Course Description

This course is designed to teach students about the role of the Supreme Court in American political life. Topics include: access to the court, the nature of Supreme Court decision making, the selection of Supreme Court justices, as well as the relationship between the Supreme Court and the other branches of government. Students will also explore some of the major substantive issues with which the Supreme Court has been concerned.

Required Readings


Additional readings are posted on Blackboard.

Policies

Participation and Time Expectations for a Four Week Course: You will be expected to put as many hours into an online class as a traditional course taught in a classroom. In a 14-15 week semester course, you should normally plan to spend at least 12 hours a week on a 3 credit course: 3 hours a week in the classroom or on the course website participating in discussions and an additional 9 hours a week reading (approximately 100-150 pages a week in assigned readings plus readings for your final paper) and completing your assignments. In a 4 week course, this means that you should expect to spend 45 hours a week on the course. 4 week courses are challenging even in the best of circumstances, so you will need to be extra careful about how you plan and spend your time during the 4 weeks of this course. If you are unable to keep up with the course readings and assignments, it is best that you drop the course early. Extensions will NOT be provided on assignments; in a short course it is unlikely you will catch up if you fall behind. The last day to withdraw from this course is January 15.

Students With Disabilities: Please email me within the first week of classes if you anticipate that you will need accommodation.
**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is taking the ideas and/or words of another person and using them as your own without citation. Plagiarism also involves resubmitting your work (without permission) for more than one assignment. If you are unsure what is or is not plagiarism, please contact me prior to your submission of the assignment. As a general rule, if you are uncertain whether you should cite or not, cite. If you plagiarize, you will automatically fail the assignment. Depending upon the circumstances, you may be subject to more serious repercussions, such as course failure or being turned over to the judicial board for suspension, expulsion, etc.

**Email Response Policy:** I will generally be online Saturday and Sunday mornings. During these and other times, I will respond to emails on a first come, first serve basis. While I will make every attempt to respond to your emails as soon as possible, please remember that it may take between 24-48 hours to receive a response. I will not answer emails December 25 and January 1, due to university holidays. Making note of the deadlines and planning accordingly should prevent any need for urgent emails.

**Written Assignments and Grading Procedure**

Every week you will take a quiz on the weekly readings and will be evaluated based on your responses to the weekly discussion question. Each discussion response and weekly quiz will be worth a possible 5 points. At 11:59 p.m. ET on Saturday of each week, the weekly quiz will become unavailable and you will NOT be able to complete the quiz after this time. At 11:59 p.m. ET on Sunday of each week, the weekly discussion will become unavailable and you will NOT be able to post after this time. In addition, you will write a 3-5 page paper proposal worth 10% of your overall course grade and 10-15 page final paper about the judicial decision-making of a current Supreme Court justice worth 50% of your overall course grade. These assignments will require you to find and read 10 credible sources (i.e. books, journal articles, court cases). The grades will be distributed as follows:

- 20% Discussion Responses
- 20% Quizzes
- 10% Paper Proposal
- 50% Final Paper

**Weekly Deadlines**

Each week will contain the following general deadlines:

**Saturdays:** Everyone should complete readings for the week by 11:59 p.m. ET to inform responses to the discussion question for the week and be prepared for the quiz. Quizzes must be completed by 11:59 p.m. ET.

**Sundays:** Responses to the discussion question must be posted by 11:59 p.m. ET.

*You may complete the quiz and post your responses anytime before these deadlines.*
Schedule

Week 1, December 21-27: Judicial Review, Caseloads, and Appointments

Read:
- Baum Chapters 1-3
- Federalist No. 78

Week 2, December 28-January 3: The Legal, Attitudinal, and Strategic Models of Judicial Decision-making

Read:
- Baum Chapter 4

Week 3, January 4-10: The Supreme Court’s Role in the American Political System

- Baum Chapter 5
Week 4, January 11-19: The Supreme Court and Social Change

Read:
- Baum Chapter 6

Note: January 15 is the Last Day to drop Winter Session classes