

COURSE SYLLABUS

PLGL 311: Constitutional Law for Paralegals Fall 2026 (3 semester hours)

Online Course Live Lecture: Mondays, 7:20 –10:00 PM

Instructor: Steve Lilley
Office Hours: Available for Consultation upon Request.
Office Phone: (903) 886-5317 – Office Number
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Required Texts

Joanne Banker Hames and Yvonne Ekern, *Constitutional Law: Principles and Practice*, 2nd edition, Cengage Learning

ISBN: 9781111648541

Course Description

Constitutional Law for Paralegals. Three semester hours. This course is designed as an introduction to U.S. constitutional law for the paralegal student. Topics include federal governmental powers and the limitation of those powers, federalism, due process, Bill of Rights, and individual rights under the Constitution. Attention is given to the connection between everyday paralegal experiences and constitutional law.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to enable the student to:

- Understand the provisions of the U.S. Constitution.
- Understand the role of the States and state power as it relates to the U.S. Constitution.
- Understand the U.S. Constitution's application and relation to different areas of law.
- Identify constitutional issues that arise in the context of a client's case.
- Analyze constitutional issues in the context of a client's case.

Attendance/Participation Policy

You are expected to know how to navigate and use the D2L platform by utilizing the training made available to you by the University. You are expected to attend and participate in the online live lectures each week. Unless you experience technological difficulties, you

are expected to use earphones and a microphone to participate in each of the live lectures and utilize a camera so you can be seen during the lecture.

In addition, you are required to participate in the discussion each week you have assigned readings. You must prepare for the discussion by reading ALL the material assigned. Questions may be posted related to each topic the week readings are assigned. You must thoughtfully respond to any posted questions. Short posts unsupported by information in the readings may be given ZERO points.

Grading Policy

Lectures and Discussion: This class will be taught using the Socratic Method as well as lecture. You may be called on at any time and are expected to be fully prepared to discuss the assigned reading material during the live lectures and in the online discussions. Your instructor will make note of the students who answer questions and respond thoughtfully when they are prompted and when questions are open for anyone to answer. This is a cumulative grade over the course of the semester.

Assignments: You are also responsible for completing the assignments listed in this syllabus. The assignments may be found within the chapters of the textbook and in handouts I will provide.

All assignments must have a cover page indicating the following: your name, class, chapter, and name of the assignment (as it appears in the syllabus), and date the assignment is due. A deduction may be assessed to any assignments turned in without a cover page. You will submit your assignments in the portal provided to you in the D2L platform.

All written work will be graded not only on content, but also on writing style, including punctuation and grammar.

Late work: You are expected to submit assignments on time. **Written work turned in late will receive a deduction of at least 10 points and will not be accepted after one week after its due date.** Exceptions will be granted only under the most extreme, verifiable circumstances after receiving approval from the Instructor.

Exams: The examinations will primarily consist of multiple choice, true/false, definition, and short answer questions. The exams are open note and open book, but any material used to assist you must be obtained prior to the start of the exam and must consist of written material only. Any collaboration with another person during an exam will result in a failing grade. You are not permitted to utilize the internet in any way during the examine to assist you on the exam.

Your grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Attendance/Participation	10 points
Assignments	30 points
Exam 1	20 points
Exam 2`	20 points
Final Exam	<u>20 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

Grade Distribution is as follows:

A = 90-99

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 59 and below

(No extra credit work will be allowed)

Plagiarism Statement

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks

- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.”

(www.plagiarism.org)

If you plagiarize, you will receive a ZERO for the assignment in question. Additionally, the Instructor reserves the right to give you an F in the course. The matter will be referred to the Office of the Dean of the College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts.

Classroom Etiquette

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct). You are expected to always exhibit respect for the Instructor and fellow students. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in removal from online course. Please be respectful of others’ opinions even if you do not agree with them. I look forward to reading a variety of thoughts and opinions and I want you to express yourselves, but please be respectful.

Disability 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 accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University – Commerce
Gee Library
Room 132
Phone: (903)886-5150 or (903)886-5835
Fax: (903)468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Nondiscrimination Statement

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 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 <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> (and/or consult your event organizer). 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 call 9-1-1.

Counseling Center

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.

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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, 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>

The Instructor reserves the right to amend, modify, or alter this syllabus as may be necessary.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1

08/24 Course Overview
Chapter 1: Introduction to Constitutional Law
Chapter 2: The Constitution and the Federal Government: An Overview
 Assignment: Putting It Into Practice #2
 Assignment: Assignment and Projects #2

Week 2

08/31 Chapter 3: Federal Judicial Power
 Assignment: Questions for Analysis - #1

Week 3

09/07 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Week 4

9/14 NO CLASS – INSTRUCTOR UNAVAILABLE

Week 5

09/21 Chapter 4 Federal Legislative Power

Week 6

09/28 Chapter 5: Federal Executive Power
 Assignment: Putting It Into Practice

Week 7

10/05 EXAM 1

Week 8

10/12 Chapter 6: State Powers and the Constitution
 Review for Midterm

Week 9

10/19 Chapter 7: Constitutional Protections of Civil Rights and Liberties
Assignment: Assignment and Projects - #2

Week 10

10/26 Chapter 8: Equal Protection
Assignment: Putting It Into Practice - #1

Week 11

11/02 EXAM 2

Week 12

11/09 Chapter 9: Due Process
Assignment: Assignment and Projects - #2

Week 13

11/16 Chapter 11: Freedom of Expression.
Assignment: Putting It Into Practice #1

Week 13

11/23 Chapter 12: Freedom of Religion
Assignment: Putting It Into Practice #1

Week 14

11/30 Chapter 14 – Criminal Justice and the Constitution

Week 15

12/7 FINAL EXAM