Course Description:

This course is an examination of the United States Constitution, as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court. It will focus on the authority of the three branches of the federal government, the relationship between them, and the ability of the federal government to regulate economic activity. In covering these topics, we also will consider various theories of Constitutional interpretation, the influence of “extralegal” factors on judicial decision-making, and the role of the Supreme Court in the democratic process.

This course will be taught primarily using the “case method,” which uses specific cases to extract legal rules and larger legal principles. In this way, the course will be similar to what one might experience in law school, but with the workload and intimidation factor greatly reduced. As this is an undergraduate political science course, we also will explore the political context surrounding Court decisions as well as the role that ideological positions and strategic behavior of the justices might (or might not) play in shaping their votes and opinions.

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of basic doctrines of American Constitutional law.
2. Understand the relationships among the various branches of government, both as articulated in the Constitution and as defined by the Supreme Court.
3. Gain proficiency in legal reasoning and be able to apply extant legal doctrines to hypothetical cases.
4. Evaluate the operation of the U.S. Supreme Court and its role in shaping the balance of power among governmental institutions.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS

Each student must purchase/borrow:

Additional readings may be assigned and will be posted on OAKS. It is the student’s responsibility to check email and OAKS regularly for information about any changes in course material, schedules, or exams.

III. EVALUATION

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefs, Homework &amp; Quizzes</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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Grading Scale

The grading system is based upon the following scale: 93-100% A; 90-92 A-; 87-89% B+; 83-85% B; 80-82% B-; 77-79% C+; 73-76% C; 70-72% C-; 67-69% D+; 63-67% D; 60-62% D-; 0-59%: F. Extra credit is not permitted.

IV. ATTENDANCE AND CLASS BEHAVIOR

Attendance is required for all classes; attendance will be taken. Only documented illness, family emergency, or institutional permission constitute excused absences. Please let me know of any such absences in advance whenever possible; if you will be missing class for a school-related reason (activity, athletics etc.), you must let me know twenty-four hours before your absence. Any student who has an unexcused absence may be assigned a lower or failing final grade. Students will be assigned one unexcused absence for every two times they are late to class.

The rules of the student code of conduct apply in this class. Appropriate behavior is required at all times. Students are expected to attend class prepared and on time. Students may not speak while other students or the instructor is speaking. Classroom debate is highly encouraged, but students are expected to conduct themselves with decorum and respect.

Laptops and cell phones are prohibited in the classroom. Please see me if you have questions about this policy or need accommodations.

V. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.
Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission--is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.

VI. DISABLED STUDENTS

The College of Charleston policy regarding disabled students and reasonable accommodations will apply in this class and accommodations will be provided for those students with documented disabilities. Please speak with me as soon as possible if you are in need of assistance.

VI. ASSIGNMENTS AND LECTURE TOPICS

Please note that I reserve the right to alter these assignments as necessary. Notice of such changes will be provided in advance (in class and/or via OAKS) and students are expected to alter their reading as necessary.

Also, please be aware the exams will be based upon information contained in both the text and the class sessions. Focusing upon solely the text or the lecture material will be insufficient to perform well in this class.