

**PSC 316**  
**INTRODUCTION TO LAW**  
**Spring 2007**

Tuesday – Thursday 9:30–10:45 am  
204 Graham

Instructor: Bill Eagles  
Office: 233 Graham  
Office Hours: TTH 8:30–9:00 am and by appointment  
Email: [weagles@greensborolaw.com](mailto:weagles@greensborolaw.com)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a survey of the judicial process and the place of the court system in American politics. We will cover various topics including the organization of the American courts, the processes through which judges act, and their effect of courts on society. This course is intended to familiarize students with the courts as institutions.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- 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 how we may think judges act.

**REQUIRED READING**

1. Carp, Robert A., Ronald Stidham and Kenneth Manning. 2004. *Judicial Process in America*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN: 1-56802-828-8.
2. Baum, Lawrence. 2004. *The Supreme Court*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN: 1-56802-815-6.
3. Selected readings. I will announce the selected readings as the semester progresses.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Class Assignments, Participation, and court observation – 25%

Paper – 25%

Mid-Term Exam – 25%

Final exam – 25%

Grading Scale:A	94-100	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	0-59

## **CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION**

Because this is an upper-level course, participation will prove to be very important to the student's success. Students are expected to regularly attend class and participate in discussion. This means that students should be prepared each class period to be called upon to answer questions relevant to the reading. Quality is more important than quantity in my evaluation of class participation. Any quizzes will be included in the assignment and participation portion of grades.

## **COURT OBSERVATION**

Each student shall observe court proceedings for four (4) hours. The observation shall include at least two different courts. State courts that may be observed are district civil, district criminal, district traffic, superior civil, and superior criminal. Federal courts that may be observed are federal district court, either civil or criminal session, and bankruptcy court. A report of these observations must be turned in during class on February 15<sup>th</sup> or emailed to me on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Late reports will not be accepted. The reports need not be formal and shall be brief. The reports should demonstrate that the observation was done. This activity will be graded with the class Assignments and Participation portion of your grade.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students who miss more than five (5) class meetings will receive a 5 point reduction in their final grade for the course. For each absence over five (5) class periods, your final course grade will be reduced an additional point. I do not grant excused absences. It is your responsibility to use your allowed absences wisely.

Students who are not present when the roll is called or who leave class prior to dismissal, unless otherwise discussed with the instructor prior to the class meeting, will be considered absent.

## **PAPER**

One paper will be required for this course (approximately 8-10 pages.) I will distribute a handout for the paper after the mid-term. Papers are due on the last day of class during class or emailed to me before 5 pm on that day. Late papers (by less than 24 hours) will be penalized ten points. No papers more than 24 hours late will be accepted.

## **EXMINATIONS**

One mid-term exam will be held during the semester, along with a cumulative final exam. Exams will consist of essay questions, and perhaps some short answer questions. Success on these examinations will require a thorough understanding of the reading assignments and class discussions/lectures.

I do not anticipate giving any make-up exams, but will revisit that position if circumstances present themselves that, in my sole discretion, call for such action.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students are expected to abide by the University's academic integrity regulations. If you are not familiar with the University's policy, please see <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/>.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

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

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Minor adjustments to the reading schedule may be made depending on how quickly material is covered. Students are responsible for keeping up with any schedule adjustments that are announced in class. The exam dates will not change.

Jan. 9	Introduction to the course
Jan. 11, 16	Foundations of Law – Carp Ch.1 U.S. Court Organization – Carp Ch. 2
Jan. 18, 23	State Court Structure – Carp Ch. 3 Jurisdiction – Carp Ch. 4
Jan. 25, 30	Selection of state judges – Carp Ch. 5; Selected reading
Feb. 1, 6, 8	Selection of federal judges – Carp Ch. 6; Selected reading
Feb. 13, 15	Lawyers, Litigant and Interest Groups – Carp Ch. 8; Selected reading; February 15: Court Observation Reports Due
Feb. 20, 22	Criminal Court Process – Carp Ch. 9-10; Selected reading
Feb. 27	Wrap-up and Review
March 1	MID-TERM EXAM
March 6, 8	No Class – Spring Break
March 13, 15, 20	Civil Court Process – Carp Ch. 11; Selected Reading
March 22, 27	The Supreme Court and Its Justices – Baum Ch. 1-2; Selected reading
March 29 & April 3	Reaching the Court – Baum Ch. 3; Selected reading
April 5, 10	Decision Making by the Justices – Baum Ch. 4-5; Selected reading
April 12, 17	Implementation and Impact – Carp Ch. 14; Baum Ch. 6; Selected reading

April 19, 24

Selected Reading: McDonald v. Smith

April 26

Wrap-up and review – **PAPERS DUE BY 4 PM**

\*\*\*\*\***FINAL EXAM** as scheduled\*\*\*\*\*