

2. Continue to improve critical-thinking, reading, and written communication through formal and informal assignments.

Student Learning Outcomes

- To understand the structure and functions of the American court system on both the national and state levels;
- To understand the role of judges, lawyers and litigants;
- To understand trial and appellate processes;
- To understand the types of American law and the role of law in the American political and legal system; and
- To understand the structure, processes and power of the U.S. Supreme Court and the impact that Court has had in America's historical development.

Prerequisites

Students registered for this course must be at least at junior-level standing and have already successfully completed POLS 2301 (Introduction to American Government I) and POLS 2302 (Introduction to American Government II).

Required Course Materials

Neubauer, David W. and Stephen S. Meinhold. 2017. *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Politics in the United States*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. ISBN: 978-1-305-50652-7.

Mitchell, Gregory and David Klein. 2016. *American Courts Explained: A Detailed Introduction to the Legal Process Using Real Cases*. St. Paul, MN: West Academic. ISBN: 978-1-63459-879-8.

Sexual Harassment

In accordance with administrative policy, sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the university. Behavior in the course must conform to the university policy.

Course Policies

To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn without undue distraction, the following are guidelines for appropriate behavior in our classroom:

- Civility and topicality are essential for in-class discussion. You may comment on recent and relevant news events; however, name-calling, taunting, harassment, or otherwise non-productive talk is not allowed. I reserve the right to penalize your grades for inappropriate behavior, up to and including permanent removal from the class.
- Turn off all cell phones (or put them on silent mode) and remove ear buds during class.
- You are permitted to use laptops/tablets during class for the purpose of taking notes only. If they are used for any other purpose including doing work for another course during class, I will terminate your computer privileges immediately.
- The use of recording devices, including camera phones and tape recorders, and the reproduction, distribution, or publication (on-line or otherwise) of abbreviated, transcribed, or taped versions of my lectures is **not permitted** without my consent. Typically, consent will only be given to students who have documentation from The Disability Resource Center (DRC) stating that this is a necessary accommodation.

I will ensure we maintain this classroom culture by addressing any disruptive behavior immediately. I will address disruptions as follows:

- A first instance of disruptive behavior will be addressed verbally and expectations for appropriation behavior will be clarified.
- If a student continues to be disruptive during a class period, that student will be excused from the classroom for the remainder of the course period.
- A student who continues to be disruptive in subsequent class periods will be reported to the department chair and/or the Dean of Students.
- Any student who exhibits extreme behavior or makes threats against members of the classroom community will immediately be reported to LUPD.

Evaluation

Participation and Attendance Policy (70 points)

Your participation is a vital component of the class and will be assessed in terms of active and meaningful involvement in class discussions and group activities. Note that participation is not merely class attendance, although you must be in class in order to participate. Although I will not be formally recording your attendance at every lecture, students will be required to participate in various in-class activities and group exercises during the semester. **If you are absent from class during a session that includes either an in-class activity or group exercise, you will receive a zero.** The objective both activities are to help students think more deeply about the course material and how it relates to a student's own experiences and ideas. If you are unable to attend a class, it is your responsibility to obtain any notes from classmates.

Short Essays (50 points)

You will choose topics from a list of relevant topics for the section and write two (2) 4-5 page **argumentative** essays (excluding Works Cited) (double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins) in the five-paragraph essay structure (you can locate a guide by clicking on the 'Writing Assignments Links and Resources' link in LU Learn). Internet resources can be used, but as with all sources they must be cited properly. Political Science as a field has adopted the APSA Manual of Style; however, you are free to use the citation style adopted by your major department or the style used in your English composition courses (MLA or other style). Regardless of citation style, all sources must be properly, thoroughly, and consistently cited. Careful attention to grammar, spelling, and the mechanics of presentation is expected. *Wikipedia is not a reliable source of information. Any citation of Wikipedia in a term paper or other assignment in this course will result in an automatic score of 0 (zero) on the assignment.* Submit papers via SafeAssign in LU Learn by **9:00 a.m.** on the dates listed in the outline below. **I reserve the right to reject assignments submitted after the deadline.**

Court Observation Analysis (50 points)

Starting Week 5, you will observe court proceedings in two different courts and submit a 6-7 page (excluding Works Cited) paper (double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, consistent citation style) in five-paragraph essay structure that describes and, more importantly, analyzes your observations from the visits. Instructions for the courtroom visit paper can be found in LU Learn. Analyses are due via SafeAssign in LU Learn by **9:00 a.m. on Monday, December 4th, 2017.** **I will not accept late assignments.**

Examinations (200 points)

Expect multiple choice questions for the most part, with short answer and essay elements. Exams are cumulative, but will focus primarily on course materials and discussions since the last exam. Questions

will come from course lectures, class discussions, and course readings, which means anything taught in class is testable material, and not everything taught in class will be in the course texts. **You cannot skip any of the exams.** Only one excused missed exam may be made-up. Students must have a valid, documented excuse for missing an exam.

