



CONSTITUTIONAL LAW I – GOVT-2231-10 SYLLABUS
Georgetown University – Summer 2025

Instructor: Prof. Joseph E. Hartman
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Class times/location: June 3 – July 3, 2025
Monday - Thursday, 10:50 AM-12:55 PM
Room TBD

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 12:55-2:00 PM, *by appointment*

Class Description and Objectives:

This course explores the ways in which judicial interpretation of the U.S. Constitution has created and allocated power to government actors. Much of the popular debate about the U.S. Supreme Court centers on claims of civil rights and liberties. The Framers of the Constitution, however, believed that the greatest protection of liberty could be found in the way government was structured, and that the promise of civil rights and liberties was of little use without decentralized government and an effective system of checks and balances. Using a case law approach, we will build our understanding of judicial perspectives on the structure of American government by analyzing major decisions of the Supreme Court and examining basic Constitutional principles controlling the exercise of governmental power. Topics covered include the theory and practice of judicial review, approaches to Constitutional interpretation, federalism, separation of powers, executive prerogatives, the reserved powers of the states, and an introduction to the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection and due process guarantees. We will also explore ways that other political and governmental actors create alternative or rival Constitutional interpretations and the societal construction of judicial and legal authority. Finally, we will learn about the process of judicial decision-making through simulations of Supreme Court oral argument.

Course Materials

The following text is required for this class, and is available at the University Book Store:

Fisher, Louis, and Katy J. Harriger (2019). *American Constitutional Law, Volume One - Constitutional Structures: Separated Powers and Federalism* (12th edition). Carolina Academic Press: Durham, NC. ISBN 978-1-5310-0950-2.

In addition, students are required to read other selected materials as indicated in the class schedule, below. Readings marked with an asterisk are available on the website “The Founders’ Constitution,” at <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/>.

The following texts are supplementary—not required, but recommended for those interested in additional background.

- Alexander M. Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch: The Supreme Court at the Bar of Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2nd ed. 1986)
- David P. Currie, *The Constitution in the Supreme Court 1789-1888* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992);
- David P. Currie, *The Constitution in the Supreme Court 1888-1986* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992);
- Alexander Hamilton, John Jay & James Madison, *The Federalist*, George Carey, James McClellan, eds. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund 2001);
- Michael J. Klarman, *The Framers’ Coup: The Making of the United States Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016);
- David M. O’Brien, *Storm Center: The Supreme Court in American Politics* (W.W. Norton & Company, 12th ed. 2020);
- Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998);

Preparation for and Participation in Class

There will be roughly 30-45 pages of reading per class, but the reading is at times dense. You will be expected to complete the reading prior to each class meeting. As is typical in the study of law, this course is presented in a combination of lecture and Socratic dialogue, meaning that ***your participation through questions and discussion will determine the quality of the course***. Accordingly, please come prepared; it not only facilitates class discussion, but it is very difficult to absorb a lot of cases at once. Your papers also will be much better if you keep up on the readings.

Course Grading and Requirements:

Your grade will be determined by your overall average, with each assignment graded on a 0-100 point scale. In addition to readings and attendance at lectures, you are required to complete two judicial opinion papers and a take-home final exam. You must also participate in moot court simulations, and regularly participate in class discussion. The point distribution is as follows:

Judicial Opinion Papers:	25 percent
Class Participation:	5 percent
In-Class Exercises and Moot Court Simulations:	10 percent
Final Exam:	35 percent

Judicial Opinion Papers: Students will write two five-page judicial opinions in which they will “rule” on hypothetical fact patterns that relate to cases discussed in class.

Class Participation: Class attendance and regular participation are an important part of this course. If you wish to do well in this class, attendance is necessary. The participation grade will be based on how well you prepare for and engage in class discussions.

