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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School of Arts and Humanities
POLS640
Judicial Politics: Process and Policy Making
3 Credit Hours
8 Weeks
Prerequisite(s): None

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Evaluation Procedures |
| Course Description | Course Outline |
| Course Scope | Academic Services |
| Course Objectives | Library Guide |
| Course Delivery Method | Turnitin |
| Course Materials | Bibliography |

Course Description (Catalog)

POLS640: This course is designed to introduce students to the judicial process, with a special focus on the workings of the Supreme Court. At the completion of this term, students will be able to understand and explain by example the role of the judiciary in American politics and policymaking. Students should also be able to engage in scholarly discussions with colleagues who work in the subfield.

Course Scope

Throughout this course we will explore the questions asked and the methods employed by political scientists studying courts and the legal system. An equally important objective of this course is to familiarize students with the seminal works in judicial research. Judicial scholarship, like other subfields of political science, has experienced some dramatic transformations over the past 50 years with respect to the kinds of questions that have been asked by researchers, the methods that have

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been utilized to study the courts, and the "variables" that have been investigated. All of these studies have sought to improve our understanding of judicial institutions, their processes and participants, the development of law through cases and litigation, and the role of law and courts in the larger political arena and social environment.

Section I: We begin our inquiry with a historical analysis of the judiciary in American politics. This segment explores how the judiciary was built into the foundation of the American political system.

Section II: The second segment of the course addresses the cultural changes in the judiciary, its role in American politics, and the public's perceptions of the changes. A focus is on civil liberties.

Section III: The third segment of the course focuses on the judiciary as participants in U.S. electoral politics, a development that parallels cultural and public policy changes. We review the history of judicial participation and behavior. We will review the backgrounds, attitudes, and rise of Supreme Court Justices, and the expectations of the presidents who nominated them to the Court.

Section IV: The course concludes with recent judicial activism, and the public's opinion of judicial activism, and recent shifts in the ideology of the U.S. Supreme Court and the other components of the federal court system.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

CO-1: Evaluate the general history of the role of the federal judiciary in politics.

CO-2: Analyze the perspective of the role of the judiciary within the political system.

CO-3: Assess the theories of the judiciary and their relationships within the political culture.

CO-4: Evaluate the impact of the criminal justice system on the political system.

CO-5: Analyze the Supreme Court's influence on civil rights in the United States.

CO-6: Evaluate judicial political participation from many vantage points and perspectives.

CO-7: Analyze the relationship between the judicial, executive, and legislative branches.

CO-8: Analyze present and future trends in the justice system and its relation to society.

Course Delivery Method

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You will be able to complete the required work for this course in a flexible manner, completely online. Requirements include Forums and two papers. Corresponding due dates are also outlined below.

Course Materials

1. Rights, Liberties, and Justice: Constitutional Law for a Changing America Author: Epstein, Lee, and Thomas G. Walker, Edition: 8TH 13 e-text: ISBN-9781452286037, Print: 9781452226743 Publisher: CQ Press.

2. Storm Center : Supreme Court in American Politics Author: O'Brien, David M. Edition: 10TH 13 ISBN: 978-0-393-93724-4 Publisher: W.W. Norton & Co.

Evaluation Procedures

Grades for this course will be based upon two grading instruments; Forums and two papers. There are eight weekly discussion questions that are provided in the **Forum**. The student will reply to the posting of at least 2 other students for **all** Forum assignments. The grade scale for each of the evaluation tools is provided below:

Grade

Instruments:

Percentage

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Forums (8) | 50% |
| Paper One | 20% |
| Final Paper | 30% |

Submission of Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due by SUNDAY Evening at 11:55 p.m. ET (Eastern Time) as outlined in the Course Outline below. Note that for Forum assignments, initial posts are due by FRIDAY Evening at 11:55 ET, with replies due on Sunday. **Late assignments will be severely penalized and are strongly discouraged unless prior arrangements have been approved by the instructor due to extenuating circumstances.** Lateness penalties are assessed thusly. For each day that the assignment is late, the assignment is penalized 5% of the maximum grade. For example, if a forum assignment with a maximum grade of 100 points is a day late, then the final grade is reduced by 5 points. On the second day, the penalty would be 10 points, or 10%.

Repeated late submissions may result in failure of the course.

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Plagiarism Penalty: The instructor has the option of awarding any assignment that has been found to have been plagiarized a zero. Subsequent violations may result in an F in the class.

Attention Air Force Students: Please read the following important information:

**AIR FORCE GRADE POLICY-Not Accepting Grade Changes
(Please read the Air Force memo below)**

It is important to let Air Force students know to submit any grade appeals or exception extension requests immediately upon the end of a course. If a corrected grade is not submitted within the Air Force deadline, the Air Force will force tuition reimbursement, even if a failing grade has now been changed to a passing grade.

