Course Syllabus

Jump to Today Edit

Instructor Contact

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Course Information

- Course Name: Judicial Process and Politics
- Course ID & Section: POS 4284-17W59
- Credit Hours: 3
- Semester/Year: Fall 2017
- Web Only Course

Course Description

Judicial Process and Politics examines the role of the judiciary in American society. Please read this syllabus carefully. This is an online only course. The course material is organized into a series of modules. When you've finished reading this syllabus, you can start with the "Start Here" module (there's a link to it at the bottom of the syllabus).

In this course, we will primarily be concerned with the *process* of law, rather than the product of legal processes. The law is not simply a collection of outcomes, policies, decisions and decrees. Law is also a method for transforming contentious issues into enforced solutions. But this process is far from simple or mechanical. Abstract rules and general principles provide some guidance in this transformation of contentiousness, but social norms, broader public understanding, and strategies of legal interpretation also play a role in this process.

A number of important questions will concern us throughout this course. Beyond understanding the mechanics of how courts function, the players who are involved and their role in society, we want to form opinions on how the judicial process *ought* to function. How *should* judges interpret decisions? How *should* the Supreme Court decide cases? If the current process is flawed, then what should replace it?

This course provides information so that you will be able to form your own responses to those questions. Political scientists often do not agree on how those queries should be answered; this course will present some of their theories. Then you will evaluate the merits of any particular answer compared to other possibilities.

University Course Catalog Description: Study of the formal and informal judicial process. Legal culture, bureaucratic model, judicial recruitment and outputs, comparative judicial behavior.

Course prerequisites: ENC 1102 (Freshman Composition II), POS 2041 (American National Government) or consent of the instructor.

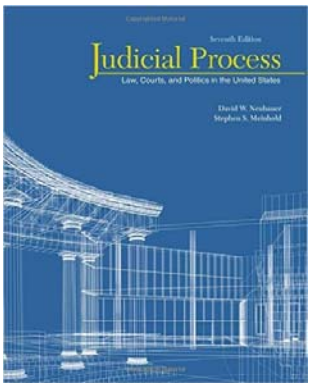
Course Objectives

- Understand terminology and concepts related to judicial process and politics
- Understand basic history and organizational principles of U.S. court system
- Evaluate the role of the courts in democratic society
- Compare the popular perception of the legal system to the realities of American courtrooms
- Evaluate the fairness of the judicial system for racial minorities and the poor
- Develop in-depth understanding of a particular judicial process through direct observation and critical analysis

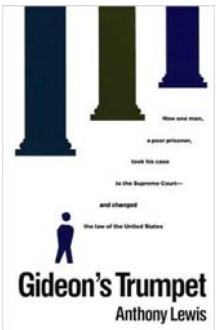
Required Texts and Supplemental Readings

- **REQUIRED**: Neubauer, David, and Stephen Meinhold. 2016. *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Politics in the United States, Seventh Edition*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning (hereafter “Neubauer & Meinhold”). ISBN-13: 978-1305506527, ISBN-10: 1305506529. See on Amazon (https://www.amazon.com/Judicial-Process-Courts-Politics-United/dp/1305506529

/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1470240246)



- **REQUIRED**: Lewis, Anthony. 1989. *Gideon's Trumpet*. New York: Vintage Books [Originally published in 1964]. **See on Amazon (http://www.amazon.com/Gideons-Trumpet-Anthony-Lewis/dp/0679723129/ref=la_B000APOQU0_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1437530734&sr=1-1)** .



- **BOOK BUYING ISSUES?** Don't wait until the second or third week of class to get the books required for this class. If the timing of financial aid is an issue, take advantage of **UCF's Textbook Purchase Programs (https://finaid.ucf.edu/receiving/funds_for_books.html)** .
- **SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS.** Additional readings will be announced and/or distributed online. In particular, these readings will focus on rulings from the most recent Supreme Court term(s), and articles regarding the various uses of federal and state judicial power.
- **RECOMMENDED:** Read your local newspaper's coverage of trials in your area. It's not only interesting to see how these cases are reported, news reports can alert you to great opportunities to observe courtroom proceedings in your area (which will help you complete the required original research project).

