

Political Science 2250: Judicial Process

Professor: Marcus E. Green
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Office Hours: TR 11:00-11:50 · W 5:15-5:45
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Quarter: Spring 2012 | Jan 30 - May 17
Section #: 01
Schedule #: 20616
Class Time: TR 2:00-3:45
Location: Library 126
Website: access through Blackboard

Course Description

Political Science 2250 analyzes the role of federal and state courts as political institutions, with special attention to the roles of judges and lawyers in the judicial process. Civil and criminal courts are studied, as well as judicial norms and procedures.

Course Objectives and Learning Goals

1. To develop an understanding of the judicial process in the United States.
2. To develop an understanding of the US court system at local, state, and federal levels.
3. To develop an understanding of law and legal reasoning.
4. To expose students to aspects of the legal profession.
5. To help students decide whether to go to law school.

Required Texts

1. Robert A. Carp, Ronald Stidham, Kenneth L. Manning, *Judicial Process in America*, 8th edition. CQ Press, 2011. ISBN: 9781604266085
2. Lief Carter and Tom Burke, *Reason in Law*, 8th Edition. Longman/Pearson, 2010. ISBN: 978-0205745395

Exam Dates & the Determination of Final Grade

Exams & Partic.	Date	Points	Grades
Exam 1	Tue, Feb 28	4	
Exam 2	Thu, Apr 5	4	
Final Exam	Thu, May 17, 11:00-1:00	4	
Participation	n/a	4	
Total Possible Points		16	
Average		4	
- points for absences			
Final Grade			

Average of essay grades & participation
 - 0.1 for each unexcused absence after 4th absence

Calculation of Final Grade

The calculation of the final grade for the course is determined by the average of the grades for two exams, the final exam, and class participation. The final grade recorded for the course follows the grade scale below. The final grade average must meet the minimum threshold of the grade scale for each corresponding grade. For example, to receive an A- in the course, a student's final grade average must be 3.7 or above. In the case of a marginal final grade within .05 of a point, I will round up. For instance, if a student's final grade average is 3.66, I will record the final grade as an A-, but a final grade average of 3.60 will be recorded as a B+.

Grade Scale

The grading system for this course follows Otterbein University's four-point grade scale found in the University Catalog. (<http://catalog.otterbein.acalog.com/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=463#Grading>). Grades for exams and final grade averages will follow the Grade Scale in first column in the table below. This Grade Scale will be used to determine the final Letter Grade.

Grade Scale	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Description
3.85 – 4.00	A	4.0	Exceptional
3.7 – 3.84	A-	3.7	Excellent
3.3 – 3.69	B+	3.3	Above Average
3.0 – 3.29	B	3.0	Above Average
2.7 – 2.99	B-	2.7	Above Average
2.3 – 2.69	C+	2.3	Average
2.0 – 2.29	C	2.0	Average
1.7 – 1.99	C-	1.7	Below Average
1.3 – 1.69	D+	1.3	Below Average
1.0 – 1.29	D	1.0	Below Average
0.0 – 0.99	F	0.0	Failure

Grades for assignments and final grade averages will follow the Grade Scale in first column. This Grade Scale will be used to determine the final Letter Grade.

Exams, Attendance, and Class Participation

Exams

The course includes two exams and a final exam. Exam dates are noted above and in the reading schedule. Each exam consists of questions drawn from the readings and lectures. The final exam is scheduled according to the university's final exam schedule. The final covers material in the last section of the course and some comprehensive material.

Make-up Exam Policy

There are no make-up exams.

Attendance

Attendance is required but not graded. Students are permitted up to 4 unexcused absences without penalty. After a student's fourth unexcused absence, I will deduct .1 of a point from the student's final grade average for each additional absence. For example, 5 absences = -0.1 point; 6 absences = -0.2 point, etc. If you need to miss more than three classes for university approved reasons, please see me to make arrangements. Sickness short of hospitalization or incapacitation does not constitute grounds for an excused absence. I may make exceptions for truly unusual and unanticipated events, but such arrangements must be discussed with me. Colds, flus, hangovers, doctor appointments, changes in work schedules, etc. do not count as either unusual or unanticipated. You are permitted three unexcused absences for such events.

Tardiness

If you are regularly late to class, I reserve the right to reduce your final grade average by .1 point for each instance of tardiness.

Participation Grade

Students are graded on class participation. In addition to the formal essay requirements, successful achievement of course objectives requires active class participation, which is an important and valuable aspect of the learning experience. Therefore, 25% of the final course grade is determined by class participation. This means that I expect you to contribute and participate in class discussions. You will only receive an acceptable grade for class participation

if you attend class and participate in discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss particular issues, topics, and readings.

To facilitate discussion, I will distribute discussion questions based upon the readings. Students are expected to answer particular questions in class – one participation point for each question successfully answered. I will also give students credit for participation when they provide significant contributions to class discussions that either enhance or provide greater meaning to the discussion. Your participation grade will be determined by the quality and quantity of your participation performance.

Participation Grade Breakdown

Participation Points	Grade
12	4.0
11	3.8
10	3.7
9	3.3
8	3.0
7	2.7
6	2.3
5	2.0
4	1.7
3	1.3
2	1.0
1	0.7
0	0.0

Participation grades will be determined by the quality and quantity of student performance. For each discussion question a student successfully answers, the student will receive one point. At the end of the semester, students' participation grades will be calculated based upon their total raw participation points following the scale to the left. For instance, a student with 11 participation points, will receive a grade of 3.8 for participation.

