

HIST 3910
The U.S. Constitution
Fall 2017

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Office hours: T 10:30-11:30 or by appointment

Course Description: This one-day course will give students a brief, intensive introduction to the core principles and legacies of the United States Constitution. Students will read the text of the Constitution and its amendments, along with key antifederalist and federalist documents and landmark Supreme Court opinions that illuminate important constitutional principles. The class will meet on Saturday, September 23 from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. (with an hour lunch break). The day will be divided into five one-hour blocks, during which we will discuss the background, drafting, and ratification of the constitution; the origins and contexts of the Bill of Rights and the Civil War amendments; and key court cases of the 19th and 20th centuries. Each hour will combine lecture and discussion, with some small group activities and a video.

You will be quizzed on the readings during our class meetings. Please plan accordingly.

Afterward, students will write a 1,500 to 2,500-word essay on one of three topics related to the readings and our discussions. In each case, students will be expected to read perceptively and to assess the relative strength of arguments, based on what they have learned in the class.

YOU CANNOT PASS THIS CLASS UNLESS YOU DO THE READINGS, ATTEND THE ENTIRE SESSION ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, AND TURN IN THE ESSAY OUTLINED BELOW. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY!

Learning Outcomes: After completing this course, students should:

- Have a clear understanding of the contents, rationale for, and objections to the U.S. Constitution;
- Understand the most important principles deriving from the U.S. Constitution, and key controversies that led to their articulation;
- Be able to read and comprehend legal texts at a high level;
- Be able to write a clearly argued historical essay.

Readings: All readings are available in Canvas under the Files tab, either as PDFs or as links to on-line content.

The U.S. Constitution and Amendments

Brutus [Robert Yates] #1: <http://www.constitution.org/afp/brutus01.htm>

Federalist [James Madison] #10: <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

Federalist [James Madison], #51: <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa51.htm>

Majority opinion by Chief Justice John Marshall, Worcester v. Georgia (1832)

Majority opinion by Chief Justice Earl Warren, Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

Majority and minority opinions, Grutter v. Bollinger et al. (2002)

ALL READINGS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23.

Essay Assignment:

LENGTH: 1,500-2,500 words

DUE DATE: Monday, October 9, at 5:00 p.m. UPLOAD TO CANVAS.

Please write your essay in response to ONE of the following prompts:

1. Clearly and succinctly synthesize and summarize the criticisms of the U.S. Constitution contained in the first Brutus essay, and then specify how the Federalist essays #10 and #51 respond to those criticisms. Which criticisms are handled most effectively in the Federalist essays, and which remain unsatisfactorily answered? What is the most important thing Brutus was right about, and what is the most important thing the Federalist essays got right?
2. Clearly and succinctly state the nature of the controversy between the Cherokee Nation and the state of Georgia in Worcester v. Georgia (1832). Then summarize the arguments presented in Chief Justice John Marshall's majority opinion. What argument in Marshall's opinion appears most persuasive to you? What argument seems most unpersuasive, and what counter-argument would you make in response?
3. Clearly and succinctly state the nature of the controversy between Barbara Grutter and the University of Michigan Law School in Grutter v. Bollinger (2003). Then briefly synthesize and summarize the arguments presented in Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion, and the two counter-arguments presented in the dissenting opinions of Justices Scalia, Thomas, and Rehnquist that you consider to be most persuasive. Which side of this case is most persuasive to you, and which is least persuasive, and why?

Grading: Course grades will be determined by the following:

Attendance, participation, and quiz/quizzes: 100 points

Essay assignment: 100 points

Grading scale:

186-200 points	A
180-185 points	A-
174-179 points	B+
166-173 points	B
160-165 points	B-
154-159 points	C+

146-153 points	C
140-145 points	C-
134-139 points	D+
126-133 points	D
120-125 points	D-
Below 120 points	E

Academic Assistance: If you want additional help, please contact the University Writing Center and/or the ASUU Tutoring Center.

University Writing Center: <http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu/>

ASUU Tutoring Center: <http://tutoringcenter.utah.edu/>

Disabilities: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will help make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. <http://disability.utah.edu/>

Student Wellness: Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, and cross-cultural differences can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources, contact the Center for Student Wellness: www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

Content Accommodations: Some of the materials in this course may conflict with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully and, if you have a concern, discuss it with me at your earliest convenience. For more information, consult the University of Utah's Accommodations Policy:

<http://academic-affairs.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/03/accommodations-policy.pdf>

Academic Misconduct: No cheating. Details here: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>. Academic misconduct will result in a failing assignment, and possibly a failing grade in the class. You will also be entered in a campus-wide database. The College of Humanities has a "2-strikes" policy. If you have been caught before, you will fail this class. If you have failed a class before for academic misconduct and do it again, the college will initiate proceedings to expel you.

Faculty Responsibilities: I am here to help you learn. Please feel free to talk to contact me before or after the day our class meets, during office hours or by appointment. Outside of the classroom, university email is the best way to reach me. Please use my university account, not the email function in Canvas. I will usually respond to emails within 24 hours.

Note: This syllabus is not a binding contract; it may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.