POL 309: JUDICIAL PROCESS

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POL 309 (Section 1):  T-Th: 3:30 – 4:45 pm
Office Hours: Wednesday 1 – 4 pm

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

COURSE OVERVIEW
This course provides an overview of how courts work. Staying primarily, but not exclusively, in the American context, we will discuss how a legal system can fit into a larger political system. This involves exploring the various components of the legal system in order to develop a deeper understanding of the role that courts play in shaping public policy. After a broad tour of the judicial process, we will examine in depth the workings of U.S. Supreme Court, and then we will finish with an example of the U.S. legal system at work (the Buffalo Creek disaster).

GRADING:
Midterm – 30%
Final (non-cumulative) – 40%
Paper – 30%

The paper will be due on November 21st. The assignment will require you to write an 10-12 page paper in which you offer a suggested reform for the U.S. judicial system. The precise details of the assignment will be given as the semester proceeds, but it is never too early to note that there is a zero tolerance policy in regard to late papers. Also, you should also know that I will distribute a study guide on October 10th (one week prior to the exam) for the midterm and on November 30th for the final exam.

If any conflict (others tests, travel plans, etc.) with the test dates or the paper due date exists, notify me by September 7th. Documentation of the conflict will be necessary, but be advised that allowances will only be given in extreme cases with my discretion as to what I define as extreme. In the case of an occurrence of an unforeseen event that prevents attendance on the test days, the burden is on the student both to prove the reason for missing the test and to arrange with me an appropriate make-up date. The make-up exam will not be the same as the exam given on the scheduled test date.
Be aware of the following web resources:

Policies against plagiarism, etc.:
http://studpubs.web.arizona.edu/policies/cacaint.htm

Policies against threatening behavior by students:
http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml

Disability Resource Center:
http://drc.arizona.edu/instructor/syllabus-statement.shtml

Course Schedule

August 22 – Introduction

August 24 – Why Courts & Judges?: MPEK 38 – 56


August 31 – No Class

September 5 – Political Jurisprudence: MPEK 3 – 37, SSB 3 – 19

September 7 – The Bar: MPEK 212 – 250

September 12 – Judicial Organization: MPEK 77 – 100

September 14 – Judicial Organization, cont: MPEK 103 – 140

September 19 – Judicial Selection: MPEK 141 – 159, SSB 245 – 274

September 21 – Judicial Selection, cont: MPEK 161 – 211

September 26 – Access to Courts: MPEK 253 – 298

September 28 – Instruments of Power: MPEK 299 – 328

October 3 – Limits on Power: MPEK 329 – 378

October 5 – Fact Finding in Courts: SSB 75 – 146

October 10 – Fact Finding in Courts: MPEK 381 – 437

October 12 – Catch Up/Review
October 17 – Midterm

October 19 – Precedent & Legal Reasoning: MPEK 438 – 490, SSB 19 – 41

October 24 – Statutory Interpretation: MPEK 491 – 538

October 26 – Constitutional Interpretation: MPEK 539 – 616

October 31 – State Courts & US District Courts: SSB 147 – 212

November 2 – US Court of Appeals: SSB 213 – 244

November 7 – Supreme Court Decision Making: SSB 275 – 298

November 9 – Supreme Court Opinion Writing: SSB 332 – 362


November 16 – Buffalo Creek, Part I

November 21 – Buffalo Creek, Part II, Paper Due

November 23 – Thanksgiving Break: No Class

November 28 – Buffalo Creek Disaster, Part III

November 30 – Buffalo Creek Disaster, cont.

December 5 – Catch Up/Review

December 14: Final Exam (2 – 4 pm)