

PS 308: Supreme Court and Public Policy  
North Carolina State University  
Department of Political Science  
Fall 2025

**Course Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays 10:15-11:30

**Course Location:** 29 Winston Hall

**Instructor:** Professor Elizabeth Lane (she/her/hers)

**Office:** 229 Caldwell Hall

**E-mail:** [elane3@ncsu.edu](mailto:elane3@ncsu.edu) - Please include "PS 308:" in the Subject line.

**Student Hours:** 11:30-12:30 Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment

## PURPOSE

This course is designed to introduce students to the operation of the United States federal judicial system, which it will do with a particular focus on the United States Supreme Court. Specifically, we will examine theoretical issues regarding judicial process and politics. Unlike courses on constitutional law, which focus on legal doctrine, we will contemplate and discuss the political aspects of the legal system, with a particular emphasis on social scientific research on law and legal process. Students should leave this class with a fundamental understanding of the inter-workings of the U.S. Supreme Court, the judicial decision-making process, how both internal and external mechanisms influence this process, as well as a greater overall understanding of social scientific research.

## OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students should have a deeper understanding of the judiciary in the United States. They should understand the historical development of the federal judiciary and understand significant events that increased the influence and prominence of the Supreme Court in American politics. Students should understand the social scientific approaches to studying judicial politics and the various legal, attitudinal, and other influences that impact judicial behavior and outcomes. Importantly, students should develop and advance their ability to understand and interpret peer-reviewed social scientific research and use the skills and substantive knowledge obtained from this class to critically evaluate news media accounts of current events of the nation's highest court. Students should also be able to answer the following questions:

1. How does the Supreme Court nomination and confirmation process shape the character of the Court?
2. What are the primary factors that influence justices' decision making?
3. How and when do institutional factors constrain or enable a justice to pursue their policy preferences?
4. How do elected politicians (i.e., members of Congress and the president) and unelected actors (i.e., attorneys, interest groups, and the public) influence how the Court decides cases?
5. How does bargaining among Supreme Court justices impact the development of law and legal doctrine?
6. Does the Supreme Court influence public opinion and does public opinion influence the Supreme Court?
7. How do political scientists study the Supreme Court?

## CLASS FORMAT

This class will meet in-person aside from the previously designated pre-recorded lectures due to professional travel. I will do my best to remember to record lectures for those of you that are unable to make it to class, but due to technical difficulties encountered throughout the semester (or operator error) I will not guarantee that 100% of the lectures will be recorded and posted online. That being said, I will post lecture slides on the course Moodle site following each lecture.

### Student Hours

If you have a question about course material, constitutional law, or you just want to chat about the Supreme Court or anything else, my student hours (aka office hours) will be on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30-12:30 pm in 229 Caldwell Hall. If this time is inconvenient for you, or you need to meet via Zoom, please email me to arrange an alternative time/venue. After making arrangements, Zoom office hours will be held using the Zoom information below:

<https://ncsu.zoom.us/j/93742060556?pwd=Uy93mtQb8CFxjWXsKQx5wGNEB6HXaq.1>

### Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the University's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a three credit-hour course, students are expected to devote a total of nine hours of work each week: three hours in the classroom and an **additional six hours of course related work outside of the classroom**.

## COURSE MATERIALS

### Required Text

- Woodward, Bob and Scott Armstrong. 2005. *The Brethren: Inside the Supreme Court*. New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN-10: 978-0743274029

The Woodward and Armstrong (2005) book is available at an affordable price in physical, digital, and audio versions. Please feel free to "read" the text in whatever format you prefer. Just ensure that you can refer back to the book to cite specific examples.

