POLITICAL SCIENCE 4284 JUDICIAL PROCESS AND POLITICS

Department of Political Science
University of Central Florida

SPRING 2026

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	"There is hardly a political question in the United States which does not sooner or later turn into a judicial one." Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1848)

Tocqueville's observation remains apt today. Courts decide such issues as abortion, flag burning, death penalty, drug testing, criminal rights and free expression. The judiciary plays an important role in American life, making it an exciting branch of government to study. Witness the center-stage role that the Florida Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court played in the Election 2000 controversy.

Judicial Process and Politics examines the role of the judiciary in American society. 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 intensive course provides information so that students will be able to form their own informed 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 students will evaluate the merits of any particular answer compared to other possibilities.

Requirements for a Web-Based Class

This is a **completely web-based class**, and, consequently, requires a much different approach in terms of requirements than a wise student would undertake in a face-to-face class. Most obviously, there will be no face-to-face meetings and no lectures. However, one should realize that a web-based class **does not** mean that you will be doing less work; indeed, a web-based class will require that a student take a **much more active role** in one's education as compared to that level of effort traditionally exerted in a face-to-face class. The web-based format will likely require approximately **three times the effort** that a student would on average expend in the face-to-face modality in the same course.

Generally, I have found that students who do well in a web-based class are self-motivated and have usually earned good grades (B or higher) in face-to-face classes. A web-based class does, however, provide students with some flexibility in that they are not required to be in a classroom two or three times a week at a specific time. As those who have taken a web-based course before may attest, this is one of the nice features of this type of class, and can make for a very rewarding learning experience.

My general rule of thumb is that students devote **at least five hours of study per course credit hour per week**. As this is a three credit-hour class, wise students should plan on devoting exclusively **15 hours per week to this class at a minimum to this course alone**. If a student does not reasonably think that he or she can honestly devote this time to class, that student likely will struggle to make a passing grade, especially in this class. ***Past students have ignored this warning here to their own detriment.***

Academic Demands: You Must Teach Yourself

Because this is a fully online course, you will **have to teach yourself the great bulk of the material** that would have been covered in the face-to-face lectures on campus. This is a cost of an online course, while not having to be at a specific time and place for lecture is a benefit. This means that you will have to read everything that is assigned, review the PowerPoint slides (available on the Canvas site), review the Module survey answers, investigate and research terms that are unfamiliar to you (yes, even those that are in the PowerPoint slides, but not covered in other materials). This course places, as a necessity because of its format, a heavy responsibility on you to be self-directed learners, just as you will find once you graduate and enter the professional world.

- Online Learning Orientation

If you are new to or unfamiliar with online courses, I STRONGLY encourage you to complete the online learning student-orientation, available within the Canvas site, mentioned below. It will answer many of the fundamental questions you may have about how the course will, generally, function and how to locate answers to issues that may occur during the course of the term.

[Portions of the above section were adapted from Dr. Jonathan Knuckey's (Department of Political Science, UCF) online Scope and Methods of Political Science (POS 3703) syllabus.]

- Web Resources

Canvas Site *– Course Management Software and other Web Resources*

The Course has a Canvas site associated with it. It is an innovative technology that allows the students to interact with each other, post messages to a common bulletin board, take quizzes, and many other tasks that facilitate comprehension of the course material and collaborative learning among the course's students in a student-centered context. This site, however, is a password-protected domain. A more thorough discussion of this course tool as well as how to navigate through it will be offered in class. Navigate to it via your my.ucf.edu login, find the course in the Online Course Tools Tab and the Webcourses@UCF Pagelet and then enter your PID and password.

Publisher's Companion Website for Neubauer and Meinhold (http://www.wadsworth.com/cgi-wadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20bI&flag=instructor&product_isbn_issn=9780495009948&discipline_number=20)

Cengage, the publisher of Neuabuer and Meinhold's text, maintains a companion website that has many resources available to viewers, which may be of value to you.

Meinhold's Companion Website (http://people.uncw.edu/meinholds/lawcourtsandpolitics/Undergraduate%20Resources/Undergraduate%20Resources.htm)

Dr. Meinhold also maintains a website containing resources for undergraduate students. It too may be helpful to you as you navigate through the course.

