PSCI 443: Civil Rights & Civil Liberties
Course Syllabus: Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Chad M. King
Office Location: SS-162
Office Hours: T/TH 12:45-1:45, W 10-1
Office Phone: (903) 886-5343
University Email Address: chad.king@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required

Title: Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Rights, Liberties, and Justice
Authors: Epstein, Lee and Thomas Walker.
Publisher: CQ Press
ISBN: 9781452270401

You should be able to purchase this book from the bookstore or your favorite on-line merchant. Please note there is also an on-line version of the text available from the publishers that is significantly cheaper.

Course Description

In this course we examine the role of the Supreme Court in the development of the American constitutional system. Students will focus upon the development of Constitutional doctrines. Students will be expected to analyze and evaluate cases and doctrines within cases over several important areas of Constitutional law.

Student Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course students will be able to

- Students will gain an understanding of the development of US Constitutional law
• Students will gain an understanding of key constitutional concepts pertaining to Constitutional liberties and legal rights
• Students will learn to understand and analyze Supreme Court cases

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

The methods of instruction in this class will be assigned readings and class lectures. These will be supplemented with interaction with classmates as well as the instructor in class discussion.

Final course grades will be based upon the following components.

Exams

Students will take three midterm exams. All exams will include material from both the textbook and lecture and the scheduled dates for the exams are listed below. Each exam will count for 25% of the final grade. These exams will include identification, short answer and essay questions. Students who arrive 20 minutes after the exam has started may be denied the opportunity to take the exam. Such students will have to comply with the make-up exam procedure discussed below.

Case Briefs

Students are expected to brief all of the major cases that are excerpted in the textbook or assigned from the case archive. Students will be given a handout on the first day of class explaining the format for these briefs. Starting with the second week of class, I will, unannounced, ask you to submit a case specific brief from the assigned readings for that day. Students will be graded on these briefs based both upon whether they have a brief at all and on the quality of the brief. If you miss class, regardless of the reason, you will need to e-mail all of your briefs for that prior to class starting.

Class Participation

I will regularly call on students during the semester to explain or summarize the case. Questions will ask for material contained in case briefs, that ask students to explain the logic of the opinion, or ask students to expand upon themes or ideas from a line of cases. Students will be given one “pass” for the semester if they are not prepared. Students will be given a grade based upon whether they attempt to answer the questions as well as the quality and thoroughness of their answers. I will also take volunteers at times.
GRADING

Course grades will be based upon the following breakdown.

Final Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm One</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Two</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Three</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Briefs</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on a 100-point scale, using the following letter/number conversion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Because new cases become available after publication of the textbook, students may need access to the online course archives provided by the textbook publisher. To access this archive, students will need:

- Regular access to a good quality computer
- Regular, high-quality Internet access, specifically, a high-speed internet connection, not dial-up or a cellular phone.
- Students will need access to an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer. Note that is the student’s responsibility to ensure they meet these requirements. Aside from when the eCollege system is down, technical issues will not be accepted as a reason for failing to complete any course work.
- The archive access code that is sold with the textbook.
Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

In addition to in-class announcements, students should rely upon e-mail as the primary means of communication with me. I will use all of these means to announce any changes to the course syllabus or other relevant information. Also, please note that the system will only send e-mail to your official University Email address, so you will need to check that account regularly.

Office Hours

The times and location for Office Hours are listed at the top of this syllabus.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

1. Students are expected to attend class regularly, take notes, and complete the assigned readings in advance of class.
2. Students are expected to take each of the scheduled Midterm Exams.
3. Students are expected to participate fully in the class discussions.
4. Students are expected to brief all of the assigned cases for the semester.
5. Students are expected to respect their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and esteem in any and all correspondence for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
6. Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another
student. Any act of academic dishonesty on a midterm exam will result in a score of 0 for the exam. Any act of academic dishonesty on a brief will result in a 0 for the entire semester's case brief grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.

7. Students who miss more than 3 class meetings will be considered “excessively absent” and will be administratively dropped from the class.

8. Make-up exams: If a student misses an exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 3 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and legal obligations. Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given. Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.

9. Incompletes will be granted completely at the discretion of the instructor and only be granted in the case of serious medical illness or other serious, unavoidable circumstances and only if the students has completed at least 50% of the course work.

University Specific Procedures

ADA 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 an 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@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

The University has rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. Specific expectations regarding student behavior and conduct are contained in different sections of this syllabus. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the student handbook.
## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

### Reading Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Understanding the US Supreme Court</td>
<td>Chapter 1, Federalist #10, #51, #78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>The Judiciary</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Incorporation</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3-2/5</td>
<td>Freedom of Religion: Free Exercise</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/10-2/12</td>
<td>Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Association</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/12-2/17</td>
<td>Freedom of Speech, Assembly, and Association</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/19</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam One</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2/24</td>
<td>Freedom of the Press</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26-3/3</td>
<td>Obscenity/Libel</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Right to Bear Arms</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10-3/12</td>
<td>Right to Privacy</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>Right to Privacy</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/24-3/31</td>
<td>Investigations &amp; Evidence</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/2</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam Two</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/7-4/9</td>
<td>Attorneys, Trials and Punishment</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/14-4/28</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30-5/5</td>
<td>Voting and Representation</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/7</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Three</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Students can access the Federalist Papers for free online at [http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html)

*** Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced via e-mail and in class.