- Class discussion should reflect a comprehensive understanding of the assigned readings. Good participation moves beyond discussion of current events to critical engagement of the readings and application of the theories to specific substantive issues. Students will be called upon regularly in class to discuss assigned materials and related topics.
- Students are expected to promptly attend all classes and to complete all of their assignments in a timely fashion. ***No more than three total absences during the semester will be permitted.***

In-Class Exercises and Moot Court Simulations: For each judicial opinion paper, we will conduct mock Supreme Court oral arguments, with students serving as counsel and Supreme Court Justices. Immediately after oral arguments, we will have a question and answer session with the remainder of the class that will further assist you with preparation for your judicial opinion papers.

The grade ranges are defined as follows:

A= unusual excellence (A- 90-93.99; A 94-100)

B= work distinctly above average (B- 80-82.99; B 83-86.99, B+ 87-89.99)

C= work of average quality (C- 70-72.99; C 73-76.99; C+ 77-79.99)

D= below average work, the lowest passing mark (D 60-69.99)

F= Failure, no course Credit (59.99 and below)

Technical Support

- **Canvas** - Students have 24/7 access to <http://canvas.georgetown.edu/getting-help>, including live chat and a support hotline at (855) 338-2770
- **Zoom** - For support with Zoom, email: zoom@georgetown.edu
- **Use of Georgetown University-issued accounts** for Google Mail, Calendar, Groups, Talk, Docs, Sites, Video, and Contacts is governed by the contract between Georgetown University and Google. For help managing your Google Documents, visit [Google Drive Help Center](#).
- **Contact the UIS Service Center** at help@georgetown.edu if you have a question regarding:

- your GU netID and/or password
- your GU email account
- any connectivity issues

Academic Resources

Please note that the University offers a number of valuable academic resources, including:

- Georgetown University Writing Center (Lauinger Library, 217A; 202-687-4246; <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>)
- Academic Resource Center (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>)

Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) (Leavey Center, Suite 335; 202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow their office time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

Academic Integrity, Classroom Conduct, and Extensions Policy

Students must follow the University Honor Code, which states:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Failure to comply with the Honor Code will result in a grade of F in the course. Additional information concerning Georgetown's honor system is available at: https://www11.georgetown.edu/programs/gervase/hc/honor_system.html.

Classroom Conduct

While classroom discussions will often be spirited and intense, students should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions. Student communications through email and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) should remain respectful and professional as well.

Late Assignments

Two 24-hour extension "coupons" are included in this syllabus, which you may use to obtain extensions on an assignment due date. You may use the coupons all at once, individually, or in any combination you choose. No student may use more than three coupons over the course of the semester. I will keep track of student coupon use. Other than death in one's immediate family or a Dean's excuse attesting to a medical emergency, I will not permit extensions beyond those available through the coupons. A coupon allows a

paper to be turned in by midnight the next **calendar** day after the original due date. Thus, a paper due on a Tuesday may be turned in at midnight on Wednesday without penalty, if submitted with a coupon. Note that a paper due on a Tuesday must be turned in on Friday by midnight with three coupons to be considered on time. For papers that exceed the coupon extension, I will deduct **five points** (out of a possible 100) for every day a paper is late. ***Coupons are for use on paper assignments only. You may not use the coupons on the final exam, which must be turned in on time.***

Electronic Media Policy

For in-person sessions, students should turn off all cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices while in class. ***Unless you have a need documented by the Academic Resource Center, you may not use laptop computers, phones, tablets or other electronic devices during class time.*** Recent studies have confirmed not only that laptops and tablets tend to be distracting, but also that taking handwritten notes rather than typing results in superior information retention and conceptual grasp of the material studied, as it requires students to process the material rather than simply take dictation. Moreover, this course seeks to develop your capacity to think with agility and analytical rigor, and not just to absorb information.

AI Policy

In this course, *your* ideas and *your* voice are what matters. Using AI text generation tools at any stage of working on your assignments (idea generation, looking for sources, outlining/organizing, writing, revising, etc.) would make it much harder for me to evaluate and respond helpfully to your work, since I wouldn't be able to tell what's coming from you. As such, you're not permitted to use AI text generating tools at any point when working on your assignments, and I will treat the use of AI text generators as academic dishonesty, and will report the incident to the Honor Council.