Grading and Evaluation*

Grades are posted in ‘My Grades’ in LU Learn and will be based on the following:

Participation and Attendance	70 points
Short Essays	50 points
Court Observation Analysis	50 points
Four (4) Exams	200 points
Total	<hr/> 370 points

*I do not offer extra credit on an individual basis.

Grading Scale

A= 370 – 333 points B= 332 – 296 points C= 295 – 259 points D= 258 – 222 points F= <221 points

Privacy Notice

Federal privacy laws (FERPA) apply to universities and colleges. University employees, including instructors, cannot discuss student information with third parties including parents and legal guardians of students. Anyone requesting information about a student should be referred to the Registrar. Instructors will be officially notified in writing by the Registrar’s Office about the specific information to be released and the persons authorized to receive the information.

Help & Resources

Lamar University’s Student Advising and Retention Services (STARS) offers tutoring in many courses, including American government, and can also help you with general study, note-taking, or textbook reading strategies. The STARS Tutoring Center is located on the first floor of the Mary and John Gray Library. If you have any questions, you can reach STARS at (409) 880-PLAN.

The Writing Center is centrally located on the first floor of the Mary and John Gray Library. The Center's individualized tutoring sessions aspire to more than just the short-term goal of improving a particular essay or paper. Writing Center tutors seek to improve the student writer's composing skills so that he or she can approach any writing assignment in a progressively more skilled and thus more confident manner. **Overall, their goal is to provide authentic learning of the writing process, not quick-fixes for papers.** Walk-ins are welcome, but students are strongly encouraged to make appointments by calling 880-8571, emailing UWC@lamar.edu, or dropping by the center.

Academic Honesty

Students are specifically warned against all forms of cheating and plagiarism. The *Lamar University Student Handbook* clearly reads: “Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subjected to disciplinary action. Punishable offenses include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination or academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of source materials.” One aspect of the *Handbook’s* definition of cheating includes “purchasing or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm.” Plagiarism is defined as “the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or ideas into one’s own and submitted for credit.” Faculty members in the College of arts and Sciences investigate all cases of

suspected plagiarism. Any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty in this course will fail the exercise in question and perhaps the course itself.

Disability Accommodation

Lamar University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is located in the Communications building room 105. Office staff collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

For students:

- If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact the DRC at 409-880-8347 or drc@lamar.edu to arrange a confidential appointment with the Director of the DRC to explore possible options regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- If you are registered with DRC and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, we encourage you to contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

myLamar Portal

Students are asked to obtain a Lamar Electronic Account username and password so they can log into the myLamar website and LU Learn. Students may get information on how to get into the myLamar Web site from the University's homepage (<http://www.lamar.edu>) by clicking on the myLamar link on the left top corner of the screen. Follow the steps to secure your myLamar username and password.

Sexual Harassment

In accordance with administrative policy, sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the university. Behavior in the course must conform to the university policy.

Gender Identity

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than is what on the class roster, please let me know. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records, and so I may call you by your preferred name and pronouns.

Emergency Procedures

Many types of emergencies can occur on campus; instructions for severe weather or violence/active shooter, fire, or chemical release can be found at:

<http://www.lamar.edu/about-lu/administration/risk-management/index.html>. Following are procedures for the first two:

Severe Weather

- Follow the directions of the instructor or emergency personnel.
- Seek shelter in an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, putting as many walls as possible between you and the outside.
- If you are in a multi-story building, and you cannot get to the lowest floor, pick a hallway in the center of the building.
- Stay in the center of the room, away from exterior walls, windows, and doors.

Violence/Active Shooter (CADD)

- **CALL** - 8-3-1-1 from a campus phone (880-8311 from a cell phone). Note: Calling 9-1-1 from either a campus phone or cell phone will contact Beaumont City Police Dispatch rather than University Police.
- **AVOID**- If possible, self-evacuate to a safe area outside the building. Follow directions of police officers.
- **DENY**- Barricade the door with desks, chairs, bookcases or any other items. Move to a place inside the room where you are not visible. Turn off the lights and remain quiet. Remain there until told by police it is safe.
- **DEFEND**- Use chairs, desks, cell phones or whatever is immediately available to distract and/or defend yourself and others from attack.