It is also important that any Air Force students who appeal and receive a grade change from an F send a copy of their updated grade report immediately to milta.reimb@us.af.mil or take a copy into their Education officeto request their grade be updated. Unfortunately the Air Force portal only allows our office the ability to post missing grades or change Incomplete grades in their online portal. We do not have access to change a grade in the AI Portal once a final grade has been submitted.

WRITING EXPECTATIONS

All written submissions should be submitted in a font and page set-up that is readable and neat. It is recommended that students try to adhere to a consistent format, which is described below.

- Typewritten in double-spaced format with a readable style and font and submitted inside the electronic classroom (unless classroom access is not possible and other arrangements have been approved by the professor).
- Arial 12-point font.
- Page margins Top, Bottom, Left Side and Right Side = 1 inch, with reasonable accommodation being made for special situations and online submission variances.

CITATION AND REFERENCE STYLE

All assignments for the Political Science Department (papers, essays, exams, and Discussion Forums) must follow the Chicago Style guidelines. Students should refer to the APUS On-Line Library [Chicago/Turabian Style Manuals](#) for the correct citation method.

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See http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html for a useful summary of the essential elements of the Turabian style. **Students are required to utilize proper citation and reference style in all written assignments including Forums.**

[Student Note: The **Citation** (format) refers to the basic information needed to find specific materials. For example, for a book this information includes author, title, place of publication, publisher, and date published. The citation provides sufficient information to locate the original item. A **Reference Style** is a consistent way of presenting bibliographic citations. Typically, the selection of the **Reference Style** is specific to a field of study.] If the student is studying in a different department than Political Science and is required to use a different citation style for that discipline, then permission may be granted to use an alternative citation style (such as APA) in this course. For legal reference and citation, The Blue Book may also be used for appropriate legal citation.

Course Outline

8 Week Course

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Topic(s)</u> | <u>Course Objective(s)</u> | <u>Readings</u> | <u>Assignment(s)</u> |
|-------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | An Introduction To Law and Justice | CO-1, CO-2 | Epstein and Walker, Chapters 1, 2, 3 Lesson Notes Week 1 Video Lecture: Scholarly Articles Audio Lecture: Research Lecture | Week1 Forum Response |
| 2 | The Structure and Process of the Justice System; Civil Liberties | CO-2, CO-3, CO-5 | Epstein and Walker, Chapters 4 and 5 O'Brien Chapters 1 and 2 | Week 2 Forum Response Paper One |

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| | | | Lesson Notes | |
| 3 | Judicial Interpretation and Civil Liberties | CO-2, CO-5, CO-7 | Lesson Notes Week 3: The 25 Most Important Supreme Court Cases Since 1824. Epstein and Walker, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 | Week 3 Forum Response |
| 4 | Judicial Interpretation and Policymaking | CO-6, CO-8 | Lesson Notes Week 4 Epstein and Walker, Chapter 10 O'Brien Chapters 3, 4, 5 Video (and transcript): Original Intent: The Battle for America | Week 4 Forum Response Final Paper – Bibliography and Thesis due |
| 5 | Criminal Justice | CO-1, CO-4 | Epstein and Walker, Chapters 11 and 12 Lesson Notes Week 5: Criminal Justice Interview Video with Alan Dershowitz and Ken Starr | Week 5 Forum Response |

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| 6 | Civil Rights | CO-3, CO-5, CO-7 | Epstein and Walker, Chapters 13 and 14 Lesson Notes Week 6 | Week 6 Forum Response |
| 7 | The Supreme Court and Other Branches of Government | CO-7 | Lesson Notes Week 7 Watch re-play (or read transcript) from Congressional Hearing | Week 7 Forum Response |
| 8 | Future Trends and Conclusion | CO-3, CO-8 | Lesson Notes Week 8 O'Brien Chapter 6 | Week 8 Forum Response Final Paper |

Academic Services

ONLINE LIBRARY RESEARCH CENTER & LEARNING RESOURCES

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to librarian@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors' publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.

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Library Guide

Help from APUS Library:

- ⦿ Request a Library Guide for your course:
(<http://apus.libguides.com/index.php>)
- ⦿ The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the Open Web and licensed resources on the Deep Web. The following are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:
- ⦿ Program Portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name, or navigate by school.
- ⦿ Course Lib-Guides narrow the focus to relevant resources for the corresponding course. To locate, search by class code (e.g., SOCI111), or class name.
- ⦿ If a guide you need is not available yet, please email the APUS Library:
librarian@apus.edu.

Turnitin.com

- ⦿ Faculty may require assignments be submitted to Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com will analyze a paper and report instances of potential plagiarism for the student to edit before submitting it for a grade. In some cases professors may require students to use Turnitin.com. Typically the course professor will establish a Turnitin.com access code for his/her classes. If the code has not been established, those who wish to use Turnitin.com may ask their professor to establish the code.

Selected Bibliography

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