Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: POSC 440

Course Title: Constitutional Law

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

Catalog Description: Study of the Constitution’s evolution through Supreme Court decisions. Offered odd Fall. Prerequisite: POSC 111.

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

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


The textbook options for this course are limited. Any text chosen must include cases addressing both governmental powers AND civil liberties.

Course Objectives:

• To understand the development of key constitutional principles through Supreme Court interpretation.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

• Understand and explain the powers used by various governmental bodies as defined by the Court over time.

• Understand and explain the Court’s development of civil liberties such as speech, press, voting, and others.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

Note: this is a senior-level course in constitutional law. As such, students must be expected to read from Supreme Court opinions in their original text. Students must also be assigned a significant writing assignment, either as briefs for all cases read (approximately 100 cases) or as an outside research assignment.

• Governmental Powers
  • Separation of Powers
  • Powers of Courts
  • Powers of Congress
  • Powers of President
  • Federalism
  • The Commerce Clause
  • Taxing and Spending Power
  • Contract Clause
- Civil Liberties
  - First Amendment
  - Religion
  - Speech and Press
  - Assembly
  - Privacy
- Criminal Due Process
  - Investigations and Evidence
  - Attorneys, Trials, and Punishment

Material from this course may be tested on the Major Field Test (MFT) administered during the Culminating Experience course for the degree.

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 30

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: April 11, 2005

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.

Office of Academic Affairs
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