All other required readings will be located on Moodle under the corresponding class period they are listed on the syllabus. You will be expected to do additional research for this course, which will include readings. You will not have to purchase any of these readings. They will be available through NCSU's library, Google Scholar, or other online resources.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your course grade will be graded on a points system (points earned divided by points possible). The points will consist of reading responses, four quizzes, two exams, and a pre- and post-test. A summary of the points breakdown is as follows:

Assignment	Points
Judicial Politics Pre- and Post-Tests	50
Attendance & Participation	150
Discussion Boards	150
Poster Project	250
o <i>Part 1 Research</i>	50
o <i>Part 2 Research</i>	50
o <i>Part 3 Research</i>	50
o <i>Final Poster</i>	100
Midterm & Final Exams	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>

### Pre- & Post-Tests (50 points)

These multiple-choice, true and false, and short answer tests will be **graded for completion and effort only**. Your grade is not based on how many questions you get right or wrong. They will be used to gauge your knowledge of the Supreme Court prior to taking the class and evaluate how much you learn/retain by the end of the semester. After the due date and time, I will go through and change all grades to 100% for those who made a full faith effort to complete the tests. The pre- and post-tests are **due at 11:59 pm EST** on the due date listed in the course schedule section of the syllabus.

### Attendance & Participation (150 points)

Coming to class is important. This material is difficult to learn on your own and class time provides an opportunity to ask questions and engage with the material. It also gives me an opportunity to see how well you are picking up on the material and understanding it. I encourage engagement in the active learning process and **I require that you come to class**. I will post a link or QR code for students who are present in class. Sometimes these will include questions related to class content to ensure you are coming to class prepared to participate. Other times, you will simply get credit for attending class that day and staying for the **entire class period**. You should complete the attendance at the beginning of class. There will be a deduction in points for coming to class unprepared, or waiting until after lecture to answer the questions. I will also reduce your grade if you appear to be on your phone or computer during class, not engaged in lecture or the discussion.

I will drop your five lowest attendance and participation scores. That means you can completely miss five classes throughout the semester. As a result, **I will not accept excused absences**. If you must work, go to the doctor or another appointment, etc. during class time it will not be excused, but will count as one of your six absences. You are an adult and prioritize what is most important. If you choose to do something else during our class meeting that is your decision to make. Sometimes you may have to miss class due to an illness, or another reason. These will also fall under your six excused absences. That is why you have them. I will only make exceptions to this policy in the following extreme circumstances: (1) performance of military duty; (2) legal obligation to appear at or participate in a judicial or administrative proceeding, including jury duty; (3) any medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth; (4) a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and as documented by the student with the Student Disability Resource Center, which prevents students from attending class; (5) observance of a religious practice, holiday, or holy day; (6) participation in an authorized University activity; and (7) death or severe illness of an immediate/dependent family member.

If something happens during the semester that will result in extended absences, **please contact me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Oftentimes these circumstances are outside of your control. I want every student to succeed this semester. We will talk and create a plan to keep you on-track.

#### Discussion Boards (150)

Each week, I will post a question or prompt related to the course content that week. This may include the required reading, *The Brethren*, or current events in relation to course content. You will have until the following Friday at 11:59 pm to answer the question on Moodle. Each discussion board post will be worth 10 points and I will drop your lowest two grades. You will not be able to post on the discussion board after it closes, so not late posts will be accepted.

#### Poster Project (250 points)

Throughout the semester, you will be working on a research project, with the goal of producing a digital research poster like the kind you would present at a university research forum. The goal of this assignment is to help you hone your research skills, as you will deep dive into an area of judicial politics with which you are not particularly familiar and present information about that area to me and your classmates.

For this project, you will sign up for a specific topic to cover during the first two weeks of class.

An adjacent aspect of these topics will be covered in class. Some aspects will be covered in *The Brethren*, however others are more current and will require more outside research. In order to complete your work on time, you will have to conduct your own, independent research. You will use the course text and external sources to research the questions involved.

You will be drafting sections of your poster and turning them in throughout the semester. Each part of the project is due at 11:59 pm Raleigh time on the date posted below and in the schedule section of the syllabus. I will read the drafted sections and provide feedback that can be incorporated into the final poster. The turn in schedule is as follows:

Due Date	Poster Section
Friday, September 19	Part 1 - Background
Friday, October 24	Part 2 - Research
Friday, November 14	Part 3 – Real Life Examples
Tuesday, December 2	Final Poster Due

Each project part should be submitted on Moodle in the appropriate assignment folder and follow all required formatting as specified in the assignment sheets. Parts must be completed by 11:59 pm Raleigh time on the due date; late submissions will be penalized as follows:

- Less than 1 hour late: -10% of grade
- 1 to 4 hours late: -20% of grade
- 4 to 12 hours late: -30% of grade
- More than 12 hours late: not accepted

I will provide more details about these assignments, including the grading rubric, in a separate document that will be posted on Moodle in the first two weeks of the semester.

