Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: POSC 340

Course Title: Judicial Process

Number of Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Study of the state and federal court systems and the impact those systems have on American politics and society. Prerequisite: POSC 111. Offered Spring.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): POSC 111.

Text(s): Most current editions of the following:


Any text appropriate for a course in Judicial Process.

Course Objectives:

- To understand the structure and functions of the American court system on both the national and at state levels.
- To understand the role of judges, lawyers, and litigants.
- To understand trial and appellate processes.
- To understand the types of American law and the role of law in the American political and legal system.
- To understand the structure, processes, and power of the U.S. Supreme Court and the impact that Court has had in America's historical development.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

- Understand the development of the various types of American law.
- Describe the structure of both state and national court systems.
- Explain the basic processes for trials and appeals.
- Explain the basic rules of evidence used by civil and criminal trial courts.
- Understand the legal profession and the various ways judges are selected.
- Describe the historical development of the U.S. Supreme Court and the procedure it employs.
- Evaluate the role of courts in American society.
Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

Note: A significant writing component is required for this course. The requirement may be satisfied by requiring students to submit a single type-written paper of twelve pages in length, properly cited, or by multiple assignments of equivalent length.

- Law
  - Types of Law
  - Theories of Law
  - Sources of American Law
- Court structure and organization
  - Typical structure of state courts
  - Structure of U.S. Article III courts
  - Structure of U.S. “specialized” courts
- The legal profession
  - American Bar Association role in school accreditation
  - Becoming an attorney
  - State bar requirements
- The selection of judges
  - Appointment
  - Election
  - Missouri Bar Plan
- Basic trial procedures
  - Criminal trials and rules of evidence
  - Civil trials and rules of evidence
  - Discovery
- Appellate Procedure
- The U.S. Supreme Court
  - Historical development
  - Judicial Review
  - Power and influence

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: David Roebuck

Date: March 23, 2006

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

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