

PLSC 3150: Civil Liberties and Rights, Spring 2005

Monday and Wednesday 2:40–4:00 p.m. in Sullivan-Harrell Room 268

Dr. Christopher Lawrence <lawrecn@millsaps.edu>

Office: Sullivan-Harrell Room 169.

Hours: MW 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. or by appointment.

Phone: (601) 974-1438

Course Web Page: <http://home.millsaps.edu/~lawrecn/s05/plsc3150/>

This course is designed to introduce you to the key Supreme Court decisions that have affected our understanding of the Constitution of the United States. This semester, we will focus on political and criminal rights and liberties.

In addition to familiarizing you with the actual decisions of the Supreme Court, it is my hope that you will gain a greater appreciation for the decision-making processes that the justices use when deciding cases that are before them.

Required Textbook:

- Lee Epstein and Thomas G. Walker. 2003. *Constitutional Law for a Changing America: Rights, Liberties, and Justice*, 5th ed. Washington: CQ Press. ISBN 1-56802-817-2.

This textbook should be available at the Millsaps bookstore (if it isn't, please let me know!). You may also be able to order it from retailers on the Internet at a discount.

You may also find the textbook's companion website (<http://clca.cqpress.com/>) a helpful resource for the course.

Assignments and Grading: Your grade in this course will be based on the following elements:

Class Participation	10%
Discussion Leading	10%
Reaction Papers (4)	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%

Participation: 10% of your grade will be based on your level of participation in class when you are not the discussion leader; you will not be graded on the relative *quantity* of your participation, but rather on the *quality* of that participation. **All students are expected to be prepared for class, including having completed the relevant readings prior to class.**

Discussion Leading: 10% of your grade will be based on your performance as the discussion leader for a set of 3–5 related cases selected from the syllabus.

During class, you will be expected to shepherd the class discussion, including providing encouragement to other members of the class to contribute their thoughts. These discussion leader assignments will be designated during the first meeting of our class.

Reaction Papers: Four reaction papers of 4–7 pages each are expected for four different topics on the syllabus; they will be due at the beginning of the first meeting the topic is to be discussed in class, and should both summarize and demonstrate integrated thinking about the cases falling in that topic. You must complete four reaction papers over the course of the semester, which are each worth 5% of your final grade in the course.

Helpful Hint: To help with discussion and exam review, you may find it helpful to briefly (in a page or less) summarize each case you read, by including the name of the case, a summary of the controversy before the

court, the “lineup” of the court’s decision on the merits, and the major arguments made in the opinions (*per curium*, majority, plurality, concurring, and/or dissenting, as applicable). Following a more formal approach to summarizing cases, known as “briefing,” may also be helpful—particularly for those of you planning to attend law school. Briefing is covered in Appendix 8 of Epstein and Walker (page 869).

Examinations: The exams will be open-book, take-home examinations, consisting of 3–5 essay questions. You may not consult with anyone (classmates, friends, acquaintances, other professors, etc.) other than the professor on these examinations. The exams will be assigned on the dates indicated on the syllabus, and will be due one week later; late exams will not be accepted, except as provided below. The final exam will be assigned on the last day of class and will be due on April 27th.¹

Honor Code: Millsaps College is an academic community dedicated to the pursuit of scholarly inquiry and intellectual growth. The foundation of this community is a spirit of personal honesty and mutual trust. Through their Honor Code, the students of Millsaps College affirm their adherence to these basic ethical principles.

An Honor Code is not simply a set of rules and procedures governing students’ academic conduct. It is an opportunity to put personal responsibility and integrity into action. When students agree to abide by an Honor Code, they liberate themselves to pursue their academic goals in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect.

The success of the Code depends on the support of each member of the community. Students and faculty alike commit themselves in their work to the principles of academic honesty. When they become aware of infractions, both students and faculty are obligated to report them to the Honor Council, which is responsible for enforcement.

The pledge signed by all students upon entering the College is as follows:

As a Millsaps College student, I hereby affirm that I understand the Honor Code and am aware of its implications and of my responsibility to the Code. In the interests of expanding the atmosphere of respect and trust in the College, I promise to uphold the Honor Code and I will not tolerate dishonest behavior in myself or in others.

Each examination, quiz, or other assignment that is to be graded will carry the written pledge: “I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment. (Signature)” The abbreviation “Pledged” followed by the student’s signature has the same meaning and may be acceptable on assignments other than final examinations.

It is the responsibility of students and faculty to report offenses to the Honor Code Council in the form of a written report. This account must be signed, the accusation explained in as much detail as possible, and submitted to the Dean of the College. Further details on the Honor Code, including the current members of the Honor Council, are online at http://millsaps.edu/academics/honor_code.shtml.

Policies: Attendance at class is required, and is a component of your “participation” grade. Please discuss any planned absences with me at least two weeks in advance. Regular attendance is essential for understanding the material; if you don’t come to class, you will probably be hurting your grade. Per college policy, excessive absences will be reported to the director of Academic Support Services.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

Late mid-term exams will, in general, only be accepted in the case of an illness or emergency that is **documented** with a doctor’s note dated on the original due date or earlier.

¹Seniors exempted from the final examination will have each of the first two examinations count for 30% of their final grade.

Make-ups for the final exam will be subject to the same policy; however, if you need to reschedule the final due to having more than two exams on one day, please consult with me to make any necessary arrangements.

This syllabus is subject to revision by the professor.

Course Roadmap: The schedule below is tentative; I do expect to cover all of this material in the order given, but the exact schedule is subject to revision.

Date(s)	Topic	Readings (chapters)
Jan 10	Introduction to the course	
Jan 12	The U.S. Constitution and the Supreme Court	EW Part 1 (Intro & Chapter 1)
Jan 17	No Class—MLK Holiday	
Jan 19	The Judiciary	EW Part 1 (Chapter 2)
Jan 24	Selective Incorporation	EW Part 1 (Chapter 3)
Jan 26, 31	Civil Liberties; Free Exercise Clause	EW Part 2 (Intro & Chapter 4, 105–45)
Feb 2	Establishment Clause	EW Part 2 (Chapter 4, 145–213)
Feb 7, 9	Speech, Assembly, and Association	EW Part 2 (Chapter 5)
Feb 14	Freedom of the Press	EW Part 2 (Chapter 6)
Feb 16	Obscenity and Libel	EW Part 2 (Chapter 7)
Exam 1 Assigned February 16th—Due February 23rd		
Feb 21	Guns, Guns, Guns	EW Part 2 (Chapter 8)
Feb 23, 28	Privacy	EW Part 2 (Chapter 9)
Mar 2, 7	Investigations and Evidence	EW Part 3 (Intro & Chapter 10)
Mar 9, 14	Attorneys and Trials	EW Part 3 (Chapter 11, 580–614)
Mar 16	Punishments	EW Part 3 (Chapter 11, 614–50)
Exam 2 Assigned March 16th—Due March 28th		
No Class—Spring Break		
Mar 28, 30	Civil Rights; Racial Discrimination	EW Part 4 (Intro, Chapter 12, 660–96)
Apr 4, 6	Other Discrimination	EW Part 4 (Chapter 12, 696–744)
Apr 11, 13	Affirmative Action	EW Part 4 (Chapter 12, 744–79)
Apr 18, 20	Voting and Representation	EW Part 4 (Chapter 13)
Exam 3 Assigned April 20th—Due April 27th		