Course Goals

The **most fundamental goal of this course is to enhance and improve your critical thinking skills**. The ability to critically analyze concepts or programs and then present your conclusions and criticisms well will be one of the most valuable skills you learn at the University. The subject matter on which you will practice these critical thinking skills will be the judicial process. You will also develop affective and task skills in this course. In order to effectively develop your analytic abilities, you will find that you need a great deal of specific knowledge about the judiciary. This course will fill that gap. Specifically, you should learn the following from this course:

- How various actors interact in the legal process, including jurors, lawyers, lower court and appellate judges and various interest groups.

- How the U.S. Supreme Court makes decisions, beginning from the certiorari process and continuing to the final decision.

- Finally, students will gain an awareness of the pervasiveness of politics, as we will come to know it, even in the judicial branch.

Mandated Documentation of Course Attendance

As of fall 2014, all faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course in order to comply with federal regulations involving student financial aid. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the **self-introduction assignment**, on the Canvas Discussion board, by the end of the first week of classes, or as soon as possible after adding the course, but **no later than Sunday, January 18, 2026**. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid (adapted from a draft statement from Academic Affairs Office, UCF).

BOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Required Books

- American Political Science Association, Committee on Publications. 2018. *Style Manual for Political Science*. Rev. ed. Washington, DC: APSA (ISBN 978-1-878147-62-2). [Available on the Canvas Reserves Discussion Topic]. The Style Manual is also available digitally at www.apsanet.org/stylemanual.

- Kirszner, Laurie G., and Stephen R. Mandell. 2017. *The Brief Cengage Handbook*. 8th ed. Boston: Thomson/Wadsworth (ISBN 978-1-305-63869-3).

- Neubauer, David W., and Stephen S. Meinhold. 2017. *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Politics in the United States*. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth (ISBN 978-1-305-50652-7). [hereafter "N&M"].

- Stern, Gerald M. 2008. *The Buffalo Creek Disaster*. 2d ed. New York: Vintage Books (ISBN 978-0-307-38849-0).

- Turow, Scott. 2010. *One L: The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School*. New York: Penguin (ISBN 978-0-14-311902-9).

Optional Books

- Strunk, William, Jr., and E.B. White. 2000. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. New York: Longman (ISBN 0-205-30902-X).

Technological Requirements

This course is a completely online course. Hence, it imposes on students the heavy responsibility and obligation to anticipate problems that, all too often, haunt humans' use of technology. Namely, computers know when a deadline is approaching and will fail to function as the user wants at the most critical time, causing untold woe and trauma. Read and understand the technical requirements mentioned in the online learning module referenced above.

Thus, students **must**, as a course requirement, take steps to prevent any technological or other problems from obstructing their completing the course exams during the period when it is available. These steps include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Ensure that anti-virus software has been installed and is regularly updated**. If I receive any document containing a virus, I will deduct 10% from the assignment's final grade. If I receive a virus-infected assignment from the same student for a second time any time during the term, I will reduce that student's final course grade by a full letter grade (e.g., from A to B). If I receive a third virus-infected assignment, the student will fail the course automatically.

- **Enable pop-ups from the course Canvas site**. This will allow you to have full functionality in the course. Do not disable the pop-up block entirely as you will need to be shielded from those intrusions while navigating in other sites.

- **Online Exams**: the exams in this course are administered entirely online. As you will have limited time to complete the exam, I **strongly encourage** you to plan to take the exam from a location at which there is reliable and strong internet service, if at all possible, as this will decrease the wait time that you experience as you load and save your answers. Otherwise, your exam time will be consumed, to some extent, by the lag time needed for the questions and answers to load and save.

- **Technical Assistance**: with an entirely online course, there are inevitable technological problems that usually occur at the last minute (hint: don't wait to the last minute). If such problems occur, the professor is ***not*** your point of contact. Rather, students should contact Online@UCF Support at (407) 823-3808 or submit a question via http://learn.ucf.edu/support/get-help. There are as well many self-help online course resources on the Learning Online Website.

Zoom Availability

I have a Zoom account and am able to meet with you via video-enabled interface during office hours by appointment to discuss course-related measures.

General Course Expectations

What I Expect of You

- Familiarize yourself **early in the semester** with the technology required and utilized in the course. If you encounter trouble, seek assistance from your fellow students or me.
- Complete the assigned reading for each Module by **the beginning of the relevant period** for which the material is assigned.
- Complete and submit all course assignments on time.
- Check your e-mail and Canvas **at least twice a week**; more often is better.
- Update your e-mail address in a timely manner if it changes during the semester on the class student list and notify me of such changes.
- Notify me if there are any unforeseen problems in submitting assignments within the requirements of the course.

