

POL 309: The Judicial Process

2009 Pre-Session

M-F: 9:00-11:50

Education 349

Instructor: Meghan Leonard

Office: Social Sciences 328A1

Office Phone: 520-621-1347

Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 12:30 – 2:00

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COURSE OVERVIEW:

In this course we will examine the role of courts in society. We will discuss courts at both the state and federal levels, and focus on their procedures, organization and selection. Further we will examine the main theories that seek to explain judicial decision-making. The goal of this course is to gain a better understanding of the judicial system and its role in the larger political arena.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Murphy, Pritchett, Epstein and Knight, *Courts, Judges and Politics* (6th edition)

Segal, Spaeth and Benesh, *The Supreme Court in the American Legal System*

DESIRE 2 LEARN

Postings and Course Announcements will be available on D2L. Students are expected to check this daily for announcements and postings. (<http://www/d2l.arizona.edu>)

GRADING:

Exam I	100 points
Final Exam	120 points
Paper	70 points
Quizzes	40 points
Participation	20 points
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	350 Total Points

The final grade will be calculated out of 350 points and will be determined according to the following scale:

A	90-100%	350-315 points
B	80-89%	314-280 points
C	70-79%	279-245 points
D	60-69%	244-210 points
E	60% and below	209 points or below

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Examinations (220 points total):

There will be two exams in this course. Each will cover approximately half of the course material. The first exam will be given on **Thursday May 28th**. The final exam will be as scheduled on **Saturday June 6th**.

Students must be present for all exams. Missing an exam will result in a grade of zero. Students may not make up exams unless there is a legitimate reason (emergency) with validating evidence (to be determined by the instructor). Those with a valid excuse will make up the exam within 3 days of the original exam date and are to be completed during the instructor's office hours. Failure to do so will result in a zero on the exam. There will be no makeup exam for the final examination.

Paper (70 Points Total):

There will be one paper assignment in this class. Papers will be due at the beginning of the final exam on **Saturday June 6th**. The paper will examine the different theories of judicial decision-making and will be expected to be between 5 and 7 pages. Papers will be graded on both substance and grammar. More specifics on the paper will be forthcoming.

Quizzes (40 Points Total):

There will be random pop-quizzes given in this course. Five will be given, but the lowest score will be dropped. Each quiz is worth 10 points. There will be no make-up quizzes. Failure to take a quiz will result in a grade of zero for the quiz. Quizzes will be based on the readings assigned for the day as well as the material covered in class the previous day.

Class Participation (20 Points Total):

Class participation is an essential part of learning. Though there is no formal attendance policy, all students should attend class everyday and be prepared to participate in discussion. Students will be expected to have read course materials before arriving at class to ensure the most useful and efficient discussion of the readings. The class participation grade will be determined by regular attendance as well as participation in discussion and the ability to answer questions regarding the reading assignments and course materials. We will conduct "Simulations" in class designed to aid the students' understanding of core issues and concepts in the study of the judicial process. While there is no formal grading for these simulations, participation grades will reflect heavily a student's participation in these simulations.

PROFESSIONALISM AND ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Standards of Conduct for Students:

Students are required to arrive to class on time each day. Before entering the class students are required to shut off all cell phones, pagers and other potentially disruptive devices. Most importantly, students will treat other students and the instructor with respect. Students should behave in a professional manner in order to ensure the classroom is a tolerant and comfortable environment for all students. Any student who fails to follow these guidelines will be asked to leave class immediately and will be referred to the appropriate authorities. These standards of conduct and respect also extend to emails sent regarding the class or class material. The instructor reserves the right to refuse a response to any email sent deemed inappropriate or disrespectful.

Threatening Behavior:

Behavior determined to be threatening is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Should this occur the student will be asked to leave class immediately and will be referred to the appropriate authorities. From the University's policy: "*Threatening behavior*" means any statement, communication, conduct or gesture, including those in written form, directed toward any member of the University community that causes a reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property. A student can be guilty of threatening behavior even if the person who is the object of the threat does not observe or receive it, so long as a reasonable person would interpret the maker's statement, communication, conduct or gesture as a serious expression of intent to physically harm.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and any form found in this class will be considered as such. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) plagiarism (presenting another's work as your own) and cheating on exams. Any student found guilty of a charge of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of 'E' for the course and will be reported to the University for further disciplinary action. Each student should familiarize themselves with the University's policies on academic integrity, which can be found here: <http://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/>

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources 621-3268; drc.arizona.edu and notify the instructor of your eligibility. I will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations.

COURSE OUTLINE

Monday May 18

Introduction to Course/ Role of Courts

Reading: Courts, Judges and Politics (CJP) : 1-11; 18-26

Tuesday May 19

Federal Courts: Organization and Selection

Reading: CJP 38-91; Supreme Court in the American Legal System (SC) 3-18

Wednesday May 20

Federal Courts: Organization and Selection

Reading: SC 187-242; 275-289

Thursday May 21

State Courts: Organization and Selection

Reading: CJP 121-140, 152-159, 205-211; SC,147-175

Friday May 22

Lawyers and the Legal Profession

Reading: CJP 212-250

Monday May 25: No Class – Memorial Day

Tuesday May 26

Simulation #1: Confirmation Hearing

Civil Trial Process

Reading: SC 75-118

Wednesday May 27

Criminal Trial Process/Review for Exam

Reading: CJP 381-437; SC 119-146

Thursday May 28: Exam I

Friday May 29

Federal Courts: Procedures

Reading: SC 187-242; 275-289

Monday June 1

Judicial Power

Reading: CJP 253-309, 329-380

Tuesday June 2

Precedent and Legal Reasoning

Reading: CJP 438-490

Wednesday June 3

Judicial Decision Making

Reading: CJP 617-690; SC 19-40, 299-362

Thursday June 4

Judicial Decision Making

Reading: CJP 617-690; SC 19-40, 299-362

Friday June 5

Simulation #2: Granting Certiorari

Judicial Impact

Reading: CJP 691-758; SC 363-392

Saturday June 6: Final Exam 9:00a.m.

The instructor reserves the right to change any information contained in this course syllabus. All information, other than the grade and absence policies may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.