

COMMON COURSE OUTLINE

Political Science POLS 2250 Constitutional Law

COURSE DESCRIPTION

1. Credits: 3
2. Lecture Hours/Week: 3 lecture/week, no lab
3. Prerequisites: None
4. Co-requisites: None
5. MnTC Goals:
 - #5 History & the Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - #9 Ethical and Civic Responsibility
6. Description:

Explores the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights as elements of national government and criminal justice. Addresses equal protection, due process, First Amendment, search and seizure, rights of the accused, rights of prisoners, presidential authority, and historic Supreme Court cases. Course includes debates and mock trials.

DATES LAST REVISED: November 2013, July 2015, November 2017 [for Transfer Pathway submission].

DATES LAST REVIEWED: August 2018

OUTLINE of MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

U.S. legal system as element of U.S. government

U.S. criminal justice system as an element of U.S. legal system

Eras of Supreme Court decisions

The Bill of Rights

- Equal Protection and Due Process
- First Amendment “fundamental freedoms”
- Fourth Amendment searches and seizures
- Fifth Amendment due process and rights of the accused
- Other amendments

Enduring Constitutional controversies

Mock Trials

Current Constitutional cases and issues

Summary and Conclusions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successfully completing this course for use as a Political Science elective in the Transfer Pathway, students will be able to do at least 75% of the learning outcomes listed immediately below (six of the eight items):

1. Explore topics and methods associated with the discipline of Political Science.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of different subfields of the discipline of Political Science, such as political theory, international relations, comparative government, American politics, and political behavior.
3. Recognize the diversity of political motives and interests of others.
4. Analyze political ideologies and explain how these lead to different goals and political conflict.
5. Examine the relationships among various values, principles, institutions, and traditions, as well as the economic, political, legal, and social orders.
6. Analyze the principles, institutions, and practices of democracy and the rights and responsibilities citizens possess in democratic societies.
7. Analyze the empirical and normative dimensions of political relationships.
8. Apply core concepts such as rights, obligations, justice, liberty, power, and (in)equality to specific issues.

More specifically, students successfully completing this course will be able to:

9. Explain the historical evolution of the U.S. Constitution, constitutional interpretation and application, and related political institutions, processes, and conditions (MnTC goal 5b)
10. Analyze and assess the purposes of the Constitution in terms of national governance, the legal system, and criminal justice. (MnTC goals 5a, 5b, 9a, 9b, and 9c)
11. Identify and evaluate enduring constitutional controversies, such as those over war powers and presidential authority. (MnTC goals 5b, 5c, 9b, and 9d)
12. Analyze and assess how well the Constitution addresses current conditions and issues. (MnTC goals 5c, 5d, and 9d)
13. Draw conclusions about how well the Constitution and the criminal justice system balance (and address) competing political values. (MnTC goals 5c and 9b)
14. Assess how the U.S. Constitution, constitutional interpretation, and application of Constitutional principles shape individual lives, public policies, and political, legal, economic, social, historical, and cultural conditions (MnTC goals 5a and 5c)
15. Apply such core concepts as *judicial review*, *due process*, *equal protection*, *property rights*, and *rights of the accused* – to diverse constitutional and criminal-justice issues in U.S. politics and illustrate how such concepts differently explain political, legal, economic, social, historical, and cultural conditions (MnTC goals 5c, 5d, 9b, and 9d)

16. Express, apply, and assess prominent national and personal political-legal values (MnTC goals 9a)
17. Exercise and assess the rights, responsibilities, and ethical features of active citizenship (MnTC goals 9c and 9e)
18. Identify and evaluate how protections in the Bill of Rights enhance individual liberty and affect the conduct of criminal justice and law enforcement. (MnTC goals 5a, 5d, 9b, and 9c)

METHODS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

May include diagnostic, formative, and summative versions of: answering questions on exams and quizzes; long-form writing (such as writing reactions to political events and conditions, evaluating public policy, advocating policy, writing research essays and political analyses); short-form writing (such as in-class essays, book reviews, reflective writing, opinion pieces, Letters to the Editor, or other brief commentary); submitting a writing portfolio; and participating in group activities, group projects, classroom discussion, classroom presentations, classroom activities, oral presentations, or debates.

SPECIAL INFORMATION: none

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION about MnTC GOALS

From http://www.mntransfer.org/students/plan/s_mntc.php and links (viewed July 2015)

MnTC goals:

#5: History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Goal: To increase students' knowledge of how historians and social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity.

Students will be able to:

- a. Employ the methods and data that historians and social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
- b. Examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods and cultures.

- c. Use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
- d. Develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.

#9: Ethical and Civic Responsibility

Goal: To develop students' capacity to identify, discuss, and reflect upon the ethical dimensions of political, social, and personal life and to understand the ways in which they can exercise responsible and productive citizenship. While there are diverse views of social justice or the common good in a pluralistic society, students should learn that responsible citizenship requires them to develop skills to understand their own and others' positions, be part of the free exchange of ideas, and function as public-minded citizens.

Students will be able to:

- a. Examine, articulate, and apply their own ethical views.
- b. Understand and apply core concepts (e.g. politics, rights and obligations, justice, liberty) to specific issues.
- c. Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.
- d. Recognize the diversity of political motivations and interests of others.
- e. Identify ways to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.