- Actively participate in the learning process. By doing so, you will learn the material on a deeper level.
- Ask questions if you are unsure of something, whether to your fellow students or to me.
- Keep up to date with current political events by reading a good newspaper and watching politically relevant TV/Online programs.
- Follow course protocols and other requirements of the syllabus.
- Anticipate problems/delays in navigating to the various websites referenced in the modules. Plan ahead for problems.
- To learn and have fun at the same time (yes, it *is* possible!).

What You Should Expect From Me

- To be fair, honest, equitable, and consistent with grade assessment.
- To be polite and courteous in my reply to your questions.
- To return submitted coursework back to you graded in a timely fashion.
- To be reasonably available for consultation and advisement about the course or any other academic matters.
- To make your learning experience as beneficial and enjoyable as possible.
- To learn with you and have some fun at the same time.
- To respond to your e-mail messages within 24 business hours of its being sent.

GRADING

Exams (45%—three exams @ 15%—of final grade)

Each of the three exams in the course is worth 100 points. Although they are each non-comprehensive, they will be composed entirely of *very challenging* multiple choice items. They will seek to test your understanding of both factual and conceptual ideas and your relative analytical and synthetic skills. They do not emphasize rote memorization of facts. Rather, they test students' ability to analytically address each question and conceptual understanding of course concepts and ideas.

As this is an online course, all exams will be administered through the Assessment function of the Canvas site associated with the course. There will be a **very narrow window** open during which students must complete the exam. Accordingly, students should anticipate any problems that they may foresee completing the exam within that time frame. Once you open an exam, you will have a **maximum of 75 minutes to finish it**. If you begin it within 75 minutes of the posted closing time for the exam window, you will have less than that amount of time to complete the test. **I will re-open the exam window only under the most extreme (i.e., truly emergency, Act of God) circumstances**. Such circumstances do NOT include weddings, cruises, "road trips," and so forth.

Those students who have an "A" (as that is defined below) immediately prior to the Final Exam are exempt from being required to complete the Final Exam PROVIDED THAT THEY HAVE COMPLETED ALL OTHER ASSIGNMENTS (I.E., YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANY 0s FOR MISSED OR UNSUBMITTED ASSIGNMENTS).

Course Content Modules (40% of final grade)

Because this is a complete online class, a substantial part of students' earned final course grades will be determined by the timely completion of specific content modules. There will be one module due per week, on average, that ties in with that week's topics. The modules will often provide a brief overview of the topic, list the required reading, and outline specific tasks and assignments. These can involve researching a certain topic, discussing and debating issues through forum postings and, sometimes, the completion of specific internet assignments. These assignments are designed to make you more familiar with the Internet and the sites relevant to the study of the American judiciary.

As there are no formal face-to-face classes, it is incumbent on you to keep up with the readings, assignments and the pace of the course. Getting behind the current schedule of the course is dangerous to your final course grade. The modules are listed in the Canvas site for the course. Together, they will be averaged into 40% of your final course grade. Grades for each module will appear in the Grades section of the Canvas site. Students may discuss the graded module assignments with me during office hours (either by phone or in person).

Some modules have multiple due dates for subparts of the module. The syllabus lists the FINAL DUE DATE for the Module – not its first. Plan accordingly.

I WILL NOT accept late modules. Computers and servers always seem to know when humans are working on a last-minute deadline and they take maniacal pleasure in crashing and not allowing you access to websites when the clock is approaching the deadline. The point (again): ***start the module assignments early in case there are problems***. If you come to me with an exotic tale of woe, I will nod relatively sympathetically but point to this warning.

The following rules apply to the Content Modules:

- **Any module, or part thereof, submitted after the due date/time will not be graded. The usual deadline time is 11:57 pm (23:57).**
- **Students MAY NOT makeup late modules**, as such assignments require an ongoing, dynamic discussion among the students across the term that cannot be later replicated.

Surveys (15%)

A portion of the Modules includes the completion of **Surveys** that require you to answer two questions about the material covered within that Module: what is the most important issue or concept addressed?; and, what is the topic or concept that bears further discussion? Completion of the Surveys earns you the appropriate number of points announced in each of the Modules of which they comprise a part.

The following are regulations regarding the Surveys that must be followed:

- Although the surveys are not anonymous, please be honest and forthcoming in your responses as they are designed to deepen your understanding of the course content and its significance.

