

Course Syllabus

PS 343/JUST A343 CONSTITUTIONAL LAW Fall 2009 Mara Kimmel

Course Time: Fridays, 1:00pm – 3:45 pm SSB 224
Office hours: Mondays 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm and by appointment, SSB 359
Email: afmek1@uaa.alaska.edu
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COURSE CONTENT AND GUIDELINES

Required Texts

Chemerinsky, Erwin, Constitutional Law: Principles and Policies, Aspen Publishers (3d ed.) 2006.

Miscellaneous readings as assigned on the Blackboard (in the Assignments section).

Course Themes

This course provides an introduction to American constitutional law through a study of selected Supreme Court cases and secondary commentary. Among the topics considered are judicial review; separation of powers; property, commerce and taxation; liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights; equal protection; and privacy. Students will study the role of the courts in interpreting the extent of that power. Students who complete the course will be able to analyze the foundations of the United States Constitution and its historical development, as well as understand the current trends of the powers accorded and the limitations placed upon the judicial, legislative and executive branches of federal government. Students will acquire an enhanced understanding of the powers, rights, duties, and interrelationships of the federal government, the state and local government (including tribal governments) and the individual, and of the social, economic and political influences on Supreme Court decision making.

This course involves a great deal of reading and writing, and is taught using the Socratic teaching method. Classroom dialogue is vital to this course, and your success in this course depends largely on your classroom participation and therefore you must be present and prepared.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation (20% of your total grade): This course is taught using the Socratic method as a seminar, with students being responsible for participating in and at times, facilitating class discussions (see below).

Case Briefs (30% of your total grade): You will be responsible for submitting three case briefs. Case briefing will be covered in class, but the web contains some great instructional sites. See <http://www.4lawschool.com/howto.htm> for links to several good ones.

Please read all cases by accessing Lexus/Nexus in the Consortium Library to be sure you are all reading the same case in the same format. To view the case properly, use the “full document” format in the “show” dropdown menu.

Citations used in your case briefs must conform to “The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation.” The Consortium Library has this book on reserve.

Mid Term Exam (20% of your total grade)

Final Exam (30% of your total grade)

ACADEMIC POLICIES

University Catalog

The university catalog provides you with valuable information about your rights and responsibilities as a student. It is also your academic contract with the university.

Grading Scale

Grades are awarded on a standard scale: 90 - 100 = A; 80 - 89 = B; 70 - 79 = C; 60 - 69 = D; 59 or below = F. In the event a mark is within one point of a higher letter grade, I reserve the right to review all scores.

What the Grades Mean

- A Indicates comprehensive mastery of required work. Answers are very well written and edited. Content not only fulfills the requirements of the assignment, but also is innovative in interpretation and analysis.
- B Indicates high level of performance in meeting course requirements. Answers are well written and edited. Content fulfills the requirements of the assignment.
- C Indicates satisfactory level of performance. Writing in answers is adequate but requires greater editing. Content deals with requirements but does not completely fulfill the assignment/
- D Unsatisfactory level of performance. Answers are poorly written and only begin to satisfy requirements.
- F Failure. Answers are poorly written and do not begin to satisfy requirements.

Extensions, Exam Make-ups, Incompletes and Withdrawals

Assignments are due during class on the date indicated in the syllabus. Extensions and exam make-ups are granted only in the case of serious illness or other extraordinary circumstances and at the instructor’s discretion. Documentation of such circumstances will be required. Incompletes will only be given at the instructor’s discretion, in very exceptional and substantiated circumstances and only upon a majority of the course work having been completed. Students who withdraw from the course during the term must meet University requirements for withdrawal in advance of the deadline to avoid a failing grade.

Academic Dishonesty

Students who cheat or plagiarize will be assigned a failing grade for the course and will face other disciplinary sanctions. In addition, all written work must be properly cited to academic sources (i.e., Wikipedia is NOT acceptable). All citations must conform to Blue Book format, which we will review in class.

Classroom Behavior

Please be respectful of your fellow students during class. Do not talk, do not surf the internet, and turn off your cell phone ringer during class. If you must come to class late, please do so in the least disruptive manner possible, and if you must leave early, please inform me in the beginning of the class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE
(subject to change – check Blackboard frequently!)

August 28, 2009	Introduction to course and to the Constitution Readings: Chemerinsky, Chapter 1 Guest speaker: Professor Kristine Huskey
September 4, 2009	The Federal Judicial Power Readings: Marbury v. Madison, 5 U.S. 137 (1803) Chemerinsky, Chapter 2 (read all but only briefly skim pps. 83-102, 105-13, 115-29, 132-49, 155-80, 182-230)
September 11, 2009	The Federal Legislative Power Readings: Chemerinsky, Chapter 3 (skip pps. 301-310)
September 18, 2009	The Federal Executive Power Readings: Chemerinsky, Chapter 4 Case Brief 1 due: Boumediene v. Bush, 76 U.S. 4406 (2008)
September 25, 2009	Limits on State Power Reading: Chemerinsky, Chapter 5 (skip pp. 457-60, 463-66)
October 2, 2009	Mid-term exam
October 9, 2009	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Reading: Chemerinski, Chapter 6 (skip pp. 519-26, 532-39)
October 16, 2009	Procedural Due Process Reading: Chemerinski, Chapter 7
October 23, 2009	Substantive Due Process: Economic Liberties Reading: Chemerinski, Chapter 8
October 30, 2009	Substantive Due Process: Equal Protection Reading: Chemerinski, Chapter 9 Case Brief 2 due: Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)
November 6, 2009	Substantive Due Process: Fundamental Rights Reading: Chemerinski, Chapter 10 Case Brief 3 due: Read and brief a Supreme Court case of your choosing involving fundamental rights subject to instructor approval
November 13, 2009	International Law, Indians and Immigrants Readings: TBD posted on Bb
November 20, 2009	First Amendment: Expression Reading: Chemerinski, Chapter 11
November 27, 2009	No class, Thanksgiving Holiday
December 4, 2009	Final Exam DUE
December 11, 2009	Final class meeting – Complete IDEA Survey