CAMPUS CLOSURE – In the event of an announced campus closure in excess of four days due to a hurricane or other disaster, students are expected to login to Lamar University’s website’s homepage (www.Lamar.edu) for instructions about continuing courses remotely.

The information contained in this class syllabus is subject to change with advanced notice.

Week	Dates to Remember	Readings	Exams and other Major Assignment Dates
1 8/28-9/1	8/30 Last day to register for Fall 2017 with late fee	Ch.1 Law Courts, and Politics (Neubauer and Meinhold)	
Part I: Institutions of Law			
2 9/4-9/8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 2 Law and Legal Systems (Neubauer and Meinhold) "How to Read a U.S. Supreme Court Opinion" & <i>Sakazar v. Buono</i> (2010) (In 'Contents,' 'Chapter 2' folder in LU Learn)	
3 9/11-9/15	9/13: last day for full refund on dropped (not withdrawn) courses	Ch. 3 Federal Courts (Neubauer and Meinhold) Ch. 2 An Overview of American Courts (Mitchell and Klein) "Structure of Federal Courts" (see 'Contents' folder)	
4 9/18-9/22		Ch. 4 State Courts (Neubauer and Meinhold) & contents in chapter folder	9/21: Exam I (Weeks 1-4)
Part II: Interpreters of the Law			
5 9/25-9/29	9/29: Last day to drop or withdraw without academic penalty	Ch. 5 Lawyers and Legal Representation (Neubauer and Meinhold) "Career Profiles: Assistant Federal Public Defender" (see 'Contents' folder)	
6 10/2-10/6		Ch. 6 Judges (Neubauer and Meinhold)	Short Essay #1 Due 10/5 via SafeAssign by 9:00 a.m.
Part III: Consumers of the Law			
7 10/9-10/13		Ch. 7 Mobilizing the Law: Litigants, Interest Groups, Court Cases, and the Media (Neubauer and Meinhold)	10/12: Exam II (Weeks 5-7)
Part IV: Trial Courts			
8 10/16-10/20		Ch. 8 Trial Courts: The Preliminary Stages of Criminal Cases (Neubauer and Meinhold) "How Well Do People Actually Know Their Miranda Rights?" (see 'Contents' folder) Ch. 1 Introduction to Two Cases and Important Information About What Is to Come (Mitchell and Klein) & pp. 54-60 (2. Beginning a Criminal Case)	

Week	Dates to Remember	Readings	Exams and other Major Assignment Dates
9 10/23-10/27		Ch. 9 Trial Courts: How Criminal Cases End: Bargaining and Sentencing (Neubauer and Meinhold) Pp 33-36, 79-90 (Mitchell and Klein)	
10 10/30-11/3	11/3: Last day to drop or withdraw with academic penalty	Ch. 10 Trial Courts: How Civil Cases Begin (Neubauer and Meinhold) Pp 37-49, 50-54 in Ch. 3, 61-79 in Ch.4 (Mitchell and Klein)	
11 11/6-11/10		Ch. 11 Trial Courts: How Civil Cases End (Neubauer and Meinhold) Ch. 8 Complexities and Complications (Mitchell and Klein)	Short Essay #2 Due 11/9 via SafeAssign by 9:00 a.m.
12 11/13-11/17		Ch. 12 Trials and Juries (Neubauer and Meinhold) Ch.5 The Trial (Mitchell and Klein) "Jury Selection: What Should I Ask?" (see 'Contents' folder)	11/17: Exam III (Weeks 8-12)
Part V: Appellate Review			
13 11/20-11/24		Ch. 13 The Appellate Process "Wrongful Convictions Have Cost Texans More Than \$93 Million" (see 'Contents' folder)	
14 11/27-12/1		Ch. 6 Appeals (Mitchell and Klein) Ch. 14 The Supreme Court: Deciding What to Decide (Neubauer and Meinhold) Ch. 7 The Supreme Court (Mitchell and Klein)	
15 12/4-12/8		Ch. 15 The Supreme Court: The Justices and Their Decisions (Neubauer and Meinhold)	Court Observation Analysis due Tues: 12/4 by 9:00 a.m.
16 12/11-12/15		Final Exam Tues, December 12th 8:00 a.m.—10:30 a.m.	