Course Requirements

Your final grade is based on following components:

1. **Module Review Exercises** (10%) - Each numbered module in this course contains at least one exercise design to increase your understanding of the assigned material. Your lowest module review exercise score will be dropped.
2. **Module Quizzes** (40%) - Each substantive module in this course includes a short quiz to test your understanding of the assigned material. Module quizzes consist of multiple choice, true-false, and short answer questions. Your lowest module quiz score will be dropped.
3. **Small Group Discussions** (10%) - Each student will be assigned to a small group of 5-6 students. We'll do our best to group students based on interests and location. In your small groups, you'll discuss how the course material relates to your particular interests and will also help one another with your original research projects.
4. **Final Exam** (20%) – The final examination is cumulative and will require students to apply their understanding of the subject matter in a constructive manner. Students can expect a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. At least one of the essay questions will require students to apply course material to a hypothetical situation.
5. **Original Research Project** (20%) - A significant component of this course will be your original research on a judicial process you want to learn more about. This projects requires both directed reading and field research. Our state and federal judicial systems are diverse and offer abundant opportunities to study law and courts in action. By the end of the semester, you will submit a 5-6 page Final Report on your original research. The assignment pages contain more information about this assignment.

Workload Expectations

This is a three credit hour class. The workload expectation per credit hour is set forth in the **UCF Catalog, Registration Policies, Terms and Credit Hours (http://catalog.ucf.edu/policies/registration-policies#Terms_and_Credit_Hours)**, which states the amount of work represented by one credit hour is not less than "One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week [or equivalent work in internship, directed readings, etc.] for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time." In an online class, you make up for hours of class time on your own. This means you are expected to work at least 9 hours per week on this class in a regular Fall or Spring Semester or 18 hours per week on this class in an abbreviated Summer Term.

This class does not take a week off for Spring Break during Spring 2017 in order to fit the final exam schedule. If you have a trip planned, I strongly encourage you to work ahead so this class won't interfere with your plans.

Missed Assignments/Make-Ups/Extra Credit

Make-ups for in-class writing, quizzes, the midterm, or the final exam will only be allowed for official University activities or personal emergencies. Written documentation is required. Make-up assessments may be different. Students may participate in an optional discussion about upcoming judicial proceedings in Florida to earn extra credit (up to 5%).

Late Work

Completing all your work by the specified dues dates is important to your success in this class. Late work will be penalized. Your score on late work will be reduced 10% per day late. For example, if you receive a score of 9 out of 10 on a quiz two days after it was due (i.e. you took a quiz due Sunday on Tuesday instead), your score will be reduced 20%, so you will receive a 7.2 out of 10 on that quiz. You will receive no credit for work complete ten or more days after its due date. However, because modules unlock only after your have completed prior modules, so you will still need to finish your work (for no credit) to complete this class.

Grading Scale

A	100%	to 92.5%
A-	< 92.5%	to 89.5%
B+	< 89.5%	to 86.5%
B	< 86.5%	to 82.5%
B-	< 82.5%	to 79.5%
C+	< 79.5%	to 76.5%
C	< 76.5%	to 72.5%
C-	< 72.5%	to 69.6%
D+	< 69.6%	to 66.5%
D	< 66.5%	to 62.5%
D-	< 62.5%	to 59.5%
F	< 59.5%	to 58.0%

Any missing assignments are treated as 0 scores for the purposes of calculating final course grades.

Grades of "Incomplete"

Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the “I” will automatically be recorded as an “F” on your transcript.

Group Work Policy

There are no group projects in this class. You are welcome to discuss course material with other students, but you are responsible for

your own work.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the **Office of Student Conduct (http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/faq#students)** for further action. See the **UCF Golden Rule (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/)** for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, **visit the UWC website (http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/)**, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

You do not need to come to the UCF campus to receive help from a trained writing tutor. As a UCF student, you have access to writing tutors at the UCF Online Writing Center. You can **schedule an online consultation (http://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/schedule-a-consultation/)** with a writing tutor. You can get the help you need to complete the Final Report of your Civic Engagement Project online at a time convenient to you! This service is free to you.

Disability Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with **Student Accessibility Services (http://www.sds.ucf.edu/)**, Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

Financial Aid Requirement

As of Fall, 2014, all faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please ***complete the Evidence of Academic Engagement Quiz by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course***. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

START HERE MODULE

Assignments Summary:

Date	Details	
Mon Jan 9, 2017	UCF Classes Begin (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363453&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Quiz: About You and Your Interests (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069694)	due by 11:59pm
	Quiz: SOL in the Court System (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069702)	due by 11:59pm
	Syllabus Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069695)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jan 11, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 3-11. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363454&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 1-15 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363455&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Law, Courts, and Politics Hangman (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069727)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jan 13, 2017	Evidence of Academic Engagement Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069700)	due by 5pm
Sun Jan 15, 2017	Law, Courts & Politics Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069698)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jan 18, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 12-30. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363434&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 16-45 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363433&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Law and Legal Systems Vocab Word Search (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069726)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Jan 19, 2017	Discussion: Meet Small Group & Share Interests (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069713)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jan 20, 2017	Reminder: Small Group Discussion Replies Due (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363486&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
Sun Jan 22, 2017	Law and Legal Systems Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069701)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jan 25, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 31-46. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363456&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 46-79 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363432&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Federal Courts Crossword (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069723)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jan 29, 2017	Federal Courts Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069697)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Feb 1, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 47-58. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363452&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 80-112 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363451&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	State Courts Jeopardy Game (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069730)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 2, 2017	Discussion: Planning Your Field Research (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069712)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 3, 2017	Reminder: Small Group Discussion Replies Due (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363487&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
Sun Feb 5, 2017	State Courts Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069704)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	
Wed Feb 8, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 59-81. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363457&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 113-148 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363431&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Lawyers and Legal Representation Crossword Puzzle (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069728)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Feb 12, 2017	Lawyers and Legal Representation Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069692)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Feb 15, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 82-99. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363450&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 149-185 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363449&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Judges Hangman Game (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069725)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 16, 2017	Discussion: Relating Course Material to Your Project (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069714)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 17, 2017	Reminder: Small Group Discussion Replies Due (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363488&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
Sun Feb 19, 2017	Judges Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069708)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Feb 22, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 100-106 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363458&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 186-211 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363430&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Mobilizing the Law Jeopardy Game (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069729)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Feb 26, 2017	Mobilizing the Law Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069693)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 1, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 107-122. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363446&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 212-241 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363445&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Criminal Justice: Preliminary Stages Sequencer (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069721)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 2, 2017	Discussion: Additional Research on Your Project (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069717)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 3, 2017	Reminder: Small Group Discussion Replies Due (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363489&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
Sun Mar 5, 2017	Criminal Justice: Preliminary Stages Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069706)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 8, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 123-145. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363447&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 242-280 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363448&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Criminal Justice Word Search (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069722)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Mar 12, 2017	Criminal Justice: Bargaining and Sentencing Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069696)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	
Wed Mar 15, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 146-168. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363435&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 281-314 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363436&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Civil Litigation: Disputing Pyramid Sequencer (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069720)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 16, 2017	Discussion: Status of Your Field Research (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069715)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 17, 2017	Reminder: Small Group Discussion Replies Due (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363490&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
Sun Mar 19, 2017	Civil Litigation: How Cases Begin Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069703)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 22, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 169-190. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363437&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 315-342 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363438&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	UCF Withdrawal Deadline (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363492&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Civil Litigation Crossword Puzzle (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069719)	due by 10:59pm
Sun Mar 26, 2017	Civil Litigation: How Cases End Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069709)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 29, 2017	Trials and Juries Sequencer (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069732)	due by 10:59pm
	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 191-201. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363439&include_contexts=course_1248992)	11pm
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 343-373 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363440&include_contexts=course_1248992)	11pm
Thu Mar 30, 2017	Discussion: Status of Your Research Paper (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069716)	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 31, 2017	Reminder: Small Group Discussion Replies Due (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363491&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
Sun Apr 2, 2017	Trials and Juries Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069710)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 5, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 202-217. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363442&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 374-405 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363441&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	The Appellate Process Hangman Game (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069731)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 6, 2017	Extra Credit: Upcoming Florida Court Proceedings (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069718)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 9, 2017	The Appellate Process Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069711)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 12, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 218-233. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363459&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 406-435 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363429&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am

Date	Details	
	U.S. Supreme Court Agenda Setting Crossword Puzzle (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069734)	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 13, 2017	Upload Your Original Research Project: Final Report (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069733)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 16, 2017	U.S. Supreme Court Agenda Setting Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069705)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 19, 2017	Read Gideon's Trumpet, pp. 234-250. (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363443&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Read Neubauer & Meinhold, pp. 436-473 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363428&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am
	Identify Warren Court Justices (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069724)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 23, 2017	U.S. Supreme Court Justices and Their Decisions Module Quiz (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069707)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 30, 2017	POS 4284 Final Exam, Fall 2016 (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1248992/assignments/5069699)	due by 11:59pm
Fri May 5, 2017	Grades Due to UCF (https://webcourses.ucf.edu/calendar?event_id=1363444&include_contexts=course_1248992)	12am