Course Policies

Course Discussion Format

Class meetings will be largely organized around discussion, meaning I will do very little (if any) lecturing. The discussions are designed to provide students with a framework of meaning through which they are better able to understand and the course material. The discussions will be based upon readings from the required texts and discussion questions. Class meetings shall provide students with a forum in which they can discuss the key concepts of the texts under review with their classmates and the professor.

Students are responsible for knowing the material covered in the assigned readings and the material covered in discussions. Discussions will address information found in the readings as well as information not found in the readings. Therefore, students are encouraged to attend class and to take notes.

Classroom Environment

Class discussions are designed to challenge your verbal communicative skills, which are, in my view, not only necessary to the learning process but vital to the development of democratic culture and citizenship. The public exchange of ideas requires skill. It requires a level of confidence to speak in front of others and a level of maturity and respect to listen to others. Our discussions will be similar to workshops in which we workout different thoughts and ideas in coordination with one another. Because of this, I will work to make the classroom environment respectful and comfortable for all, and I expect you to do the same.

Blackboard

I will distribute course materials on Blackboard. Therefore, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with Blackboard and to login periodically for course updates.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Otterbein policies regarding academic integrity will be strictly enforced. All submitted work must be your own. I will investigate indications of copied or plagiarized work, and I reserve the right to administer an oral exam and to question the student, if I suspect a student has submitted work that may be plagiarized.

According to the Otterbein Campus Life Handbook, “any use of the words or ideas of someone else as though they were the student’s own words, constitutes plagiarism. This definition applies to the use of both printed and unprinted sources, including the work of other students or faculty.” See: <http://www.otterbein.edu/public/CampusLife/HealthAndSafety/StudentConduct/JudicialPolicies.aspx> I will report violations of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. According to Otterbein policy, students who violate standards of academic integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions, which include the “failure on the given assignment or a failing grade for the course.”

Disability Accommodation

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment, we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Disability Services Coordinator for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Disability Services Coordinator (x1618 or LMonaghan@otterbein.edu), I encourage you to do so.

Email

Outside of my office hours, I can be reached via email, and I will usually respond within 24 hours. **Note:** In the subject, include the course number (POLS 2250), and in the body of the message, please include your first and last name.

Electronic Devices

Recording Lectures: In accordance with federal regulations, students may not make audio recordings of class lectures without the prior written consent of the instructor. Students who have registered and documented disabilities may make audio recordings with the consent of the instructor.

Cell Phones & iPods: Please turn off cell phone ringers during class. No texting or no iPod listening in class. If I see a student texting in class, I will automatically subtract one point from the student’s participation points.

Drop Dates & Withdrawal Policy

Students who wish to drop the course may do so using the regular procedures. It is not the responsibility of the professor to drop students from the course.

- Last day to drop classes with no grade recorded on transcript: March 2, 2012
- Last day to drop with “W” on transcript: March 30, 2012

Class Schedule and Readings. This is a tentative schedule and may change with notice.

Week	Date	Topic/Reading	Assignment
Week 1	Tue Jan 31	Introduction to the course	
	Thu Feb 2	Carp, Ch. 1 Foundations of Law in the United States	
Week 2	Tue Feb 7	Carp, Ch. 2 History and Organization of the Federal Judicial System	
	Thu Feb 9	Carp, Ch. 3 History and Organization of State Judicial Systems	
Week 3	Tue Feb 14	Carp, Ch. 4 Jurisdiction and Policymaking Boundaries	
	Thu Feb 16	Carp, Ch. 5 State Judges Carp, Ch. 6 Federal Judges	
Week 4	Tue Feb 21	Review	Review
	Thu Feb 23	Guest Lecture: Marion County Common Pleas Judge William Finnegan	
Week 5	Tue Feb 28	Exam 1	Exam 1
	Thu Mar 1	Carp, Ch. 8 Lawyers, Litigants, & Interest Groups in the Judicial Process	
Week 6	Tue Mar 6	Carp, Ch. 9 Crime and Procedures Prior to a Criminal Trial Carp, Ch. 10 The Criminal Trial and Its Aftermath	
	Thu Mar 8	Carp, Ch. 11 The Civil Court Process	
Week 7	Mar 10 - 18	Spring Break March 10-18. No Class	
Week 8	Tue Mar 20	Guest Lecture: Jeffery A. Linn II, Associate Attorney, Yavitch & Palmer Co., L.P.A.	
	Thu Mar 22	Movie: <i>Hot Coffee</i> (2011)	
Week 9	Tue Mar 27	Carp, Ch. 12 Decision Making by Trial Court Judges	
	Thu Mar 29	Review	Review
Week 10	Tue Apr 3	Guest Lecture: Craig Scott & J.R. Thomas of Volkema Thomas Miller & Scott, LPA	
	Thu Apr 5	Exam 2	Exam 2
Week 11	Tue Apr 10	Guest Lecture (to be determined)	
	Thu Apr 12	Carp, Ch. 7 Policy Links: Citizenry, President, & Federal Judiciary	
Week 12	Tue Apr 17	Carp, Ch. 14 Implementation and Impact of Judicial Policies Carp, Ch. 15 Policymaking by American Judges: A Synthesis	
	Thu Apr 19	Carter & Burk, Ch 1 What Legal Reason Is	
Week 13	Tue Apr 24	Carter & Burk, Ch 2 Change & Stability in Legal Reasoning	
	Thu Apr 26	Carter & Burk, Ch 3 Common Law	
Week 14	Tue May 1	Carter & Burk, Ch 4 Statutory Interpretation	
	Thu May 3	Carter & Burk, Ch 5 Interpreting the U.S. Constitution	
Week 15	Tue May 8	Carter & Burk, Ch 6 Law and Politics	
	Thu May 10	Review	Review
Week 16	Thu May 17	Final Exam 11:00-1:00	Final Exam