Virtual Classroom Policies

Should exigent circumstances require us to meet virtually on Zoom, please adhere to the following practices:

- Attend class on time and remain on Zoom throughout the session;
- Arrive to the Zoom class prepared to discuss readings, current events, and other assigned materials;
- Unless you have received my prior approval, keep webcams and speakers on throughout the entire class session;
- Keep your microphone muted unless speaking;
- Dress appropriately for class;
- Limit eating to before or after class (or during breaks);

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

June 2 **Welcome and Introduction**

I. THE FOUNDING

June 3 **Structural Issues in American Politics**
Readings:
*Articles of Confederation;
U.S. Constitution 481-494
*Republican Government: Brutus #1, Federalist #10
Fisher, pp. 173-74, “Madison’s Analysis of the Separation of Powers”

II. JUDICIAL POWER

June 4 **Judicial Review**
Readings: Fisher, pp. 35-50
Federalist No. 78
Marbury v. Madison (1803)

June 5 **Judicial Review, *continued***
Readings: Fisher, pp. 50-61
Cohens v. Virginia (1821)
Martin v. Hunter's Lessee (1816)
Eakin v. Raub (1825): Gibson’s Dissent

Politics of Interpretation
Readings: Fisher, pp. 61-73

June 9 **Threshold Questions: Cases and Controversies, Standing**
Readings: Fisher, pp. 75-93
Ashwander v. TVA (1936) – The Brandeis Rules
Bellotti v. Baird (1979)
Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife (1992)
Frothingham v. Mellon (1923)
Flast v. Cohen (1968)
United States v. Richardson (1974)
Allen v. Wright (1984)

June 10 **Threshold Questions *continued*: Mootness, Ripeness, Political Questions**
Readings: Fisher, pp. 93-110
DeFunis v. Odegaard (1974)
Poe v. Ullman (1961)
Baker v. Carr (1962)
Nixon v. United States (1973)

III. EXECUTIVE PREROGATIVES: FOREIGN POLICY, EMERGENCY AND WAR POWERS

- June 11 **Emergencies, War and Foreign Affairs: External and Internal Affairs**
Readings: Fisher, pp. 175-77, 257-287
United States v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corp. (1936)
Zivotovsky v. Kerry (2015)
Haig v. Agee (1981)
Trump v. Hawaii (2018)
Video: The Iran-Contra Affair
- Emergencies and Foreign Affairs, *continued*: An Executive Prerogative?**
The Prize Cases (1863)
Ex parte Milligan (1866)
Korematsu v. United States (1944)
Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company v. Sawyer (1952)
New York Times Co. v. United States (1971)
- June 12 **Emergencies, War and Foreign Affairs, *continued***
Treaties and Executive Agreements
Readings: Fisher, pp. 287-295
Goldwater v. Carter (1979)
Dames & Moore v. Regan (1981)
First Judicial Opinion Paper - Assignment Handed Out
- June 16 **War Powers and Habeas Corpus**
Readings: Fisher, pp. 296-321
Hamdi v. Rumsfeld (2004)
Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (2006)
Boumediene v. Bush (2008)
The War Powers Resolution
Dellums v. Bush (1990)
Campbell v. Clinton (2000)
"Military Operations in Libya" – OLC Opinion

IV. PRESIDENTIAL POWER

- June 17 **Creating the Executive Departments**
Readings: Fisher, pp. 177-201
Bowsher v. Synar (1986)
Attorney General Opinion on Ministerial Duties (1823)
Morrison v. Olson (1988)
In-Class Video: Watergate

Appointments and Removals

Readings: Fisher, pp. 189-207

Buckley v. Valeo (1976)

OLC Memo on President Obama's Recess Appointments (2012)

NLRB v. Noel Canning (2014)