- After the due date for the Surveys has passed, I will collate and collect the most pertinent and relevant questions and post answers to them, in the Discussion Area, for the entire class to read and consider. They are good ways to prepare for the exams, and not "busy work." Use them for your benefit. Ignore them at your own peril.

- Once the deadline for the Surveys has passed, I will reset the Survey so that students may then answer for the next module's topic. If you have already answered the Survey prior to my doing so, however, Canvas will not allow you to resubmit the Survey.

- **Do NOT send blank responses through for the Survey**. Repeated violation of this rule will result in the entire class's being required to send survey responses to me through my UCF email account. Past classes have, sadly, tested me on this requirement. Please do not make me implement this requirement.

- Failing to complete even a small number of the Surveys will negatively affect your final course grade.

Do not put the Modules off until the last minute. *You should do them as they are assigned, since you cannot control for the internet being down, or the site that you must access being temporarily unavailable. I will have little sympathy for you if this circumstance befalls you and you are unable to turn-in your assignment. Assignments do not count until they are RECEIVED, not sent. See above warning about anticipating technological problems.* I customarily send a brief email message indicating its receipt if you submit it to me via email. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE SUCH A MESSAGE, THE ASSIGNMENT HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED AND YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE FULL CREDIT FOR THE ASSIGNMENT. In that case, contact me by other means (such as the telephone) to determine if I have received the assignment. If not, resubmit it ASAP. Thus: **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT.**

If you come to me with an exotic tale of woe about your not having turned in your assignment on time, I will nod relatively sympathetically and point to this warning. If you submit the assignment through the Assignment tab in Canvas AND you receive confirmation of its receipt safely there, you may rest assured that it has been properly received.

Furthermore, note the following rules regarding the Modules, some of which require a written product submitted to me:

- You may NOT use Wikipedia (or its variants) as *any* source in your internet assignments. Doing so will substantially reduce your grade, even to an "F." One of the early modules to be completed in the course will introduce you to ways to evaluate websites properly.

- You must follow APSA style when composing your internet assignments. Failure to do so **will result in at least one letter grade reduction** of the grade earned.

- Double space between paragraphs, even in a document that is otherwise single-spaced.

- Provide in-text citations to the SPECIFIC SOURCE FROM WHICH YOU ARE TAKING THE INFORMATION. Otherwise, the reader does not know to what source you attribute your information. Failure to do so will result in a least a one letter grade reduction in the grade earned. See the APSA Style Manual for examples.

- Case names must be italicized as per the APSA Style Manual.

- Attaching printouts to a module's assignment does not magically satisfy the cite and reference requirements of APSA style.

- Assignments containing more than five spelling errors will automatically earn a score of zero. Multiple misspellings of the same word will count the number of times that the word is not correctly spelled, rather than simply once. Note that prior students' failing to heed this requirement has caused them great misery. Spelling counts.

- **Ensure that your name appears on each and every assignment. Even though you may upload the assignment to the Assignment link or to Canvas, PLEASE put your name on the *assignment itself* as I download the assignments and grade them in hard copy. It makes it very difficult to grade and assign a score for an assignment whose author is unknown. Those assignments not bearing the student author's name will be penalized by one letter grade.**

Course Point Allocation

COMPONENT	WEIGHT
Exam I	15%
Exam II	15%
Exam III	15%
Content Modules	40%
Surveys	15%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale (Aggregate Earned Percentage)

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	90-100
B+	89-87
B	86-80
C+	79-77
C	74-70
D+	69-67
D	66-60
F	59 or less

Best Allies

You will find that your colleagues have similar backgrounds and experiences and that they can be your best allies in making it through this course, just as you will discover in later life and, possibly, in law school.

COURSE POLICIES
(aka My Pet Peeves)

There are several points you should note.

No Excuses

First, this class operates under a "No-Excuse" policy. It is incumbent upon you to be responsible for the assignments given. If fail to log in to the course, you NEED NOT inform me about it. If you do inform me of your impending absence, you are NOT thereby immunized from the terms of the syllabus. Because this course is an upper division class and one delivered completed online, you will quickly learn that if you intend to pass, you should plan on logging in regularly, keeping up with and completing the assignments as they are given and, especially, asking questions when, reasonably, you have them.

