

**PSC 316-01: Introduction to Law**  
**Fall 2008**  
**Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30 pm to 1:45 pm**  
**Graham 204**

**Instructor & Office Hours:**

**Dr. Susan Johnson**

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**Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2 pm – 3:15 pm and by appointment**

**Course Catalog Description:**

Analysis of the American legal system, focusing on the behavior of actors in that system, theoretical foundations of the system, and policy-making role of the courts.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- To give students an introductory understanding of the structure of the American court system
- To help students explore their expectations of the court system and appreciate the way courts influence politics and everyday life
- To show students how judges make decisions, and why this process is different from our long-held myths about judges
- To practice reading and analyzing written judicial opinions

**Required Texts:**

- Carp, Robert A., Ronald Stidham, and Kenneth L. Manning. 2007. *Judicial Process in America*. 7th edition. CQ Press.
- Katsh, M. Ethan and William Rose. 2006. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Legal Issues*. 12th edition. McGraw-Hill.
- Additional Readings may be placed on Blackboard/e-reserve.

**Course Requirements:**

Case briefs	15%
Participation in mini-debates	10%
Exam I	25%
Exam II	25%
Final exam	25%

**Case Briefs:**

You will be required to turn in a case briefs for TEN (10) of the cases of your choice that we read in *Taking Sides*. The case brief will serve to focus your reading on key arguments and issues in each of the cases. I will provide a template for your case brief that you will follow for each case. Case briefs will be due at the beginning of class on the date that the case is assigned. Summaries should be typed (no exceptions!!!!)

**Class Participation:**

We will have "mini-debates" based on the issues in *Taking Sides*. The class will be divided into small groups on the days that issues from *Taking Sides* have been assigned. Each group will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each side as presented in the text. You will

also record your groups' thoughts and disagreements about the issue on a debate participation sheet. Obviously, if you are not in attendance, you will receive a zero for participation for the date(s) missed. If time permits, we will discuss the issues as a class after small debate time has ended.

**Exams:**

Three in-class exams will be held during the semester. Exams will consist of multiple choice and/or short answer and essay questions. Success on these examinations will require a thorough understanding of the reading assignments and class discussions/lectures.

**Academic Honor Code:**

I expect all students in this course to abide by both the letter and spirit of the university's academic integrity policy. The full text of the Academic Integrity Policy can be viewed at: <http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Policy/HonorPolicy.html>.

**Students with Special Needs:**

Students with special needs should contact the instructor during the first week of class. I will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with special requirements.

**Grading Policy:**

A (93-100)	C (73-76)
A- (90-92)	C- (70-72)
B+ (87-89)	D+ (67-69)
B (83-86)	D (63-66)
B- (80-82)	D- (60-62)
C+ (77-79)	F (0-59)

**Late Case Briefs and Missed Debates/Exams:**

Students are expected to turn case briefs in on time and be present to take the exams at their scheduled times. Only in extraordinary circumstances will make-up opportunities exist. Students must notify me PRIOR to the missed exam or brief with a valid excuse and must be prepared to provide credible evidence (such as a written doctor's note) of the excuse. Excuses for late case briefs and missed debates and exams after the fact will not be allowed, resulting in a failing grade for the missed brief and/or exam. It is the instructor's sole discretion to determine whether or not an excuse is acceptable.

Make-up exams will be scheduled for the same day, time and place for everyone. The make-up exam time will be announced in class. Students will be allowed to make-up only one (1) exam during the semester.

**Schedule of Topics:** (Minor adjustments to the schedule may be made during the semester. Students are expected to keep abreast of any changes made to the schedule. Exam dates will not change).

\*Note: Chapter numbers refer to the chapters in *Judicial Process in America*. Issue numbers refer to the topics in *Taking Sides*. Each day's reading assignments should be completed *prior* to class. **Case briefs are due on the date the issue is assigned.**

Aug. 26	Introduction and course overview
Aug. 28	Chapter 1 – Foundations of Law
Sept. 2	Issue 2 – Abortion

Sept. 4	Chapter 2 – The Federal Judicial System
Sept. 9	Issue 1 – Enemy Combatants
Sept. 11	Chapter 3 – State Judicial Systems
Sept. 16	Issue 16 – Same-sex marriage
Sept. 18	Chapter 4 - Jurisdiction & Policymaking Boundaries
Sept. 23	Issue 3 – Physician-assisted suicide
Sept. 25	<b>Exam I</b>
Sept. 30	Chapter 6 – Federal Judges
Oct. 2	<i>Video- Federal judicial selection process</i>
Oct. 7	Chapter 5 – State Judges
Oct. 9-14	<i>Video – "The Last Campaign"</i>
Oct. 16	Chapter 8 – Lawyers, Litigants & Interest Groups <i>Galanter, "Why the Haves Come Out Ahead" (Reserve reading)</i>
Oct. 21	Fall Break
Oct. 23	Chapter 9 – Criminal Procedures
Oct. 28	Issue 7 – Police Identification Issue 9 – Thermal Imaging
Oct. 30	Chapter 10 – Criminal Rights
Nov. 4	Issue 11 – Death Penalty for Juveniles
Nov. 6	Issue 12 – Three-strikes laws Issue 13 – Student drug testing
Nov. 11	<b>Exam II</b>
Nov. 13	Chapter 11 – The Civil Court Process
Nov. 18	Issue 17 – Public School Liability
Nov. 20	Chapter 12 – Decision Making by Trial Court Judges <i>Reserve reading</i> Issue 15 – Cross burning
Nov. 25	Chapter 13 – Decision Making by Collegial Courts <i>Reserve reading</i>

- Nov. 27      Thanksgiving Break
- Dec. 2      Video: Justices' views on decision-making
- Dec. 4      Chapter 14 – Implementation and Impact  
*Reserve reading*  
Issue 19 – Race-Conscious Admissions Policies
- Dec. 9      Reading Day (no classes)
- Dec. 11      Final Exam (Noon – 3 pm)**