### Midterm and Final Exams (400 points)

To evaluate what you learned throughout the semester, there will be a midterm exam and a final exam for this class. This final will be cumulative and will consist of a combination of matching, multiple choice, and essay questions. Both exams will be taken in-person in the classroom on the scheduled days. The midterm will be in class on **Wednesday, October 6** and the final will be on **Monday, December 8, 8:30-10:30 am**, as that is our allotted time for the final per the University (<https://studentservices.ncsu.edu/calendars/exam-calendar/>). If you have three final exams in 24 hours you are able to reschedule an exam. If one of the exams to be rescheduled is for this class, please let me know via email and follow the Student Services Exam Reschedule tool in MyPack by navigating to the Planning and Enrollment tile.

Since the exams are in person, I will not offer early or makeup exams unless there are extreme circumstances, such as: (1) performance of military duty; (2) legal obligation to appear at or participate in a judicial or administrative proceeding, including jury duty; (3) any medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth; (4) a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and as documented by the student with the Student Disability Resource Center, which prevents students from attending class; (5) observance of a religious practice, holiday, or holy day; (6) participation in an authorized University activity; (7) death or severe illness of an immediate/dependent family member; (8) illness or injury that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class or complete work; and (9) university closure for weather-related or other emergencies, you must provide documentation that allows me to verify your excuse is/was valid. All claims, when possible, must be made at least two weeks prior to when the exam is scheduled. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a 0 being awarded for the final. I reserve the right to have the makeup exam be of a different format than the exam given during the regular exam period.

If you require accommodations for testing, including extra time please let me know no later than **Thursday, August 28**, because I have to submit all requests by Friday, August 29, through DRO.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

### Grade Scale

NCSU uses a letter plus minus grading scale. The **final minimum percentage needed** for each grade level is as follows in the tables below. The right table is a continuation of the left and set adjacent instead of below to save space.

Please **do not** email me at the end of the semester asking me to round your final grade. The **ONLY** reason you need to email me is if you think there is an error of some sort. If there is, we will fix it. If you email me asking to change your final grade, to round your final percentage/bump up your final percentage/letter grade, or inquiring about extra credit, I will delete your email and not respond. If you send an email like this it will be clear you did not read the syllabus, or that you think the rules that apply to the rest of the class do not apply to you. Everyone has the semester to earn the same points as any other student. This makes the process fair. Last minute additions, bumps, rounding, is unfair.

Low	Letter	High	Low	Letter	High
97 ≤	A+	≤ 100	77 ≤	C+	≤ 80
93 ≤	A	≤ 97	73 ≤	C	≤ 77
90 ≤	A-	≤ 93	70 ≤	C-	≤ 73
87 ≤	B+	≤ 90	67 ≤	D+	≤ 70
83 ≤	B	≤ 87	63 ≤	D	≤ 67
80 ≤	B-	≤ 83	60 ≤	D-	≤ 63
			0 ≤	F	≤ 60

### Grade Questions and Appeals

If you receive a grade and see that it contains an arithmetic error (i.e., I mis-calculated your grade), please inform me of the problem. If you have a question or concern about your performance on any course work, please also contact me. **All** concerns must be stated in writing (paper or email), beginning with a statement that concisely explains why you believe your grade should be altered.

All concerns, whether arithmetic or otherwise, must be raised within one week of that assignment/quiz's release to students. The one-week clock starts when grades are posted on Moodle or paper exams are distributed back to the class regardless of whether you were there to collect it or not. If you do not raise your question within this one-week period, you forfeit your ability to appeal your grade.

### Academic Integrity and Honesty

Students are required to comply with the university policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Student Conduct (<https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01/>). Therefore, students are required to uphold the university pledge of honor and exercise honesty in completing any assignment.

Academic misconduct includes four basic categories including cheating, plagiarism, aiding and abetting another to cheat or plagiarize, and/or destruction or removal of academic materials. Generally, academic misconduct can be thought of as any behavior that involves the giving, taking, or presenting of information by a student that unethically or fraudulently aids the student or another on any work which is to be considered in the determination of a grade or the completion of academic requirements or the enhancement of that student's record or academic career.

