POS 4284
Judicial Process and Politics
Spring 2017
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:30-2:20
Classroom Building 1, Room 318

Instructor: Nathan Ilderton
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Office Hours: 10:00am-12:00pm Monday and Wednesday or by appointment (Main Campus)
3:30-5:30pm Monday (West Campus)
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Course Description:
This class is a study of the U.S. court system, its processes, participants, structure, and policy impact. This is not a course on the law, but on the branch of government charged with interpreting the law. We will examine state and federal court systems, the key participants in the legal process (judges, lawyers, special interest, etc.), and the process by which decisions are made in the judicial branch. We will also examine the impact of these decisions on public policy.

Course Objectives:
The first objective is to understand the basic procedures of the judicial process. However, we must also recognize that Article 3 of the Constitution is the shortest article describing a branch of government. It left wide open the structure of the judicial branch below the Supreme Court, issues of jurisdiction, and even the process by which judges render decisions. This means that the judicial process and structure of the judiciary as we see it today was created by a political process. Further, the effects of judicial decisions are deeply political. Therefore, we will go beyond just a simple understanding of the mechanics of the judicial process and seek to understand the political nature of its creation and its political impact.

Required Reading:

There are two books required for this class. Each is available at the University Bookstore and through the usual off campus and internet outlets.

- David W. Neubauer and Stephen S. Meinhold. *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Politics in the United States*, 7th edition (Cengage Learning).

If you purchase the text book online please insure that you are purchasing the correct editions of the required text. This course will adhere to the listed editions; students who purchased the wrong editions are responsible for acquiring any new or changed material.

Assignments, Exams and Grading:
Exams: Students will be graded on the basis of two exams. The first will be given in class on February 16th. Exam 2 will be given during the final exam period, Monday, April 30th, 1:00-3:50pm. Even though it will be given during the final exam period, Exam 2 will not be cumulative. Format for the exams will be multiple choice and short answer questions.

Attendance and Participation: Students will also be graded on the basis of a two-part participation grade. Part of eight class periods will revolve around a discussion of topical readings from the textbook. The first part of the participation grade will be based on attendance. See below for the full attendance policy.

Discussion Paper: The graded portion of the discussion will be a one to one-half page paper to be prepared for the class period in which a discussion takes place. Prior to the class I will provide questions to be used for composing the paper (in class and on webcourses). The paper will be turned in after the discussion. I will grade the paper based on the insight you provide in answering the questions, the accuracy of your assertions, and the quality of writing. You may earn bonus points on your paper for insightful and active participation in the class discussion.

There are seven discussion topics this semester. I will require that you turn in any five discussion papers. This means you may miss two discussion papers without penalty. If you turn in more than five discussion papers, I will drop the lowest discussion paper grade for each extra paper you submit.

These papers are to be double spaced using 12-point font and are not to exceed 2 pages in length.

Film Response Papers: Three times during the semester the class will watch a film during the second part of the class period. Following each film I will handout a series of questions on the film. Each student will turn in a paper of approximately 750 to 1000 words (double spaced, 12-point font, proper citations to any works cited in the paper) on two of the three films viewed during the semester. The papers will be due in class the week following the in class viewing of the film. Students may only turn in papers on two of the three films.

Final grades will be calculated using the following formula:

Participation: 30%
- Attendance: 10%
- Discussion Papers: 20%

Film Papers: 20%
Exam 1: 25%
Exam 2: 25%

Film Response Papers: Three times during the semester the class will watch a film during the second part of the class period. Following each film I will handout a series of questions on the film. Each student will turn in a two to three page paper (double spaced, 12 point font, proper citations to any works cited in the paper) on two of the three films viewed during the semester.

The papers will be due in class one week after the completion of the in class viewing of the film. Students may only turn in papers on two of the three films.

Final grades will be calculated using the following formula:

Participation: 30%
    Attendance: 10%
    Discussion Papers: 20%
Film Papers: 20%
Exam 1: 25%
Exam 2: 25%

The grading scale for final grades is as follows:

A: 89.5% or above
B: 79.5% to 89.4%
C: 69.5% to 79.4%
D: 59.5% to 69.4%
F: 59.4% or below

Final grades are just that, final. I will not reconsider them except in a case where I made a computational error in calculating them (I have taught for several years and have yet to miscalculate a final grade). Please do not email or call me asking for a grade change for another reason, it will not happen.

