



PSCI 442 Section 01E: Constitutional Law COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2024

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Chad M. King
Class Meeting Times: MWF 10-10:50 AM
Classroom: SS-150
Office Location: SS-162
Department of Political Science Phone number: (903) 886-5317
Office Hours: M: 2-4:30 PM; W: 8:20-8:50 AM, 2-3 PM; F: 2-3 PM.
University Email Address: chad.king@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: E-mail
Communication Response Time: M-F 8 AM to 5 PM (24 hours), Weekends: 48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Textbook: Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Institutional Powers and Constraints
Authors: Epstein, Lee, Kevin McGuire and Thomas Walker.
Published Date: 2022
Publisher: Sage
Edition: 11

Course Description

“This course is an introduction to constitutional law in the United States. Attention is given to important constitutional and legal doctrines by examining major decisions of the US Supreme Court. Topics include the powers of the federal government, federal interbranch conflict, federalism and nation-state relations, and state regulatory power.” (Quoted from the University Undergraduate Course Catalog)

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will gain an understanding of the development of US Constitutional law
2. Students will gain an understanding of key constitutional concepts
3. Students will learn to understand and analyze Supreme Court cases

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need to be familiar with the University learning management system, (myLeo Online), know how to use a personal computer, navigate the World Wide Web/Internet, and use basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word and Power Point.

Instructional Methods

The following methods of instruction will be utilized for this course.

- Lectures and discussions during assigned meeting times.
- Student self-directed readings.

Student Responsibilities for the Course

All students are expected to comply with the following requirements.

- All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.
- Students are expected to regularly check the course site for announcements and updates.
- Students are expected to complete all course readings for each section of the course.
- Unless arranged in advance, students are expected to turn off and put away all electronic devices such as laptops, cell phones, tablets, iPods/iPads, audio and video recording devices, etc.
- Students are expected to review any supplementary materials that the instructor provides, such as web links, news stories, options assignments, etc.
- Students are expected to attend class regularly. Excused absences will only be granted for documented official university activities or documented medical issues. Students are required to provide documentation by the next class meeting to receive an excused absence. Such documentation must be submitted electronically.
- Students are expected to complete all assigned writing assignments, quizzes and exams.
- Students are expected to exhibit respect toward their fellow classmates and the instructor. This includes treating everyone with courtesy and esteem in any and all correspondence

and interactions for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

- Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments or taking exams), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. For this course, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an Internet source, or another student. Any act of academic dishonesty on an exam or quiz will result in a score of 0 for the exam or quiz. Any act of academic dishonesty on a writing assignment will result in a 0 for the entire assignment grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.
- Students will comply with all myLeo Online/D2L technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 89.5%-100%

B = 79.5%-89.4%

C = 69.5%-79.4%

D = 59.5%-69.4%

F = 59.4% or below

Course grades are computed using the following weighted assignments.

Grade breakdown	
Weekly Quizzes	10%
Attendance & Participation	15%
Exam One	21%
Exam Two	21%
Exam Three	21%
Certiorari project	12%
Final Grade	100%

Assessments

Attendance and Participation

This grade is made up of two elements. First, formal attendance will be taken. Second, students will be regularly and randomly call upon to answer questions that help explain or summarize the cases we have. These questions might ask for basic information that would be included in case briefs, ask students to explain the logic of the opinion, or ask students to expand upon themes or ideas from a line of cases. Students will be given one “pass” for the semester if they are not prepared. Students will be given a grade based upon whether they attempt to answer the questions as well as the quality and thoroughness of their answers. Students who accumulate more than 4 unexcused absences will be administratively dropped from the class. Any request for an excused absence must be submitted directly to the instructor in writing (no e-mail) with supporting documentation, no more than 1 class day after the absence.

Quizzes

Students will take weekly quizzes over the assigned readings for the course. These quizzes will contain multiple-choice, True/False and short answer questions. These quizzes will be unannounced and taken in class. Quizzes cannot be made up, however, the lowest four will be dropped.

Exams

Students will take three exams. These exams will include identification, short answer and essay questions. Exams will be taken in class. The dates and times for these exams are listed below.

Certiorari Project

Students will be required to write a short case history and make an oral presentation their case to the class. Students will choose a pending US Supreme Court case to write about and present. The assignment description is available on the course page, along with the deadlines, and grading rubric.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

System Maintenance

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students should rely upon e-mail, office hours, and course announcements as the primary means of communication with the instructor. However, if students have a question about a grade, they will need to meet with the instructor in person. Also, please note that the system will only send e-mail to a student's official University Email address, so students will need to check that account regularly.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

- Make-up exams: If a student misses an exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be made in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 2 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death of an immediate family member, participation in University activities, and legal obligations. Students who miss any exam because they forgot about the exam dates/times will not receive a make-up exam. Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given. Make-up exams will be exclusively essay format.
- Incompletes will be granted completely at the discretion of the instructor and only be granted in the case of serious medical illness or other serious, unavoidable circumstances and only if the student has completed at least 70% of the course work. Incompletes must be finished within two weeks of the end of the semester.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedur>

[es/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf](#)

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty, see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI Use in Courses

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

For this course, students are prohibited from using AI to complete any and all assessments. Any use will result in a 0 for said assessment.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Below are the readings assignments and an exam schedule. The numbers in the third column refer to the assigned chapter from the textbook. In addition to the readings from the textbook, students should also keep abreast of the news and current events.

Week Beginning	Topic	Chapter to read
8/26	Understanding the US Supreme Court, The Judiciary	1, 2
9/2	The Judiciary, The Legislature	2, 3
9/9	The Legislature	3
9/16	The Executive	4
9/23	The Executive	4
9/30	Interbranch Interactions	5
10/7	Interbranch Interactions, Federalism	5, 6
10/14	Federalism	6
10/21	Federalism, The Commerce Power	6, 7
10/28	The Commerce Power	7
11/4	The Commerce Power	7
11/11	The Power to Tax and Spend	8
11/18	The Power to Tax and Spend, ESDP	8, 10
11/25	ESDP	10
12/2	The Takings Clause	11
12/9	Finals Week	

Exam Schedule

Exam 1: 9/27/24 Covers Chapters 1-4.

Exam 2: 11/8/24 Covers Chapters 5-7.

Exam 3: 12/9/24 @ 10:30-12:30 Covers Chapters 8, 10 & 11.

Certiorari Project

The assignment topic is due on 9/12/24 at 5 PM. Due dates for individual paper assignments will be determined by oral presentation dates.