



# **PSCI 443 01E: Civil Rights & Civil Liberties COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2025**

## **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Chad M. King  
Class Meeting Times: T/TH 9:30-10:45 AM  
Classroom: BA-244  
Office Location: SS-162  
Office Hours: T/TH 8:45-9:30 AM, W 9-12 PM, 1-2 PM.  
University Email Address: chad.king@tamuc.edu  
Preferred Form of Communication: E-mail  
Communication Response Time: 24 hours (Up to 48 hours during weekends)

## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### *Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings*

Required Textbook  
Title: *Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Rights, Liberties, and Justice*. 12<sup>th</sup> Edition.  
Authors: Epstein, McGuire, and Walker.  
Published Date: 2025  
Publisher: CQ Press  
ISBN: 9781071901663

### ***Course Description***

In this course we examine the role of the Supreme Court in the development of the American constitutional system. Students will focus upon the development of

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Constitutional doctrines. Students will be expected to analyze and evaluate cases and doctrines within cases over several important areas of Constitutional law.

### ***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, 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**

This class will rely upon a combination of lectures and utilization of the “Socratic method” to explain important concepts of Constitutional law and encourage open discussion and debate about the various substantive topics covered in the 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.
- Students are expected to review any provided supplementary materials.
- Students are expected to attend classes regularly.
- 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 for the course. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.
- East Texas A&M University 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

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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 hypothetical will result in a 0 for the entire semester's writing 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

The final course grade will be calculated using the follow weights.

Attendance & Brief checks	12%
Participation	10%
Exam One	22%
Exam Two	22%
Exam Three	18%
Hypotheticals (2 total, 9% each)	16%
<b>Final Grade</b>	100%

## Assessments

### Attendance & Brief check

Beginning the second week of the semester, students will receive a weekly attendance grade. Excused absences will only be granted for documented official university activities or documented medical issues. Students are required to provide

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documentation by the next class meeting to receive an excused absence. Documentation must be submitted electronically.

In addition, any student who accumulates 4 or more unexcused absences will be administratively dropped from the class.

As part of the attendance grades, students may be asked to pass in a hard copy of their case briefs for the day. Students who are unable to provide briefs will not receive credit for attendance that day.

## **Participation**

Students will be regularly and randomly called 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.

## **Quizzes**

Students will take weekly quizzes over the assigned readings for the course. These quizzes will contain multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer questions. These quizzes will be taken during the first 10 minutes of class. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, however, the instructor will automatically drop the lowest three quiz grades.

## **Exams**

Students will take three exams. These exams will include identification, short answer and essay questions. Students will have 75 minutes to complete the exams. The times and dates for the exams are listed at the end of the syllabus.

## **Hypotheticals**

Twice this semester, students will take on the role of a Supreme Court justice and write an opinion in a hypothetical case, using what has been learned about that area of the law. More information about this assignment will be found on the course page. The times and dates are listed below. ***(For political science majors, the hypothetical would be suitable as artifacts in the Graduating Student Portfolio for either SLO 3 or 4)***

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## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

**LMS: All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

Students will need their campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If students do not know their CWID or have forgotten their password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto: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 students have any questions or difficulties with the course material, please contact the instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If students 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. During

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normal business hours on M-F, students can expect an email reply within 24 hours. On weekends, students can expect an email replay within 48 hours.

## ***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 3 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. 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 students 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/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

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

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

#### **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>

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<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

## **Academic Integrity**

Students at East Texas A&M University 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 students have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

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

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

## **Nondiscrimination Notice**

East Texas A&M University 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.

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## ***Campus Concealed Carry Statement***

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## ***East Texas A&M University Supports Students' Mental Health***

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

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## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Below are readings assignments and exam schedule. In addition to the readings from the textbook, students should also keep abreast of the news and current events.

<b>Week Beginning</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
1/12	Introduction, The Judiciary	1, 2
1/19	The Judiciary, Incorporation	2,3
1/26	Freedom of Religion: Free Exercise	4
2/2	Freedom of Religion: Religious Establishment	4
2/9	Foundations of Free Expression, Modern Free Expression	5, 6
2/16	Modern Free Expression	6
2/23	Libel and Obscenity	8
3/2	Right to Keep and Bear Arms; Privacy and Personal Liberty	8, 9
3/9	<b>Spring Break</b>	
3/16	Privacy and Personal Liberty; Investigations and Evidence	10, 11
3/23	Investigations and Evidence	11
3/30	Attorneys, Trials and Punishment	12
4/6	Race Discrimination and Equal Protection	13
4/13	Race Discrimination and Equal Protection, Contemporary Equal Protection	13, 14
4/20	Contemporary Equal Protection	14
4/27	Voting and Representation	15
Final Exam Week	<b>Final Exam on 5/8 at 8 AM</b>	

\* Students can access the Federalist Papers for free online at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>

### Exam Schedule

Exams will be taken in class and are scheduled on the dates listed below.

Exam 1: 2/25 Covers Chapters 1-4, 6

Exam 2: 4/8 Covers Chapters 8-12

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Exam 3: 5/8 @ AM Covers Chapters 13-15

### **Hypotheticals**

Hypotheticals will be available and submitted on the course page and are scheduled on the dates listed below. Each will open at 11:59 AM (Noon) and close 60 hours later at 11:59 PM. More information about these assignments will be provided on the course page.

Hypothetical 1: Opens 2/7 and closes 2/10

Hypothetical 2: Opens 3/21 and closes 3/24

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