

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### PSCI 589: CIVIL LIBERTIES & CIVIL RIGHTS (3 semester hours)

#### Online Course

**Instructor:** Professor April Pitts  
**Office Location:** SS – 163  
**Office Hours:** M – F in virtual office (I will respond to emails over the weekend on the following Monday)  
**Email:** [april.pitts@tamuc.edu](mailto:april.pitts@tamuc.edu)

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#### Required Texts

Daniel E. Hall and John P. Feldmeier, *Constitutional Law: Governmental Powers and Individual Freedoms*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (ISBN: 978-0-13-510950-2)

#### Course Description

This course focuses on American constitutional law as it relates to the procedural and substantive rights of individuals by examining major decisions of the US Supreme Court. Topics include the Bill of Rights and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments.

#### Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the development of U.S. Constitutional Law;
- Identify and discuss key constitutional concepts related to the Bill of Rights;
- Demonstrate and understanding and conduct analysis of Supreme Court Cases; and
- Brief Cases;

#### Grading Policy

***Informed Participation:*** You are expected to participate in the discussion each week. You must prepare for the discussion by reading ALL of the material assigned. Questions will be posted related to topics in the assigned reading. You must thoughtfully respond to the posted questions. In addition, you must thoughtfully respond to at least one post by another student for each question. Weekly posts must be submitted by 11:00 pm Saturday the week it is assigned. LATE POSTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT.

***Weekly Assignments:*** Assignments will consist case briefing and various assignments found in your textbook. WEEKS 1-4: Assignments must be submitted by 11:00 pm Saturday the week it is assigned. WEEK 5: Assignments must be submitted no later than 11:00 pm July 5, 2012. LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

**Exams:** The exams will primarily consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Each exam will open and close as indicated in this syllabus. Any collaboration with other students with regards to the substance of the exam will result in a failing grade.

Your grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Informed Participation	20 points
Weekly Assignments	30 points
Exam 1	25 points
Exam 2	<u>25 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

Grade Distribution is as follows:

- A = 90-99
  - B = 80-89
  - C = 70-79
  - D = 65-69
  - F = 64 and below
- (No extra credit work will be allowed)*

### **Classroom Etiquette**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct) You are expected to exhibit respect for the instructor and fellow students at all times. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from class.

### **Disability Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University – Commerce**  
**Gee Library**  
**Room 132**  
**Phone: (903)886-5150 or (903)886-5835**  
**Fax: (903)468-8148**  
**[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)**

## **“What is Plagiarism**

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

### **According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means**

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

### **But can words and ideas really be stolen?**

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

### **All of the following are considered plagiarism:**

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.” ([www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org))

**If you plagiarize, you will receive an F for the assignment in question and the matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.**

*As Instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or alter this syllabus as the situation may require.*

**Tentative Course Reading Assignments**

Week 1

07/09/2012 –  
07/14/2012

Chapter 8: The Bill of Rights

Chapter 9: First Amendments Freedom of Expression, Association, and Press

Week 2

07/15/2012 –  
07/21/2012

Chapter 10: Religion and the Constitution

Week 3

07/22/2012 –  
07/28/2012

Chapter 11: Substantive Due Process, Privacy, and Other Liberties

**Test 1 (Chapters 8-11)**

- opens 12 am 07/26 and closes 11 pm 07/28

Week 4

07/29/2012 –  
08/04/2012

Chapter 12: Equal Protection

Week 5

08/05/2012 –  
08/09/2012

Chapter 13: Civil Liberties in the Criminal Justice System

**Test 2 (Chapters 12 and 13)**

- opens 12 am 08/07 and closes 11 pm 08/09