Accommodations for Physically Challenged Students

Second, if you are physically challenged, every attempt is made to accommodate your learning needs. Notify Student Disability Services (FC 185, 407-823-2371) by the end of the first week of class so that we

can make appropriate arrangements. This class operates in accordance with the Office of Student Disability Services here at the University and federal guidelines governing the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (1990).

Plagiarism and Cheating: Don't Let it Happen to You!

Third, please consult the policy regarding plagiarism and cheating which is attached at the end of this document. Each of you must review the University policy on the penalties for plagiarism. The Golden Rule explains this in more detail:
http://regulations.ucf.edu/~regs/pdf/notices/5.015StuAcademicBehaviorStandards_newJul09_000.pdf.

Almost every semester, one or more students, unfortunately, wrongfully appropriates the published work of someone else, and I have had the unfortunate responsibility of failing those students and seeking disciplinary action against them. You are on notice that I have failed students because they decided to risk their academic careers by choosing the easy way out. I can assure you that it is not.

Use of AI Tools

Use of AI prohibited. Only some Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as spell-check or Grammarly, are acceptable for use in this class. Use of other AI tools via website, app, or any other access, is not permitted in this class. Representing work created by AI as your own is plagiarism and will be prosecuted as such. Check with the instructor to be sure of acceptable use if you have any questions. Instructors can easily distinguish between work was written by AI as opposed that written by a human.

Caveat Emptor

Fourth, this is an upper division course with correspondent responsibilities for you. I expect that you will devote *several hours per week* studying, reading, and meeting with other students to discuss and review the course material. **This is a difficult course.**

Conceptual Understanding Key

Fifth, class topics are best understood at the conceptual and/or abstract level. Read the course material AND THINK ABOUT ITS IMPLICATIONS. You will quickly learn that one of my favorite questions is, "what does that mean?." You are expected to read and prepare for course discussions. I assume that the reading will be completed by the associated assignment's due date and time. LEARN TO PACE YOURSELF ACCORDINGLY!

Online Decorum: Course Protocols

As this is a fully online course, there are certain rules and regulations that make the course and our asynchronous communication go more smoothly. Do not say or do anything that would otherwise do in a face-to-face context. In short, treat others as you would like to be treated, as you may have been taught previously.

Moreover, as many of you have aspirations of attending law school, now is the time to begin to adopt the canons and traditions of the learned profession of the law, one profoundly steeped in tradition and history: how would you act in a court of law? Act in a disruptive manner? Post rude and discourteous messages to a court-run blog? File documents or submit reports late?

More specific requirements are listed in the Course Protocols available in the Canvas site.

Word Processing Required

Seventh, as this is a fully online course, all assignments must be word processed, including internet assignments. You should allocate enough time for printer cartridges to run dry and dogs to eat papers and computer disks! You laugh, but trust me: I have heard every excuse in the book! Again, **late assignments are NOT accepted**. "Late" means ANY time after the due date and time for the assignment—even if that is one minute past the deadline.

Duplicates of Assignments

Eighth, while I have never lost an assignment, I require that you retain copies of all work submitted to me in the unlikely event that something should happen. In the event that I should need a copy of the assignment, and you are not able to provide it, you will not receive credit. Even after I have returned materials to you, please hold on to the work until after you have received your grade from the Registrar. This protects you from any possibility that you might receive an erroneous grade.

Technological Tools

Ninth, I require that everyone learn how to use e-mail and the technological tools associated with the course. They can facilitate your comprehension of the course material. I have found that this encourages students to communicate with me about questions you may have regarding the material discussed in class. You are responsible for any assignments or other information that I distribute on the course's associated web sites or via email.

If you already have an e-mail account (either through the University or a commercial server), please do not sign-up for an additional account. You should check your email on a regular basis as I post any changes about class assignments to your account and/or to the course-associated web site. Beginning with the Fall 2009 semester, all students are REQUIRED to obtain a Knights Email address and use it for course-related communications. I am required to send such information to that address alone.

If your email address changes during the semester, you MUST NOTIFY ME of the new address, so that I may then direct any communications to that address. This is a course requirement. Otherwise, you will miss important course information, which could drastically impact your grade negatively.

Time-Sensitive Communications and Assignments

In past semesters, some students have had difficulty submitting assignments to me by the due date and time. This difficulty arises, in part, from their undue reliance on fragile and potentially unreliable email programs and other technologies beyond their control (such as AOL).