Student Engagement and Financial Aid
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 syllabus quiz by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course, but no later than January 12th. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

The syllabus quiz is a five question multiple choice quiz and can be found on the class' webcourses site under the "Quizzes" tab. The only purpose of the syllabus quiz is to satisfy the financial aid requirement for this class. It will not be included in the calculation of your final grade.

Attendance Policy:
Because of this class' discussion component, attendance will be mandatory and will be a part of your participation grade. Be warned, I will usually take attendance after the break between the lecture and discussion portions of the class. Absences can be excused if you can document that you have been absent for a legitimate reason, i.e. illness, family emergency, mandatory university activity.

Makeup Work:
I will not allow missed assignments to be made up without a documented university excused absence. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a scheduled exam or other assignment please inform me prior to the class period the assignment is due. If you cannot inform me ahead of time, please inform me within one business day of the scheduled due date for the assignment of the reason you missed the assignment and request a makeup. This should be done either via phone or email. Date and time of makeup exams will be determined by the instructor on a case by case basis. I reserve the right to change the format and questions of makeup exams at my discretion.

Webcourses
A webcourses section has been created for this class and is accessible through the myUCF web portal at my.ucf.edu. This space will be used to post the syllabus, lecture notes, grades, and important class notices. You may use the "send message" under the people tab to turn in talking points.

Class Topics and Reading Assignments:
Students are expected to complete the assigned reading by the beginning of each week.
Please note that I reserve the right to change the lecture and readings schedule as necessary to adequately cover all topics. I also reserve the right to add or subtract readings from the course. Any changes to the schedule or assigned readings will be announced in class. The Diascro and Ivers readings are to be used to create talking points.

Week 1: Law and Legal Systems. January 8th, 10th, 12th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 1, 2

No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday, January 15th

Week 2: The Federal System. January 17th, 19th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 3

Week 3: State Courts. January 22nd, 24th, 26th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 4
Discussion:
State Courts and Medical Marijuana (pg. 104)

Week 4: Judges. January 29th, 31st, February 2nd
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 6
Discussion:
Judges and Campaign Contributions (pg. 163-4)

Week 5: Lawyers. February 5th, 7th, 9th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 5
Film: *Hot Coffee*

Week 6: Litigants and Interest Groups. February 12th, 14th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 7

Exam 1, Friday, February 16th

Week 7: Criminal Trials. February 19th, 21st, 23rd
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 8, 9
Discussion:
The Death Penalty (pg. 266)

Week 8: Criminal Trials (continued), Civil Trials. February 26th, 28th, March 2nd
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 10, 11
Discussion:
Federal Courts and the War on Terrorism (pg. 68)

Week 9: Civil Trials (continued). March 5th, 7th, 9th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 10, 11
Film: *Injustice*

Spring Break, No Class, March 12th-16th

Week 10: Juries. March 19th, 21st, 23rd
Readings: Judicial Process, Ch. 12
Jury Simulation- Read "Jury Simulation" materials available on Webcourses.

Week 11: Appeals Process March 26th, 28th, 30th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 13
Discussion:
Courts in a Digital Age (pg. 376)

Week 12: Supreme Court 1. April 2nd, April 4th, April 6th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 14
Discussion:
Congress and the Courts (pg. 429)

Week 13: Supreme Court 2. April 9th, 11th, 13th
Readings: Judicial Process Ch. 15
Discussion:
Courts and Voter ID (pg. 457)

Week 14: Policy Impact of Judicial Decisions, April 16th, 18th, 20th
Readings: Suggested readings will be posted on webcourses.
Film: *Q&A: Antonin Scalia*

Week 15: Finish Film: *Q&A: Antonin Scalia* and Review, April 23rd

Exam 2, Monday, April 30th, 1:00-3:50pm

UCF Creed and Academic Honesty
Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

Integrity
I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

Scholarship
I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

Community
I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

Creativity
I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

Excellence
I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/).

Students with Disabilities

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 who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Unauthorized Use of Class Notes

Third parties may be selling class notes and other materials from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.