In-Class Video – Judicial Confirmations: Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas

Myers v. United States (1926)

Humphrey's Executor v. United States (1935)

Free Enterprise Fund v. Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (2010)

First Judicial Opinion Paper – Oral Arguments

June 18 **Delegation of Legislative Power**

Readings: Fisher, pp. 207-214

Hampton & Co. v. United States (1928)

Schechter Corp. v. United States (1935)

West Virginia v. EPA (2022)

Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo (2024)

Congressional Oversight

Readings: Fisher, pp. 214-226

Clinton v. City of New York (1998)

Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Chadha (1983)

June 19 **No Class – Juneteenth**

June 23 **Investigations and Executive Privilege**

Readings: Fisher, pp. 226-244

Watkins v. United States (1957)

Barenblatt v. United States (1959)

United States v. Nixon (1974)

The AT&T Cases (1976-77)

Clinton v. Jones (1997)

Trump v. United States (2024) (pdf)

In-Class Video – the McCarthy Era

First Judicial Opinion Paper Due

Second Judicial Opinion Paper - Assignment Handed Out

V. FEDERALISM AND THE COMMERCE CLAUSE

June 24 **Federalism (a Brief Introduction)**

Readings: Fisher, pp. 325-336

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Missouri v. Holland (1920)

The Commerce Clause

Readings: Fisher, pp. 337-343

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)

Cooley v. Board of Wardens (1852)

First Judicial Opinion Paper Due

Second Judicial Opinion Paper - Assignment Handed Out

June 25

Federalism and National Elections

Readings: Fisher, pp. 415-425

Bush v. Gore (2000)

In-Class Video – Bush v. Gore

Nationalization of the Economy

Readings: Fisher, pp. 343-348

Champion v. Ames (1903)

Hammer v. Dagenhart (1918)

June 26

The New Deal Watershed

Readings: Fisher, pp. 349-359

Carter v. Carter Coal Company (1936)

National Labor Relations Board v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation (1937)

United States v. Darby (1941)

Wickard v. Filburn (1942)

From National League to Garcia

Readings: Fisher, pp. 360-365

National League of Cities v. Usery (1976)

Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority (1985)

Second Judicial Opinion Paper – Oral Arguments

June 30

State Powers Revived

Readings: Fisher, pp. 365-377

United States v. Lopez (1995)

United States v. Morrison (2000)

Gonzalez v. Raich (2005)

Second Judicial Opinion Paper Due

Final Exam Handed Out

VI. TAXING AND SPENDING

July 1

The Spending and Taxing Powers

Readings: Fisher, pp. 378- 397

Bailey v. Drexel Furniture Co. (1922)

Steward Machine Co. v. Davis (1937)

South Dakota v. Dole (1987)

National Federation of Independent Business v. Sibelius (2012)
King v. Burwell (2015)
South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc. (2018)

Preemption and Abstention

Readings: Fisher, pp. 397-405
Pennsylvania v. Nelson (1956)
Arizona v. United States (2012)

July 2 **TBD**

VII. INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

July 3 **LAST DAY OF CLASS**
Concluding Remarks
Online Class Evaluations; TBD
Second Judicial Opinion Paper Due
Final Exam Handed Out

July 11 ***Final Exam Due, 11:59.59 p.m.***

Syllabus Modification: In some instances, the syllabus might need to be altered, and the Instructor retains the right to do so. In those instances, the Instructor will give notice of those changes to the class in a timely manner.

Extension Coupons



COUPON #1 – CONSTITUTIONAL LAW I (SUMMER 2025)

This coupon entitles you to an automatic, no questions asked, 24-hour (one calendar day) extension on any paper for Constitutional Law I, subject to limitations detailed in the syllabus.



COUPON #2 – CONSTITUTIONAL LAW I (SUMMER 2025)

This coupon entitles you to an automatic, no questions asked, 24-hour (one calendar day) extension on any paper for Constitutional Law I, subject to limitations detailed in the syllabus.