Accordingly, for time-sensitive communications, send me a message through the Canvas Mail tool, contact me on the telephone, or, most unconventionally of all, see me in person during office hours.

Syllabus NOT a Contract

Finally, this syllabus is **not** deemed to be a contract. I reserve the right to change any of the exam times or assignments by providing you with a forty-eight hour (48 hr.) notice of such changes. Such changes are either announced on the Canvas site, or sent via Mail message, or both. Therefore, you are responsible for any changes that may occur during the course of the session.

If you fail to log in to the course for several days, you should check with your fellow students to determine what you have missed. As such, your virtual absence is **not deemed** a sufficient excuse as to why work is incomplete.

In the event that the University administration closes school for any reason (*e.g.*, hurricane), any assignments or examinations that were scheduled on the days during which the University is officially closed will be due by 9:00 am on the next business day when the University resumes operations.

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

N&M = Neubauer, David W., and Stephen S. Meinhold. 2017. *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Politics in the United States*. 6th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth (ISBN 978-1-305-50652-7).

Stern = Stern, Gerald M. 2008. *The Buffalo Creek Disaster*. 2d ed. New York: Vintage Books (ISBN 978-0-307-38849-0).

Turow = Turow, Scott. 2010. *One L: The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School*. New York: Penguin (ISBN 978-0-14- 311902-9).

Reserve = Items designated as Reserve are available under the Canvas Discussion Topic "Reserve Readings." You will need the Adobe Reader (http://www.adobe.com) to view these readings.

NOTE: THIS SCHEDULE OF ASSIGMENTS LISTS THE FINAL DUE DATE FOR THE MODULE. SOME MODULES HAVE MULTIPLE PARTS THAT HAVE PRIOR DEADLINES. READ THE MODULES CAREFULLY FOR EACH OF THE MODULE'S MULTIPLE DUE DATES. AGAIN, LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Projected Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Weeks 1 and 2: Jan. 12 – Jan. 25	Course Orientation Course Requirements Evaluating Websites	Syllabus and other relevant documents	Module 1: Getting Started (due by **Sun., Jan. 18 by 23:57**) Module 2: Evaluating Websites (due by **Sun., Jan. 25 by 23:57**)
Week 3: Jan. 26 – Feb. 1	The Structure of American Law and the American Court System Judicial Federalism - The Federal Courts	N&M, Chapts. 1 and 2	Module 3: Courts as Political Institutions (due by **Sun., Feb. 1 by 23:57**)
Week 4: Feb. 2 – Feb. 8	Judicial Federalism – The State Courts The Players in the Judicial Process The Impact of the Selection Process	N&M, Chapts. 3 and 4 Stern, pp. 1-90 Turow, pp. 1-50	Module 4: Courts in the Federal Constitutional Republic (due by **Sun., Feb. 8 by 23:57**)
Week 5: Feb. 9 – Feb. 15	The Players in the Judicial Process The Impact of the Selection Process (continued)	N&M, Chapts. 5 and 6 Turow, 51-136	Module 5: Judicial Selection: The Players and Dynamics (due by **Sun., Feb. 15 by 23:57**)
Week 6: Feb. 16 – Feb. 22	***** TEST I *****	REVIEW FOR THE TEST	**TEST I** (to be completed by **Sunday, Feb. 22 by 23:57**; window will open at noon on Sat., Feb. 21. ***Plan accordingly***)