Of note for this course is plagiarism, which is defined by NCSU Code of Student Conduct as either (a) representing the work of others as his or her own; or (b) submitting written materials without proper attribution or acknowledgment of the source.

Written assignments for this class will be subject to review by plagiarism detection software. Incidents of dishonesty may also be reported to the Department or University, which can result in further disciplinary action. On your briefing-discussion memos I expect this to be in your own words and not the words of Epstein et al. I do not want to see that you can copy from the book. You must demonstrate your own understanding of this material. I understand certain terms like "cruel and unusual punishment" must be used and are unavoidable, but other content must be yours, and yours alone.

Regarding group work, all work must be completed without assistance unless explicit permission for group or partner work is given by the faculty member. This is critical so that I can assess your performance on each assignment. If a group/partner project is assigned, the student may still have individual work to complete. Read the syllabus and assignment directions carefully. You might have a project with group work and a follow up report that is independently written. When in doubt, e-mail the me member or ask during a class session. Seeking clarification is your responsibility as a student. Assuming group/partner work is okay without permission constitutes a violation of the NCSU Code of Student Conduct.

Regarding AI/Machine Learning/Chat GPT, I ***strongly discourage*** students from using this. That being said, if you do use it, **you must** give credit/cite this work. **Any work** that is not your own must be cited per the University's Academic Integrity guidelines.

If you are ever confused about what is and is not plagiarism, I am happy to discuss it with you, especially if it avoids you accidentally plagiarizing. Additionally, Indiana University has a helpful plagiarism tutorial that I encourage you to look at if you are ever confused in this class or any other: <https://plagiarism.iu.edu/tutorials/task2/index.html>

Students are responsible for reviewing the NC State University PRR's which pertains to their course rights and responsibilities:

- Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination Policy: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-04-25-05/>
- Code of Student Conduct: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01/>
- Grades and Grade Point Average: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-50-03/>
- Credit Only Courses: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-15/>
- Audits: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-04/>

### Collaboration

A student's grades must represent the extent that the ***individual*** mastered the course content. You should assume that you are to complete course work individually (without the use of another person or uncited sources) unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. It is your responsibility to seek clarification if you are unclear about what constitutes proper or improper collaboration.

### Course Communication

Class announcements will be sent via email on Moodle. If you ever delete one of these emails and want to reference it, you can find it under the Announcements page on Moodle.

I try to start and end each class with a review of where we've been, and announcements of where we are headed with any due dates in the coming weeks (I will become a broken record).

If you need to schedule a meeting outside of office hours, have questions regarding course material, or other topics, please feel free email me. When emailing, please include "PS 308:" as the first part of the subject line. If you do not include this information, I may not see your email. Also, for me to reply, you must also include your first and last name in the text of the email so that I know who I am responding to, and I can properly address you. Some of your names are different from your emails or not clearly apparent from your email address. **If you have questions regarding due dates or reading assignments consult the syllabus or a classmate.** I am not saying this to be rude but (1) I promise you will find your answer sooner, and (2) if everyone emails me about a question that can be

answered by the syllabus I will be overwhelmed with emails. Considering I receive these emails anyway, I am sure you can imagine how many student emails I receive each day.

You will be submitting assignments in person and via Moodle. For assignments submitted on Moodle, you are responsible for giving yourself enough time to do so. If you encounter complications with Moodle, **contact Technology Support first**. You can find their information on the right-hand side of the course Moodle Page in the Student Services block, located below Student and Academic Support. If the issue remains unresolved after contacting them, then you can email me, but you must provide proof of your communication with Moodle first.

It is incredibly helpful if you include a user picture on Moodle. This helps me know whose work I am grading and relate that to who I see in class. If you feel comfortable uploading a picture you can do so by clicking our name on the top right-hand side of Moodle > Profile > and under User details, click "Edit profile." You can then navigate to WolfWare Profile and upload your photo there.

## **Attendance & In-Class Policies**

### **Attendance**

***Coming to class is important.*** This material is difficult to learn on your own and you should have an opportunity to ask questions and carry on discussions with your classmates, which will aid your learning. For the sake of your own success, I **STRONGLY** encourage you to come to class every meeting and be prepared with questions. I am sure it comes as no surprise that students who regularly attended my class do significantly better than their classmates.

