

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Welcome to Constitutional Law! We expect that most of you are coming into this class with only a minimal understanding of your Constitutional rights. Before the semester is over, it is our goal to make sure that each of you understands the fundamentals of the Constitution and how the law affects you as a student and as a citizen or resident of the United States. We will cover many topics in this class including free speech, search and seizure, and civil rights.

In addition to learning the law, you will also learn the fundamentals of good legal writing. As a lawyer, good writing skills are as important as, or more important than, actually knowing the nuts and bolts of the law. In addition, good writing techniques will aid you all future classes, college applications, or job searches.

Lastly, a major component of this class will be participation in a moot court. Each of you will research a topic, create an argument based on the applicable law and facts, and deliver the argument orally in class. The best presenter will be able to participate in a moot court competition in the spring semester at American University.

Contact Information:

Should you have any questions about the assignments or reading materials, please feel free to e-mail us at the address below. We will try to get back to you within a reasonable amount of time. However, if you send a question at 12:30am concerning an assignment due on the following day, you probably will not receive a response. Please remember that we sleep during normal hours and also have classes and homework of our own.

Ms.Heather.Elizabeth@gmail.com

Website:

<http://sites.google.com/site/conlawwts/>

<http://www.wcl.american.edu/marshallbrennan>

Class Goals and Expectations:

- Develop efficient writing skills
- Develop basic understanding of legal terms and concepts
- Develop basic understanding of how the Constitution affects our rights in a democracy
- Develop basic understanding of how the Supreme Court operates
- Develop oral communication skills
- Understand how the Constitution affects students

Grading Policy:

- 30% Writing Component
 - Paper 1- 10%
 - Paper 2- 10%
 - Paper 3- 10%
- 10% Attendance
- 20% Participation in class and briefs
- 15% Moot Court
 - Research, outline of argument, and written argument- 10%
 - Oral presentation- 5%
- 15% Tests
 - Midterm- 5%
 - Final- 10%
- 10% Quizzes

Writing:

You will be expected to complete three papers throughout the semester. These papers should be 7-10 pages in length, double spaced, 12 pt. font in Times New Roman, with at least 1 inch margins on all sides. As students ourselves, we know all of the tricks used to lengthen and shorten papers. It would be in your best interest to simply follow the rules. The topics of these papers will partially depend on you. After we complete approximately a quarter of the material, you may pick a topic that we have covered to write about. We will provide more information on the content of the papers as we progress through the semester.

Attendance:

Attendance is extremely important in all of your classes. It is impossible to learn the material if you never come to class. Hence, there will be consequences for missing multiple classes without a valid excuse. A valid excuse for missing a class includes sickness, a death in the family, or a school sponsored event. In each instance, please provide us with a written note from your parent or guardian which includes their phone number and/or e-mail address for confirmation. **When you reach three unexcused absences, three points will be deducted from your final grade.** Three additional points will be deducted for each additional absence.

Participation and Briefs:

Participation is an important component to any Constitutional law class. Your participation grade will be based on your comments in class as well as the briefs that you complete for each class. We encourage you to ask questions and offer opinions about the topic we are covering as well as any **related** topic you might be interested in discussing. We also encourage classroom debate about controversial issues and news events. However, it is important to remember that every one has a different opinion, and we should all try to respect those opinions even if we don't agree with them.

You will be required to hand in a brief for every case assigned in the reading. A brief consists of concise statements concerning the facts, the issue, the rule, and the court's holding. You will need to complete 2 copies of each brief, either handwritten or typed. One copy will be collected in class, the other is for your notes. More detailed information about how to brief a case will be covered in class.

Quizzes:

There will be approximately **10 unannounced** quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will cover material that you should have read for homework within the last few days or additional material that we covered in class. Since these quizzes are unannounced, it is important to always keep up with the reading and review your notes.

Moot Court:

Moot Court is a simulated courtroom experience. Our moot court problem this semester is on the Fourth Amendment. This classroom portion of the moot court competition will require each student to research case law and create an argument which be presented to a panel of judges as if you were in an actual courtroom.

Another element of moot court is the national competition which can result in an all-expense paid trip to Philadelphia and cash prizes. More information about these opportunities will be discussed later in the semester.

Rules of the Classroom:

- No technology. (blackberry, I-pod, cell phone, CD player, game boy or any other device with a battery)
- Remember to bring all materials you need for the day, including your text book.
- Arrive on time. "On time" means in your chair.
- Be respectful of yourself, the teachers, and your other classmates.
- Full class participation in required. We will call on you.

ASSIGNMENTS

Week One: August 24-28

Thursday 8/27

Readings: None.

In Class: Introductions, Course Overview & Constitution Quiz

Week Two: August 31-September 4 (The Constitution)

Monday 8/31

Readings: The Constitution.

In Class: Go over the Constitution, test your values (Anne Frank Quiz) & make a class constitution

Tuesday 9/1

Readings: WTS pgs 2-10.

In Class: The civil court Process, how to Brief a Case

Thursday 9/3

Readings: TBA

In Class: Debate & Public Speaking Skills

Week Three: September 7-11 (Fourth Amendment)

Monday 9/7 – Labor Day; No Class.

