entropy, Gibb free energy and Helmholtz functions and their physical applications in terms of energy cycles. They will perform laboratory classes to deepen the knowledges.	3	
4	Lectures and case studies	Students will be given lectures about the relationship between Gibb free energy and the spontaneity of chemical changes and equilibrium.	4	
5	Lectures and laboratory classes	Students will be given lectures on the application of principles of introductory kinetics to analytical procedures in selected chemical reactions. The laboratory classes will allow students to perform experiments that enhance their understanding of the kinetic principles covered in the lectures.	5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Tutorial assignments	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	8	-	Yes

2	Quizzes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	22	The quizzes are in a closed-book format.	No
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Continuous Assessment (%)

30

Examination (%)

70

Examination Duration (Hours)

3

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

40

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

40

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Tutorial assignments and quizzes

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Student is expected to show strong evidence of subject matter and great familiarity with knowledge.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Student is expected to demonstrate evidence of subject, evidence of familiarity with knowledge.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student is expected to show little evidence of the subject and little familiarity with knowledge.

Marginal (D)

Student is expected to demonstrate sufficient familiarity with the subject matter and limited evidence of knowledge.

Failure (F)

Student shows no evidence of familiarity with the subject matter and irrelevant understanding of knowledge.

Assessment Task

Examination

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Student is expected to show strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize the subject matter; superior grasp of knowledge is required.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Student is expected to demonstrate evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with knowledge.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student is expected to show little evidence of the subject, little evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; fair understanding of issues.

Marginal (D)

Student is expected to demonstrate sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure (F)

Student shows no evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant understanding of knowledge.

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**Introduction

Units. The Mole. Atoms, ions, molecules, isotopes. Relative atomic and Molecular Masses.

State of Matter

Ideal Gas Law. Intermolecular Force. Potential Energy Curve. Dalton Law of Partial Pressure. Condensation and Isotherms. Real Gas Equations of State. Gas Viscosity. Graham's Law.

Kinetic Theory of Gases

Molecular Speeds. Partition of Energy. Boltzmann Distribution Law. Maxwell Speed Distribution, Molecular Collision and Mean Free Path. Diffusion and Effusion.

Radiation and Matter

Electromagnetic Spectrum. Wave Nature of Light. Photoelectric Effect. Photon. Quantized Energy levels. Elementary Quantum Theory. de Broglie Hypothesis. Uncertainty Principle. Wave-Particle Duality of Matter. Line Spectra of H-atom. Bohr's Atomic Model. Rydberg Formula.

Thermodynamics

Energy Conversion. The First Law. Enthalpy. State and Path functions. Heat Capacities. Adiabatic and Isothermal Gas Expansion and Compression. Thermochemistry. Bond Energies. Hess Law. Energy cycle applications. Spontaneous processes. Entropy. Carnot Cycle. The Second Law. Entropy changes. The Third Law. Standard Entropies. Gibbs Free and Helmholtz Energies. Dependence of Gibbs Free energy on Pressure and Temperature. Chemical Potential. Criteria of Spontaneous Changes and Equilibrium. Chemical Equilibrium and Gibbs Free Energy change. van't Hoff equation.

Chemical Kinetics

Reaction Rate Law, Reaction order. Zeroth-, First- and Second-order Reactions. Half-life and its Determination. Arrhenius Equation. Activation Energy. Simple Collision Theory. Molecularity. Collisional Activation. Rate-determining Step. Steady State Approximation. Reaction Mechanism.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Physical Chemistry, Engel & Reid, Pearson, 3rd Ed., 2012.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Student's Solutions Manual for Physical Chemistry, Engel & Reid, Pearson, 2012.
2	Atkins' Physical Chemistry, Atkins & de Paula, Oxford University Press, 9th Ed., 2010. Website: www.oup.com/
3	Physical Chemistry, I. N. Levine, Mc Graw Hill, 5th Ed., 2002.
4	Physical Chemistry, J. W. Moore, Prentice Hall, 5th Ed., 1972.
5	Physical Chemistry with Applications to Biological System, R. Chang, Macmillan Publisher, 2nd Ed., 1977.

6	Website: www.oup.com/
7	Website: www.aw-bc.com