OFFICE HOURS:
The best time to talk to me is during my office hours—12:00 – 1:00pm Tuesdays. If that proves inconvenient, you can contact me at the email address listed above. We can either work out a time to meet or conduct questions and answers via email. I have also noted a phone number above; please use this in emergencies—leave a message including your name, my name and a reason for the call.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course examines the relationships between law, courts, and politics in the United States, with a focus on the role of lawyers and the operation of trial courts in civil and criminal cases. The course is designed to present a broad overview of the structure and processes of court systems in the United States. Since the course examines the legal system, the focus will not only be on judges and courtrooms, but also in placing courts in their political and operational context. In addition to the legal system, we will be discussing lawyers, police, litigants, and politicians. Besides what occurs within courtrooms, we will emphasize the equally important events that occur in lawyers’ offices, and in the hallways of the courthouse, City Hall and the local police station.

Courses dealing with the law and the legal system have an important place within the general liberal arts and political science curricula. The knowledge of how the law and courts operate is essential to understanding how the American political system functions. This course will focus on the law in operation and not the law on the books.

Course materials are drawn from a variety of sources, including court cases, social science research, and journalistic accounts of actual cases.

READING REQUIREMENT:

***There will be additional readings given during the course of the semester. These may include cases not included in the text and/or related articles.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible. Most importantly, please request that Disabilities Resource Center send a letter verifying your disability.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Participation (10%): Along with regular attendance, participation will be assessed on your ability to interact and participate in classroom discussion and activities. I am not looking for quantity, but quality. This portion of the grade will not be based on the number of times you speak, but on the
reasoned opinions, responses, and arguments you make during class. I reserve the right to call upon students at random and if readings are not being done I reserve the right to give pop quizzes.

Quizzes (15%): There will be eight (8) quizzes given during the semester. The quiz will be based on the readings given for that week. There will be no make ups.

Debates (20%): You are required to participate in two debates. Handouts will be given out prior to the debate to explain the format of each debate and how you are expected to participate. The first debate will be a Mock Senate Confirmation Hearing, which will require you to hand in a two (2) page response prior to the Hearing. The second, the Death Penalty Debate, will also require you to hand in, prior to the debate, a two (2) page response.

Two Papers – Midterm and final (55%): You are required to submit two papers during the course of the class. The first paper, midterm will be due in class on Tuesday, October 5th and is worth 25% of your grade. The second paper, the Final will be due in the contact office, HU 16, on Friday December 10th—no later than 1pm—and is worth 30% of your grade.

Grading: Any assignments turned in late must have an excuse from the Dean of Academic Affairs. Otherwise, grades will be graded down by 1/2 a letter grade for each day it is late. For example, if a paper is turned in and is an A paper, but was 2 days late, the paper will be given a B.

IF you wish to dispute a grade, it must be done in writing within 48 hours of receiving the assignment back. It must address what you are questioning and why you feel your answer/paper is deserving of higher grade. IF you want to dispute a grade please let me know and I will supply you with a handout listing the correct format to use.

1. Participation: 10%
2. Quizzes: 15%
3. Debates: Two (2) 10% (Mock Senate Confirmation Hearing) 10% (Death Penalty Debate)
4. Papers: Two (2) 55% (25% Midterm, 30% Final) 100%

READING SCHEDULE:
This is subject to change if we get through the information faster/slower than anticipated. However, it will be easier to learn and you will be better prepared for the tests if you read as outlined below.

Week 1:
Part 1 – Institutions of law:
August 31: Chapter 1 – Introduction: Law, Courts, and Politics
September 2: Chapter 1 – Continued
September 7: Chapter 2 – Law and Legal Systems
September 14: Chapter 2 – Continued

Week 2:
September 16: Chapter 4 – State Courts
September 21: Chapter 4 – Continued
September 23: SVU/Law & Order
September 28: Chapter 3 – Federal Courts
September 30: Chapter 3 – Continued
Week 3:

**Part II – Interpreters of the Law**

Midterm DUE IN CLASS ON MONDAY, October 5

October 5: Chapter 6 – Judges.

October 7: Chapter 6 – Continued

**October 12: MOCK SENATE CONFIRMATION HEARING**

**Part III – Consumers of Law**

October 14: Chapter 7 – Mobilizing the Law


Week 4:

**Part IV – Trial Courts:**

October 21: Chapter 8 – Trial Courts: The Preliminary Stages of Criminal Cases

October 26: Chapter 8 – Continued

**October 28: Death Penalty Debate**

November 2: Chapter 9: Trial Courts: How Criminal Cases End: Bargaining and Sentencing

November 4: Chapter 9: Continued

Week 5:

November 9: Chapter 10 – Trial Courts: How Civil Cases Begin


November 16: Civil Action

November 18: Chapter 11 – Trial Courts: How Civil Cases End

November 23: Chapter 12 – Trials and Juries

Week 6:

November 30: Chapter 12 – Continued

**Part V – Appellate Review:**

December 2: Chapter 14 – The Supreme Court: Deciding What to Decide

December 7: Chapter 15 – The Supreme Court: The Justices and Their Decisions

December 10: FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10

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**STATEMENT REGARDING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**
Cheating on an exam or a paper will result in a grade of zero for the exam and possibly a failing grade for the course. Plagiarizing will be treated the same. Those found in violation will be reported to the relevant University bodies. The following is from the Undergraduate Bulletin 2006-07 available at [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)

“It is every student's responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University. Claims of ignorance, of unintentional error, or of academic or personal pressures are not sufficient reasons for violations of academic integrity.”

No set of guidelines can, of course, define all possible types or degrees of academic dishonesty; thus, the following descriptions should be understood as examples of infractions rather than an
exhaustive list. Individual faculty members and the judicial boards of the University will continue to judge each case according to its particular merit.

PLAGIARISM:
Presenting as one’s own works the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student’s work as one’s own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating University regulations.

EXAMPLES OF PLAGIARISM INCLUDE:
Failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper’s or project’s structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person’s data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one’s own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

Multiple Submissions:
Submitting substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once, without the prior explicit consent of the instructor(s) to whom the material is being (or has in the past been) submitted.

Unauthorized Collaboration:
Collaborating on projects, papers, or other academic exercises, which is regarded as inappropriate by the instructor(s). Students who want to confer or collaborate with one another on work receiving academic credit should make certain of the instructor's expectations and standards.

Falsification:
Misrepresenting material or fabricating information in an academic exercise or assignment (for example, the false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of experimental or computer data, etc.).

PENALTIES AND PROCEDURES FOR VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
“When a faculty member has information that a student has violated academic integrity in a course or program for which he or she is responsible and determines that a violation has occurred, he or she will inform the student and impose an appropriate sanction. A faculty member may make any one or a combination of the following responses to the infractions cited above:

Warning without further penalty; requiring rewriting of a paper containing plagiarized material; lowering of a paper or project grade by one full grade or more; giving a failing grade on a paper containing plagiarized material; giving a failing grade on any examination in which cheating occurred; withholding permission to withdraw from the course after a penalty has been imposed;
lowering a course grade by one full grade or more; giving a failing grade in a course; imposing a penalty uniquely designed for the particular infraction.

If a faculty member announces a failing grade in the course as a possible result of academic dishonesty, the student receiving such a penalty will not be permitted to withdraw from the course unless the grievance or judicial system rules in favor of the student.

Any faculty member encountering matters of academic dishonesty in an academic program or class for which he or she has responsibility may, in addition to, or in lieu of, the actions cited above, refer a case to the University Judicial System. After considering the case under the procedures provided by the University, the appropriate University judicial body will recommend the disposition of the case that can include disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University.”