Readings: N/A

In Class: N/A

Tuesday 9/8

Presidential Speech

Thursday 9/10

Readings: N/A

In Class: Study Time

Week Four: September 14-18

Monday 9/14

Readings: N/A

In Class: Study Time

Tuesday 9/15

Readings: WTS pgs 130-138
In Class: Reduced Privacy Rights in School

Thursday 9/17

Readings: WTS pgs 139-145, 152-157
In Class: *Special Curriculum* - Constitution Day!—
Extracurricular Activities & Drug Testing
Debate & Public Speaking Skills

Week Five: September 21-25

Monday 9/21

Readings: WTS pgs 149-150, 139-145, & 152-157
In Class: Locker Searches & Metal Detectors; Review *Doe v. Renfrow*

Tuesday 9/22

Readings: *Safford v. Redding* - Handout
In Class: Strip Searches in Schools; Review 4th Amendment

Thursday 9/24

Readings: TBA
In Class: Review Additional Cases –
Debate & Public Speaking Skills – Focus on grammar.

Week Six: September 28-October 2

Monday 9/28

Readings: N/A
In Class: Debate & Public Speaking Skills

Tuesday 9/29

Readings: Read & Highlight Fact Pattern – Identify Issue(s).
(Also available on the website)
In Class: Moot Court. Prep

Thursday 10/1

Readings: Rough Draft of Paper #1.
In Class: Applying the Law – Moot Court Prep.

Week Seven: October 5-9 (First Amendment)

Monday 10/5

Readings: *First Paper Due*.
In Class: Introduction to First Amendment

Tuesday 10/6

Readings: WTS pgs 13-29

In Class: Expressive Conduct & The Right to Speak

Thursday 10/8

Readings: WTS pgs 33-40

In Class: Provocative Symbols and Double Entendres

Week Eight: October 12-16

Monday 10/12 No Class.

Readings: N/A

In Class: N/A

Tuesday 10/13

Readings: WTS pgs 41-62

In Class: Testing the Limits of Free Speech. (*BONG HiTS 4 JESUS!*)

Thursday 10/15

Readings: WTS pgs 63-77;

In Class: Freedom of Student Press. Review First Amendment.

Week Nine: October 19-23 (Fourteenth Amendment)

Monday 10/19

Readings: Appellate Case Brief.

In Class: Drafting Oral Arguments.

Tuesday 10/20

Readings: TBA

In Class: Continue Oral Argument; Introduction to Equal Protection.

Thursday 10/22

Readings: WTS pgs 176-188

In Class: Slavery, Racism & Segregation

Week Ten: October 26-30

Monday 10/26

Readings: WTS pgs 189-213
In Class: School Integration & College Admissions.

Tuesday 10/27

Readings: WTS pgs 189-213.
In Class: Wrap up admissions discussion & Review.

Thursday 10/29 – Half-Day; School’s Out at 12:15.

Readings: Second Paper Due (*Please e-mail*).

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!

Week Eleven: November 2-6

Monday 11/2

Readings: WTS pgs 214-234
In Class: Suspect Classes.

Tuesday 11/3

Readings: Oral Argument
In Class: Moot Court Prep – Performing the Argument
WTS pgs 248-259 Student Harassment.

Thursday 11/5

Readings: WTS pgs 269-282
In Class: Privacy, Pregnancy & Abortion.
Vote for Student Choice

Week Twelve: November 9-13 (Moot Court Competition)

Monday 11/9

Readings: WTS pgs 269-282
In Class: Continue Previous Discussion

Tuesday 11/10

Readings: TBA
In Class: Cyber Bullying.

Thursday 11/12

Readings: Revised Full Draft of the Argument (Extra Hard Copies).
In Class: Moot Court Prep

Week Thirteen: November 16-21

Monday 11/16

Readings: Revised Oral Argument.
In Class: Continue work on oral argument.

Tuesday 11/17

Readings: Professional Dress Required.
In Class: In Class Moot Court Competition

Thursday 11/19

Readings: TBA
In Class: Moot Court Prep.

Saturday 11/21

Fall: William H. Karchmer Local High School Moot Court Competition

Week Fourteen: November 23-27

Monday 11/23

Readings: *Third Paper Du e – Topic of Choice.*
In Class: Evaluate the Moot Court Process.

Tuesday 11/24

Readings: TBA.
In Class: TBA.

Thursday 11/26 Thanksgiving – No Class.

Readings: N/A
In Class: N/A

Week Fifteen: November 30-December 4 (Student Choice Week)

Monday 11/30

Readings: TBA
In Class: TBA

Tuesday 12/1

Readings: TBA
In Class:

Thursday 12/3

Readings: TBA

In Class: TBA

Week Sixteen: December 7-11 (Eighth Amendment)

Monday 12/7 (Parent Teacher Conference)

Readings: WTS pgs 158-175

In Class: Due Process & Cruel and Unusual Punishment in Schools.

Tuesday 12/8

Readings: Review & Organize Your Notes.

In Class: Finish Previous Discussion & Review 8th Amendment.

Thursday 12/10

Readings: Review & Organize Your Notes.

In Class: Review Session.

Week Seventeen: December 14-18; FINALS WEEK!

Date of Final Exam: TBD.

END OF SEMESTER