

First-Year Law School Syllabus

Course: Constitutional Law

Professor: Sally Pretorius

Semester: [Fall/Spring] [Year]

Class Time: [Days/Times]

Location: [Room/Online Platform]

Course Overview:

This course provides an introduction to constitutional law with a focus on the structure of government, judicial review, federalism, and individual rights. We will explore foundational Supreme Court decisions and analyze their impact on contemporary legal issues.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the framework of the U.S. Constitution and the role of judicial review.
2. Analyze key Supreme Court decisions and their legal reasoning.
3. Develop critical thinking and legal analysis skills through case briefs and discussions.
4. Apply constitutional principles to contemporary legal and policy issues.
5. Improve legal research and writing abilities.

Required Texts & Materials:

- *The U.S. Constitution* (provided in course materials)
- Chemerinsky, Erwin. *Constitutional Law: Principles and Policies* (Latest Edition)
- The Federalist Papers (Selections)
- Additional cases and readings provided on the course portal

Grading Breakdown:

- **Class Participation & Attendance** – 10%
- **Case Briefs & Short Assignments** – 20%
- **Midterm Exam** – 25%
- **Final Exam** – 35%

- **Legal Research Paper** – 10%

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction & Judicial Review

- The U.S. Constitution: Structure and Interpretation
- *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) and the establishment of judicial review

Week 2: Separation of Powers

- Congressional Powers & Executive Authority
- *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (1952)

Week 3: Federalism & State Powers

- The Commerce Clause
- *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) and *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824)

Week 4: Due Process & Equal Protection

- The 14th Amendment
- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

Week 5: First Amendment Rights

- Freedom of Speech & Religion
- *Schenck v. United States* (1919) and *Texas v. Johnson* (1989)

Week 6: Midterm Exam Review & Exam

- Review session for key topics
- **Midterm Exam**

Week 7: Presidential & Congressional Powers

- War Powers & Executive Orders
- *United States v. Nixon* (1974)

Week 8: Individual Rights & Privacy

- Substantive Due Process
- *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) and *Roe v. Wade* (1973)

Week 9: Criminal Procedure & the Fourth Amendment

- Search & Seizure
- *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961) and *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966)

Week 10: Second Amendment & Gun Rights

- *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008)

Week 11: Equal Protection & Civil Rights

- Affirmative Action
- *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978)

Week 12: Modern Constitutional Issues

- Recent Supreme Court Cases & Controversies
- Debates on judicial activism vs. judicial restraint

Week 13: Legal Research Paper & Review

- Student presentations on legal research topics
- Final exam review session

Week 14: Final Exam

- **Final Exam – Comprehensive**

Class Policies:

1. **Attendance:** Regular attendance and participation are required. More than two unexcused absences will impact your final grade.
2. **Late Assignments:** Late submissions will incur a grade deduction unless prior arrangements are made.
3. **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism or cheating will result in disciplinary action per law school policies.
4. **Office Hours:** [Days/Times] or by appointment.
5. **Technology Use:** Laptops and tablets are allowed for note-taking, but improper use (social media, messaging) may lead to restrictions.

Contact Information:

- **Professor's Email:** [Professor's Email Address]
- **Office Location:** [Office Address]
- **Office Hours:** [Available Times]

For questions, concerns, or clarifications, please reach out via email or visit during office hours.