POLITICAL SCIENCE 319 SYLLABUS
CIVIL LIBERTIES & RIGHTS
[SEMESTER] [CLASS TIME] [CLASS LOCATION]

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Cole D. Taratoot
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OFFICE HOURS: [VARY BY SEMESTER]

STUDY GUIDES: Study guides and useful materials can be found on Blackboard

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to examine the role of the Supreme Court in defining the fundamental rights and liberties of citizens in the United States with a particular focus on case law. In our system of separated powers, the Federal courts often have to balance the rights of the individual against the common good. We will examine the inherent tension in supporting individual rights when such individual rights conflict with the will of the democratic majority. This inherent tension will be examined in the areas of incorporation, the Establishment Clause, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to bear arms, and criminal procedure. In addition, this course will examine the struggle for equality and civil rights in the context of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and income by examining the Equal Protection Clause and Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment in these contexts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

(1) Students will gain the skills necessary to read and understand Supreme Court opinions by learning the proper method for briefing cases.
(2) Students will gain a better understanding of the extent and limits of their personal liberties contained in the First, Second, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendments to the Constitution by reading and understanding Supreme Court case law and how these individual rights often conflict with the will of the democratic majority in the United States.
(3) Students will improve their critical thinking skills through engagement in Socratic dialogue with the instructor. Improvement in critical thinking skills will help students to be able to better defend their viewpoints.
(4) Students will improve their writing and research skills through the completion of a written term paper on a topic related to the course material.

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviation may be necessary because of unforeseen circumstances.
POLICIES:

Students are expected to act like adults in the classroom. Students causing disruptions will be asked to leave. **TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS.** Tobacco use is also strictly forbidden during class.

PLAGIARISM:

Students are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism (i.e., presenting the work, idea, argument, or illustration of another as your own without properly attributing it to the author or source. This also includes submitting work done for another class in this class for credit. Any student found to have plagiarized will receive an **F for the course.** For more information about academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, consult the UAB Academic Honor Code in the Undergraduate Catalog ([http://catalog.uab.edu/undergraduate/](http://catalog.uab.edu/undergraduate/)), pgs. 87 – 88.

In addition to turning in a hard copy of assignments, you must also turn in an electronic copy via Blackboard through the Turnitin software. Turnitin is a program that identifies instances of plagiarism by comparing the text of the paper to online sources, scholarly sources, and papers turned at this and other Universities. In short, it would be best if all of your work is original, cited properly, and quoted when necessary.

CHEATING:

**THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR CHEATING.** Any student caught cheating or helping someone else cheat will receive an **F for the course.** For more information about academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, consult the UAB Academic Honor Code ([http://catalog.uab.edu/undergraduate/](http://catalog.uab.edu/undergraduate/)), pgs. 87 – 88.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

UAB is committed to equal opportunity and a campus environment free of harassment and discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or veteran status. If you feel you have been harassed or treated unfairly by either an instructor or another student, please consult a faculty member or call the Equal Opportunity Office (650-3307). Visit [http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/](http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/) for more information.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you are registered with Disability Support Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted Disability Support Services, please call 934-4205 or visit DSS at 516 Hill University Center.

EMAIL:

**Students are expected to check their email at least one per day to check for course related communications.** Thus, you are responsible for ensuring that your Blazer email is received. This means if you are forwarding it to an inactive account, you will need to update the forwarding info so that you are receiving it.

Students are expected to email the instructor in a **professional manner.** This means properly addressing the instructor, typing in full sentences and avoiding shorthand text message style, and signing your name. Any email that does not follow this format will be ignored. For emails that follow the proper format, I will typically respond within 1 business day, but do not expect responses over the weekend. Finally, University policy
and federal law (FERPA) prohibits me from responding to emails from personal accounts (yahoo, MSN, gmail, etc.). Thus, you should only send emails from your official UAB email address as I will not respond to emails from personal accounts.

SOCRATIC DIALOGUE:
In addition to lectures, I will frequently engage in “Socratic dialogue” where I will call upon students at random to answer questions based on the reading. When called upon to discuss a case, be ready to state its facts (i.e. what happened that got the parties to go to court), the legal issue(s) involved (i.e. the legal question(s) the court must answer to resolve the dispute between the parties), the court’s decision (i.e. its answer to the legal question), and the court’s rationale (i.e. the reasons the court gives to support its decision).

I may also ask “hypothetical questions” that require you to speculate on an issue or scenario not specifically covered in the reading. The purpose of Socratic dialogue is to cultivate your analytical and critical thinking skills by having you articulate your thoughts aloud. Students who are unable to respond or demonstrate that they are unprepared will lose points from their participation grade.

