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PSC 471.01: American Constitutional Law - Federalism and Separation of Powers

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PSc W471
Con Law I: Federalism and Separation of Powers
Fall 2001

The course deals with governmental power in the American political system, especially its source, nature, and conflicts. Two constitutional principles provide the critical perspectives: separation of powers and federalism. The discussion of separation of powers will treat national governmental powers as legal and political relationships among the federal courts, the congress, the president, and the bureaucracy. Examples of topics are judicial review, delegation of legislative power, legislative investigations, and presidential war power. The discussion of federalism will emphasize tensions resulting from the constitution's distribution of governmental authority between the national and state governments. Important themes will be the nature of state sovereignty and state regulation and taxation of interstate commerce. Opinions of the United States Supreme Court will serve as the basis of class discussion.

INSTRUCTOR: Jim Lopach, 243-4829, LA 348

CLASS FORMAT: Students are expected to complete reading assignments prior to class meetings. In class, students will be called upon to present analyses of Supreme Court opinions. The instructor will lead discussion and lecture as required. Class discussion will concentrate on the meaning and significance of case principles, evolution of doctrine, and related contemporary problems of a practical nature.

READING ASSIGNMENT: 15 to 20 pages per class meeting.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Each student will write four essays on topics central to the course. The essays will be typewritten, no more than two pages in length, and assigned several days prior to their due date. Grading will be based upon content (clarity and validity of argument) and correctness of writing (grammar, diction, syntax, and logical development).

EXAMINATIONS: The midterm examination date will be October 18. The final examination, which will cover material from the midterm to the end of the course, is scheduled for Monday, December 17, 10.10 a.m. Both examinations will use definition questions to test knowledge of key principles and short-essay questions to test analytical reasoning.

GRADE: Class attendance and participation	- 10% (20 points)	A=180-200 points
Essays	- 30% (60 points)	B=160-179 points
Midterm Examination	- 30% (60 points)	C=140-159 points
Final Examination	- 30% (60 points)	D=120-139 points
		F= 0 -119 points

HOLIDAYS: November 22

TEXT: Mason and Stephenson, American Constitutional Law, 12th Edition