Week 7: Feb. 23 – Mar. 1	Trial Court Policy-Making: The Criminal Process The Police	N&M, Chapts. 7, 8 and 9	Module 6: Trial Courts, Criminal Defendants and the Police (due by **Sun., Mar. 1 by 23:57**)
Week 8: Mar. 2 – Mar. 8	Trial Court Policy-Making: The Civil Process (Part I)	N&M, Chapt. 10	Module 7: Civil Procedure (due by **Sun., Mar. 8 by 23:57**)
Week 9: Mar. 9 – Mar. 15	Trial Court Policy-Making: The Civil Process (Part II)	N&M, Chapts. 11 and 12 Finish Stern	Module 8: Civil Remedies (due by **Sun., Mar. 15 by 23:57**)
Week 10: Mar. 16 – Mar. 22	***** UCF SPRING BREAK *****		
Week 11: Mar. 23 – Mar. 29	***** TEST II *****	REVIEW FOR THE TEST	**TEST II** (to be completed by **Sunday, Mar. 29 by 23:57**; window will open at noon on Sat., Mar. 28. ***Plan accordingly***).
Week 12: Mar. 30 – Apr. 5	Trials: Lawyers, Judges and Juries Legal Ethics (Not an Oxymoron) Law School—The Crucible Legal Profession	Finish Turow Curtis and Frank (Reserve)	Module 9: The Paper Chase (due by **Sun., Apr. 5** by 3:57).
Week 13: Apr. 6 – Apr. 12	The Appellate Process United States Supreme Court Agenda-Setting	N&M, Chapt. 13 Pacelle (Reserve) Rehnquist (Reserve) Stevens (Reserve)	Module 10: Deciding What to Decide: Supreme Court Case Selection (due by **Sun., Apr. 12 by 23:57**)
Week 14: Apr. 13 – Apr. 19	Are Judges Priests or Laypersons?: Legal and Behavioral Models of Supreme Court Decision-Making	N&M. Chapt. 14 Spaeth (Reserve) Kozinski (Reserve)	Module 11: Attitudinal and Legal Models of Judicial Behavior (due by **Sun., Apr. 19 by 23:57**)
Week 15: Apr. 20 – Apr. 26	U.S. Supreme Court Decisional Behavior	N&M, Chapt. 15 Harlan (Reserve)	Module 12: U.S. Supreme Court Decision-Making (due by **Sun., Apr. 26 by 23:57**)
Week 16: Apr. 27 – Apr. 28	Do Courts Make A Difference?: Impact and Implementation Reform and Evaluation Summary and Conclusions Online Course Evaluation (available through my.ucf.edu)	N&M, Epilogue (Reserve)	Module 13: The Importance of Courts (due by **Tuesday, Apr. 28 by 23:57). NOTE: THIS IS A DIFFERENT SCHEDULE THAN THE USUAL SAT.-SUN. SCHEDULE OF PRIOR MODULES TO SYNCHRONIZE WITH UCF'S ACADEMIC CALENDAR.**
Thurs., Apr. 30 – Friday, May 1	***** TEST III *****	REVIEW FOR THE FINAL	**Test III** (to be completed by **Fri., May 1 by 23:57**; window will open at noon on Thurs., Apr. 30). ***Plan accordingly***.

General Policies of the University

***Source for these policies*:** UCF Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (http://fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Syllabus/statements.php)

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at <http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc>. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Unauthorized assistance: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.

b. Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party (such as coursehero.com) without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.

d. Falsifying or misrepresenting the student's own academic work.

e. Plagiarism: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.

f. Multiple Submissions: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.

g. Helping another person violate academic behavior standards.

For more information about Academic Integrity, students may consult The Center for Academic Integrity <http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/assets/FVProject.pdf>.

For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices" <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>.

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* <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/goldenrule.pdf>. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to academic misconduct. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade>.

The Golden Rule: A Handbook for Students (University of Central Florida) defines academic dishonesty as including cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is defined as "unauthorized assistance; communication to another through written, visual or oral means. The presentation of material which has not been studied/learned, but obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment or project constitutes a violation. The unauthorized possession or use of examination or course related material may also constitute cheating" (p. 6). Plagiarism is defined as the deliberate use of another's work "without any indication of source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials

taken from another is plagiarizing. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards (p.6-7)".

Normally, the penalty for a violation of this policy is an "F" in the course.

Course Accessibility Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need disability-related access in this course should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at <http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html>.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students having appropriate medical training may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/workplacesafety.html> (click on link from menu on left).
- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <my.ucf.edu> and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video (<https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk>).

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

A deployed, active duty military student who believes that he/she requires a special accommodation due to that unique status should contact the instructor to discuss the circumstances.

Religious Observances

Students may encounter conflicts between the normal class schedule and their honoring major religious observances. Students are expected to notify, in writing, the instructor **at least two weeks in advance** of the relevant date if they intend to miss class or miss an assignment to observe a holy day of their religious faith.

Notice of Use of Turnitin.com

In this course, I may utilize turnitin.com, an automated system that instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's written assignment with billions of websites, as well an enormous database of student papers that grows with each student submission. Accordingly, student assignments may be subject to this additional check. After the assignment is processed, I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another person's work was used in the assignment. For more detailed information about this process, visit http://www.turnitin.com.

[Portions of this Notice of Use of Turnitin.com policy were adapted from "Sample Wording for Syllabus," UCF Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Patricia A. MacKown, Director].