STUDENT EVALUATION:
1. Class Attendance: Students may miss a maximum of four classes. After four absences, students will lose one percent per additional absence off of their participation grade (maximum of 5 points). I will give one bonus point on the final grade for those who have perfect attendance. I do not distinguish between excused versus unexcused absences, so budget accordingly. If every single member of the class shows for class, I will provide my PowerPoint presentation for that day. If even a single member of class fails to attend, no PowerPoint will be provided. Earned PowerPoint presentations will be posted on Blackboard.

2. Participation: Participation by students is required. Participation includes having read the reading assignments, bringing readings to class, having briefed cases before class, and contributing to class discussions by responding to questions as outlined in the “Socratic Dialogue” section above. I will attempt to balance the discussion between students, but it is ultimately your responsibility to participate in class discussions. If you do not participate in class discussions you will not receive full credit. Participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

3. Briefs: 10% of your grade will come from random collection of 10 briefs for the assigned cases for that day’s readings. 7 of the 10 (1% each) will count toward your final grade. Thus, I will collect briefs ten times, but your lowest three grades will be dropped. Hand-written briefs will receive no credit. The proper method for briefing cases will be covered in the first week of class.

4. Exams: There will be two regular multiple-choice exams during the course of the semester consisting of 40 – 50 multiple-choice, true/false, matching questions, and essay questions. Each test will count toward 30% of the final course grade. Make-up examinations will only be given for documented serious emergencies and must be taken within one week of the original exam date. The type of make-up exam is chosen at the instructor’s discretion and is typically all essay format and extremely difficult.
5. **Term Paper:** The term paper will be due Thursday, May 2\textsuperscript{nd} at the beginning of class. Papers not received at the beginning of class are considered late. The papers are to be on one or more of the following subject areas covered in this class: the establishment clause, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right to privacy, search and seizure, right to bear arms, self-incrimination, the right to counsel, fair trials, death penalty, racial discrimination, and so forth. You may not write a paper on Constitutional Law - institutions. Students must adhere to the following dates, and grading of the paper will be allocated in the following manner:

a. Topic (5%) due Thursday, February 14\textsuperscript{th}, 2013
b. Annotated bibliography (5%), with a minimum of 7 sources, not including the Epstein and Walker textbook. Due Thursday, March 7\textsuperscript{th}, 2013
c. Term Paper (15%), minimum 10 pages, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, paginated, due Thursday, May 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2013

For topic and annotated bibliography, for each day the assignment is late the student will lose \(\frac{1}{2}\) point (out of 5) at the discretion of the instructor. For the term paper itself, each day late will lead to a loss of one full point, out of 20 total points, off of the term paper, at the discretion of the instructor. All submissions must be printed or typed. You must submit a hard and electronic copy of the final paper. Additional instructions will be given in another handout.

6. **Grading Scale:**

- 90 – 100 A
- 80 – 89 B
- 70 – 79 C
- 60 – 69 D
- < 60 F

7. **Late Assignments:** All assignments are due at the beginning of class (3:30 pm). Any assignment turned in after the start of class (after 3:30 pm) is considered to be late. The rationale behind this policy is that it is not fair to your fellow classmates for you to have additional time to complete assignments by showing up late for class. Late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade per day late. A day is defined as the 24 hour period beginning at 3:31 pm the day an assignment is due to 3:30 pm the following date. A day is also ANY subsequent day after the paper is late. This is **NOT** limited to class meeting days and includes weekends, holidays, non-class meeting days, etc. No assignment may be turned in by email. There are no exceptions to this rule! Resolve all printing, saving, and formatting issues prior to the due date and time.

**TEXTBOOK AND READINGS:**

There is one text for the course; it is available at the Barnes and Noble University Bookstore:

- Additional reading can be located on Blackboard.
1. COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

The Supreme Court, the Constitution, and Legal Research

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 16</td>
<td>LAST DAY TO DROP AND RECEIVE A FULL REFUND</td>
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Civil Liberties I: The Establishment Clause, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, and the Right to Bear Arms

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January 31


February 5


February 7


February 12


February 14


**PAPER TOPICS DUE!**

February 19


February 21

February 26  

February 28  
VISIT FROM BIRMINGHAM MAYOR WILLIAM BELL.

March 5  
MIDTERM EXAM

**Rights of the Criminally Accused**

March 7  
**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE!**

March 12  

March 14  

March 17 – 23  
SPRING BREAK!

March 26  

March 28  
**LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW AND RECEIVE A “W”**

Civil Rights and Discrimination

April 4  TRIP TO THE BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE!!


April 30


May 2


May 7

**FINAL EXAM, TUESDAY, MAY 7th, 4:15 – 6:45 pm.**