Course Description and Objective

This course is designed to give students a better understanding of the U.S. Supreme Court and its role within the political and governmental process. Particular attention will be paid to the relation of the Supreme Court to the President, Congress, state and local governments, as well as the Court’s influence over economic policies.

Students will investigate the Court’s interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, how these interpretations fit within broader principles such as separation of powers and federalism, and importantly, how these interpretations have evolved throughout history.

Required Text


Attendance Policy and Class Participation

All students are expected to attend each class session and participate in the conduct of the class. Despite this being a larger class, I expect a portion of each class to revolve around discussion. With this in mind, you should come to every class prepared to participate in and contribute to an informed and engaging conversation. In order to participate, you must read, take notes, and think about the assigned readings before class. You will learn more, enjoy class more, and be better equipped to participate if you read the assigned materials before class.

While there is no formal attendance policy, class participation is vital to a lively and interesting class and, as such, will be considered in the calculation of your final grade. Students that miss a class session are responsible for catching up on all material missed.
Grading

Final course grades will be based on the results of quizzes, three case briefs, two midterm exams, a final exam, and class participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Briefs</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Midterm</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93 - 100: A</td>
<td>73 - 76.9: C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 92.9: A-</td>
<td>70 - 72.9: C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 - 89.9: B+</td>
<td>67 - 69.9: D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 - 86.9: B</td>
<td>63 - 66.9: D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 82.9: B-</td>
<td>60 - 62.9: D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 - 79.9: C+</td>
<td>60: F</td>
</tr>
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There is a possibility that extra credit will be available over the course of the semester, but that is up to the discretion of the instructor.

Examinations

The first midterm exam will be given in class on March 3rd. The second midterm exam will be given in class on April 9th. The final exam, while cumulative, will focus primarily on material covered after the second midterm. The final exam is scheduled for May 13th from 5:30 pm-8:00 pm. You are responsible for all materials covered either in the required readings or discussed in class. Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer formats.

Make-up exams will be given only after the presentation of all appropriate documentation pursuant to University guidelines. Make-up exams must be completed within one week of the original exam date. If the make-up exam is not completed within one week of the original exam date, the grade for the exam will be recorded as zero. Questions on make-up exams will be different from those on the original exam, but will cover the same material.

Briefs

An important skill is to be able to quickly and succinctly summarize the important details of important cases. Throughout the course, I will ask you to write three case briefs that will summarize the important facts, legal considerations, and outcomes of cases. I will provide more details on the specifics in class and on Blackboard. Briefs are to be uploaded to SafeAssign on Blackboard on the dates indicated. Any late work that is not accompanied by a doctor’s note or similar documentation will be penalized by 10% per day late.

Quizzes

There will be eight (8) quizzes given throughout the semester, however only six (6) will count towards the final grade. The two lowest grades will be dropped. The purpose of the quizzes is to provide incentive to do the reading before class, and the questions should be easily answered if you have completed the required reading for that day. The timing and content of these quizzes is entirely up to the discretion of the instructor.
University Policies

Academic Integrity

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/.

Students With Disabilities

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Electronic Communication Statement

Email and especially email sent via Blackboard [http://blackboard.stonybrook.edu] is one of the ways the faculty officially communicates with you for this course. It is your responsibility to make sure that you read your email in your official University email account. For most students that is Google Apps for Education [http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud], but you may verify your official Electronic Post Office (EPO) address at this site.

If you choose to forward your official University email to another off-campus account, faculty are not responsible for any undeliverable messages to your alternative personal accounts. You can set up Google Mail forwarding using these DoIT-provided instructions found at [http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/setting-up-mail-forwarding-in-google-mail].

If you need technical assistance, please contact Client Support at (631) 632-9800 or supportteam@stonybrook.edu.

Class Dates and Required Reading

- Jan. 27 - Course Introduction
- Jan. 29 - Introduction to the Court/Briefing Cases
  Required Reading: Chapter 1
- Feb. 3 - Strategic Interaction on the Court
  Required Reading: Epstein & Knight (see Blackboard)
- Feb. 5 - The Judiciary
  Required Reading: Chapter 2
- Feb. 10 - The Judiciary
  Required Reading: Chapter 2
  Brief Due: Marbury v. Madison
- Feb 12 - The Legislature
  Required Reading: Chapter 3

- **Feb. 17 - No Class**

- Feb. 19 - The Legislature
  Required Reading: Chapter 3

- Feb. 24 - The Executive
  Required Reading: Chapter 4

- Feb. 26 - The Executive
  Required Reading: Chapter 4

- **Mar. 3 - Midterm 1**

  - Mar. 5 - Separation of Powers
    Required Reading: Chapter 5

  - Mar. 10 - Separation of Powers
    Required Reading: Chapter 5
    Brief Due: *Youngstown Sheet & Tube v. Sawyer*

  - Mar. 12 - Federalism
    Required Reading: Chapter 6

- **Mar. 17 - No Class - Spring Break**

- **Mar. 19 - No Class - Spring Break**

  - Mar. 24 - Federalism
    Required Reading: Chapter 6

  - Mar. 26 - Commerce Power
    Required Reading: Chapter 7

  - Mar. 31 - Commerce Power
    Required Reading: Chapter 7

  - Apr. 2 - Commerce Power
    Required Reading: Chapter 7

  - Apr. 7 - Commerce Power
    Required Reading: Chapter 7 Brief Due: *United States v. Lopez*

- **Apr. 9 - Midterm 2**

  - Apr. 14 - Tax and Spend
    Required Reading: Chapter 8
• Apr. 16 - Tax and Spend
  Required Reading: Chapter 8

• Apr. 21 - Contract Clause
  Required Reading: Chapter 9

• Apr. 23 - Contract Clause
  Required Reading: Chapter 9

• Apr. 28 - Economic Substantive Due Process
  Required Reading: Chapter 10

• Apr. 30 - Economic Substantive Due Process
  Required Reading: Chapter 10

• May 5 - Takings Clause Required Reading: Chapter 11

• May 7 - Wrap Up and Review

• May 13 - Final Exam - 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.