



MERCER
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
POL-205	Constitutional Law	3.0
Hours: Lecture/Lab/Other 3/0/0	Co- or Pre-requisite ---	Implementation Semester & Year FA 2022

Catalog description:

An introduction to the basic principles of U.S. constitutional law including the constitutional basis for the federal system; powers of national government; the rights against national and state government; and the process of judicial review and the role of constitutional interpretation.

General Education Category: | **Course coordinator: Ken Howarth, 6095703809
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Not GenEd

Required texts & Other materials:

American Constitutional Law: Introductory Essays and Selected Cases, 16th Ed., by Alpheus Thomas Mason & Grier Stephenson, Routledge, 2011, ISBN-13: 978-0205108992

Handouts & Websites as directed; for updated editions/similar text-check bookstore

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of general constitutional law principles dealing with the federal government and the federal system. (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
2. Demonstrate a knowledge of individual guarantees against government or private action including first amendment freedoms. (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
3. Demonstrate a knowledge of the various constitutional restraints on criminal procedure established in the Bill of Rights. (ILGs 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (PLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

Each goal or outcome relates to “political science literacy” with respect to content knowledge and to the “discipline-specific methodologies” of the study of politics with respect to relevant content material. Other learning goals may be specified in particular sections by the instructor with the course coordinator’s approval in addition to but not as a replacement for the above listed goals.

Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):

Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Institutional Learning Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Institutional Learning Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Institutional Learning Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective: Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy: Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking: Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

Program Learning Outcomes for Liberal Arts (PLO)

1. Concept Knowledge Understand the vocabulary, methods, and major concepts present in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences
2. Communication Articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing
3. Critical Thinking Perform a series of thinking tasks including speculation, analysis, and synthesis (i.e., abstract reasoning)
4. Research Methods Utilize research materials and methodologies

Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:

The general plan for this course is broadly in two parts; the first unit serves as a primer of religious studies; while subsequent units address various contemporary issues and focus on subject particulars and applications of more general religious influences.

Units in Summary

Unit 1 – General Constitutional law principles dealing with the federal government

Unit 2 – General Constitutional law principles dealing with the federal system

Unit 3 – Demonstrate a knowledge of individual guarantees against government or private action including first amendment freedoms

Unit 4 – Demonstrate a knowledge of the various constitutional restraints on criminal procedure established in the Bill of Rights

Detailed Units:

Unit I General constitutional law principles dealing with the federal government (SLO #1, 2, 3)

Learning Objectives The student will be able to...

1. Understand the judicial power as established in Article III.
2. Describe the power of judicial review.
3. Distinguish between the various limitations on the exercise of federal jurisdiction.
4. Understand the legislative power as established in Article I.
5. Distinguish between the enumerated and implied powers of Congress.
6. Understand the concept of delegation of legislative power. Understand the executive power as established in Article II.
7. Distinguish between the domestic powers and power over external affairs.

8. Discuss executive privilege, immunity, and the impeachment process.

Unit II General Constitutional law principles dealing with the federal system (SLO #1, 2, 3)

Learning Objectives *The student will be able to...*

1. Distinguish between the relative spheres of federal and state powers including exclusive federal powers, exclusive state powers, and concurrent federal and state power.
2. Understand the concept of intersovereign litigation.
3. Distinguish between the different forms of intergovernmental taxation.
4. Explain the significance of the privileges and immunities clauses.
5. Understand the concept of regulation of foreign commerce.
6. Understand the concept of regulation of interstate commerce.
7. Understand the power of states to tax interstate commerce.
8. Explain when states have the power to tax foreign commerce.

Unit III Demonstrate a knowledge of individual guarantees against government or private action including first amendment freedoms (SLO #1, 2, 3)

Learning Objectives *The student will be able to...*

1. Understand the constitutional restrictions on power over individuals including the bill of rights, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments and the commerce clause.
2. Distinguish between procedural due process and substantive due process.
3. Explain the purpose and scope of the "takings" clause.
4. Understand the concept of equal protection and the various classification systems.
5. Understand the various fundamental rights including the right to privacy, the right to vote, and the right to travel.
6. Explain principles of freedom of speech and assembly including time, place, and manner restrictions; unprotected speech; prior restraints; and freedom of the press.
7. Describe freedom of association and belief protections.
8. Understand the freedom of religion free exercise and establishment clauses.

Unit IV Demonstrate a knowledge of the various constitutional restraints on criminal procedure established in the Bill of Rights (SLO #1, 2, 3)

Learning Objectives *The student will be able to...*

1. Understand constitutional requirements binding on the states and those rights not binding on the states.
2. Describe the scope and limitations on the exclusionary rule.
3. Understand the application of the fourth amendment as it relates to arrests and other detentions, search and seizure, and methods of evidence that shocks the conscience.
4. Explain the fifth amendment privilege against self-incrimination.
5. Understand the sixth amendment right to counsel.
6. Distinguish between the various practical procedures including bail, grand juries, and speedy trial.
7. Understand what constitutes the right to a fair trial.
8. Distinguish between plea bargaining and guilty pleas.
9. Understand constitutional rights in relation to sentencing, punishment, and appeals.

Evaluation of student learning:

Weekly quizzes 20%
Class participation 10%
Multiple reaction papers 5%
Term Project with Oral Presentation 15%
3 Essay exams 50%