

POLS 3352 Constitutional Law: Government Powers

Summer 1 2022

Instructor Information

Rebecca Larsen

Assistant Professor of Practice

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10AM to 11AM and by appointment

Zoom Room for Office Hours: <https://zoom.us/j/829692367>

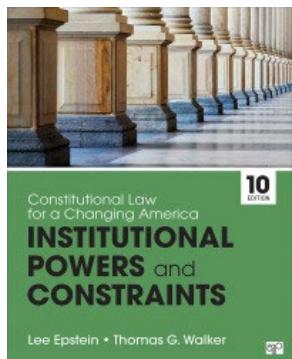
Course Description

This course is a survey of the major concepts and principles in American constitutional law relating to the institutional powers of government. Some of the significant topics we will cover include: the constitutional basis of the powers of Congress, the president, and the judiciary; federalism; the separation of powers; and the constitutional regulation and protection of economic liberties.

Learning Objectives Upon Course Completion:

1. Evaluate constitutional issues and controversies.
2. Explain U.S. Supreme Court cases and the way that they connect with one another.
3. Formulate constitutional arguments and opinions about the institutional powers of government.
4. Apply constitutional concepts to historic and current events.
5. Explain hypothetical case problems in constitutional law.

Course Materials



Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Institutional Powers and Constraints

Lee Epstein and Thomas G. Walker
10th Edition. 2020

Grading Scale

A = 90 – 100

B = 80 – 89

C = 70 – 79

D = 60 – 69

F = 0 – 59

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Grading

Exams – 40%

Quizzes – 35%

Discussion Posts – 25%

Assignments

Quizzes (5% Each – 35% Total)

There will be seven short quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will cover the assigned reading and videos for that unit. These quizzes are not intended to trick or ask you to apply larger concepts, but instead are to make sure you are understanding the main points from the assigned content.

Discussion Posts (6.25% Each – 25% Total)

Discussion posts ask you to take a position on a constitutional issue and defend it with previous cases and logic. You are also asked to engage with posts from your classmates.

Exams (20% Each – 40% Total)

There will be two exams in this course. They are not comprehensive. Each exam will have a traditional exam portion that includes multiple choice, identification, and short essay questions. It will also contain a separate written hypothetical portion. The hypothetical portion presents you with a set of case facts and asks you to step into a role, such as writing a brief as a law clerk for a judge or writing an opinion as a U.S. Supreme Court justice.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Content	Due
Week 1, Part 1	Course Introduction	Review introduction video, syllabus, and course layout and deadlines.	
Week 1, Part 2	Introduction to Constitution and Supreme Court	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Introduction; Skim Articles of Confederation, U.S. Constitution; Epstein and Walker, Chapter 1 Videos: Introduction to U.S. Constitutions; How the Supreme Court Works	FRI 6/3 Quiz Discussion Post
Week 2, Part 1	Presidential Powers	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Chapter 4: The Executive Videos: Presidential Powers 1; Presidential Powers 2	TUES 6/7 Quiz
Week 2, Part 2	Congressional Powers	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Chapter 3: The Legislature Videos: Congressional Powers	FRI 6/10 Quiz
Week 3, Part 1	Judicial Powers	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Chapter 2: The Judiciary Videos: Judicial Powers	TUES 6/14 Quiz Discussion Post
Week 3, Part 2	Separation of Powers EXAM #1	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Part II Introduction Videos: Separation of Powers	FRI 6/17 Exam #1
Week 4, Part 1	Federalism	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Chapter 6: Federalism Videos: Federalism Foundations; New Judicial Federalism	TUES 6/21 Quiz

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Week 4, Part 2	Commerce	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Chapter 7: The Commerce Videos: Wickard v. Filburn; Commerce Clause	FRI 6/24 Quiz Discussion Post
Week 5, Part 1	Takings	Reading: Epstein and Walker, Chapter 11: Takings Clause Videos: Takings Clause	TUES 6/28 Quiz Discussion Post
Week 5, Part 2	FINALS WEEK		FRI 7/1 Exam #2

Assignments are due on Tuesdays and Fridays by Midnight Central Standard Time. Any changes to this schedule, will be communicated through email and Blackboard.

Late Work Policy

Late work will be accepted up to 48 hours after the deadline for a 20% reduction in grade. The final exam cannot be accepted late due to final grade submission deadlines to the university, but all other assignments – quizzes, discussion posts, and Exam #1 – do qualify for this option.

TTU Policies

Religious Holy Days

Texas House Bill 256 requires Institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel. An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. No prior notification of the instructor is required.

Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other act of academic dishonesty will result in a 0.0 for the course. For more information on TTU's Academic Integrity Policy, see: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/>. For the purposes of this course, cheating is defined as:

- Working with another student on an exam
- Sharing exam questions or answers with another student
- Using quiz or exam questions or answers provided by another student
- Finding exam questions or answers online in order to enhance course performance

For the purposes of this course, plagiarism is defined as:

- Quoting from any source without properly citing

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- Paraphrasing from any source without properly citing
- Presenting the work of another person as your own

TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence:

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other [Title IX violations](#) are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the *Office for Student Rights & Resolution*, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at [titleix.ttu.edu/students](#). Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: **TTU Student Counseling Center**, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (*Provides confidential support on campus.*) **TTU Student Counseling Center 24-hour Helpline**, 806-742-5555, (*Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.*) **Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center**, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (*24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.*) **The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office**, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (*Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.*) **Texas Tech Police Department**, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (*To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.*)

TTU LGBTQIA Support:

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433

Basic Needs

If at any time during the semester, you face challenges accessing regular food and housing and believe this may affect your performance in the course, you are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students for support, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos>. *If you are located at the Waco campus you also have access to MCC's food pantry, <http://www.mclennan.edu/completion-center/food-pantry>.* In addition, if you feel comfortable, please feel open to notifying me so that I can assist in connecting you with university and community resources.