POS 4603 - AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW I

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Class Meeting Days: MW
Class Meeting Time: 09:00AM - 10:20AM
Class Meeting Location: CB1 O308
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Steven Smallpage
Title: Associate Professor
Office Location: Howard Phillips Hall 311E
Email: steven.smallpage@ucf.edu

Office Hours

My office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30am to 12:30pm, and by appointment. While I will be in my office during these times, I am also available to meet virtually.

Course Description

POS 4603 COS-POLS 3(3,0)American Constitutional Law I: PR: ENC 1102 or POS 2041 or C.I. Development of American federalism and national power, commerce clause, and nationalization of the economy. Fall.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and appreciate how, why, and to what extent the Constitution distributes powers across institutions;
- Comprehend the role of the Supreme Court as the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution and in addressing politically controversial topics;
- Understand and apply judicial philosophies/modes of constitutional interpretation in deciding cases and evaluating selected legal problems; and
- Improve critical thinking and legal problem-solving skills.

Required Course Materials and Resources

Constitutional Law: Instituitonal Authority
ISBN: 9781071822142

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Midterm Exam (20%) – Covers material from the first half of the course, including key doctrines, cases, and institutional principles.

Final Exam (30%) – Cumulative, with emphasis on content from the second half of the course.

Amendment Group Project (20%) – Students will work in groups to research, draft, and present a proposed constitutional amendment focused on institutional authority or federalism.

Participation (30%) – Includes active engagement in class discussions (attendance alone is not sufficient) and meaningful contributions on Yellowdig, our online discussion platform.

Grading Scale

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Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	61-63%
F	0-60%

Policies for Course Grade

Makeup and Late Work Policy

Students are expected to complete all assignments and exams by the scheduled deadlines. A 24-hour grace period may be granted if requested prior to the due date. After the deadline, late work may be penalized up to 5% per 24-hour period. Makeup opportunities for the midterm, final exam, or group presentation will not be available except in truly exceptional circumstances, which must be documented and communicated well in advance. Participation points—including in-class engagement and Yellowdig activity—cannot be made up. While attendance is not required, it is necessary (though not sufficient) for a strong participation grade.

Attendance

I highly encourage you to attend the classroom sessions as we will discuss concepts that you will be expected to critique in the exams, and you will have focused time to work with your group members. However, if you are sick, please stay home. I will also record the classroom sessions if you are unable to attend in person. You may choose to watch the recording and answer the question that is embedded in order to receive participation credit. Contact me as soon as possible if you are unable to attend class in any fashion. Throughout the semester I reserve the right to take attendance if needed.

Controversial Content

This course will discuss some potentially controversial issues. Part of the purpose of the course is to enable you to understand how reasonable people might disagree about such issues (especially involving ethics and justice). You are not required to *believe* any particular position that we discuss and examine on such issues. You are expected, however, to have an open mind and to try to *understand* the arguments (and to consider the ideas and evidence used in such arguments) for many different positions on these issues, and to critically examine and respectfully discuss such arguments, ideas and evidence.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

- **Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is governed on an assignment-by-assignment basis**. For each assignment, you must carefully review the instructions to determine whether AI-generated content is permitted. In some cases, you may be permitted (though not required) to use GenAI. When using GenAI, you must disclose specifically where and how it was used in the process of completing the assignment. Unless explicitly allowed, all components of your work must be fully prepared by you. Any attempt to represent GenAI output inappropriately as your own work will be treated as plagiarism. Ultimately, students are responsible for the accuracy and veracity of submitted work whether AI-generated or not.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express

written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.

    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/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 this activity 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.

Class Schedule

Course Schedule

Week	Topic
1	Introduction
2	Chapter 1
3	Chapter 2
4	Chapter 3
5	Chapter 4
6	Chapter 5
7	Chapter 6
8	Midterm
9	Chapter 7
10	Chapter 8
11	Chapter 9
12	Chapter 10
13	Chapter 11

Week	Topic
14	Amendment Presentations
15	Review
16	Final Exam