You do get credit toward your final grade for classroom attendance and participation; however, I allow you to miss five courses without penalty. Therefore, if you are feeling unwell but not sick enough to go to the doctor, missing class for pre-scheduled doctor's appointments, classes missed because of work/volunteering/interviews, missing class because you got stuck behind a train or could not find parking (although I do sympathize), as well as the days you simply do not want to come to class that is your prerogative. Please do not email me asking to be "excused" for any of these reasons unless it is for reasons discussed in the Other Accommodations section.

Please remember that part of your grade is based on **coming to class prepared**. Because these attendance and participation will have questions at random, and you get to drop the lowest six grades, these will not be excused. Additionally, please do not email me to ask, "What did I miss?" because all lectures will be recorded and posted on Moodle.

There is also a lot of flexibility with the other assignments throughout the semester. If you will miss the final exam, you must get an excused absence per the University's absence policy and notify me in advance:

<https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03-attendance-regulations/>

I hope this does not happen, but if you fall too far behind and feel the need to withdraw, please find information on the University's policy here: <https://studentservices.ncsu.edu/your-classes/withdrawal/process/>

### **Classroom Recording and Materials**

If you wish to record classroom lectures you must ask the instructor for permission prior to doing so. Lectures and course materials (including but not limited to presentations, exams, quizzes, outlines, lecture notes, reading prompts, etc.) are protected by U.S. copyright law and by university policy. I am the exclusive owner of the copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may also share those materials with another student who is registered and enrolled in this course at the same time as you. **You may not reproduce, distribute or display (post/upload) course materials without my express written consent.** You also may not allow others to do so. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing any course-related material with online social-study sites like Course Hero, Quizlet, Koofers, and other related services. Dissemination of classroom content without permission to do so is strictly prohibited and subject to academic disciplinary actions.

### **Classroom Technology**

I, like you, can be easily distracted. As fascinating as the United States Supreme Court is, I understand that sometimes online shopping, social media, and the fantasy football team you are managing may draw your attention away from my explanation of the judicial process. It has grown frustrating, however, when students miss important parts of class due to these distractions and I find myself having to re-explain course content, due dates, etc. As a result, after class attendance, phones will be strictly prohibited. If I see you on your phone, you will receive a reduced participation grade for that day. If it is an excessive amount, you will receive a 0. As I do not want to ban computers as I know for some students, they are necessary, **I will require anyone who wishes to use their laptop/tablet with a keyboard to take notes to sit in the last three rows of the classroom or the two rows furthest from the door.**

### Accessing University Resources

You may access many student resources provided by the University in the Student Services block located on the right-hand side of the course Moodle page below the Meet the Instructor and Activities blocks. These services include: Academic Support, community, health and wellness, basic needs, financial assistance, and other campus resources. To open the block drawer, click on the button that looks like an arrowhead on the right side of the main course page. You can close the block drawer by clicking on the X.

### Disability Services & Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state law, NC State is committed to ensuring that no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. If you have already made accommodation arrangements, please inform me of your needs at the beginning of the course and present me with your accommodations form. If you need to request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, students must register with the Disability Resource Office at Holmes Hall, Suite 304, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653. You can fill out an accommodations request form at:

<https://dro.dasa.ncsu.edu/connect-with-the-dro/accommodation-requests/>. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.01)

If you require accommodations for testing, including extra time please let me know no later than **Thursday, August 28**, because I have to submit all requests by Friday, August 29, through DRO.

### Trans-Inclusive Statement

In an effort to affirm and respect the identities of transgender students in the classroom and beyond, please contact me if you wish to be referred to using a name and/or pronouns other than what is listed in the student directory.

### Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing or has other severe adverse experiences and believes this may affect their performance in the course is encouraged to notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. Alternatively, you can contact the Division of Academic and Student Affairs to learn more about the Pack Essentials program:

<https://dasa.ncsu.edu/pack-essentials/>

### Other Accommodations

I recognize that although all of you are students you have a life outside of the classroom and oftentimes things going on in your personal life can complicate your work as a student. You may experience a range of personal issues that can impede learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug concerns, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. The Counseling Center at NC State offers confidential mental health services for full-time NC State students, including same-day emergency services. CHASS also has an embedded clinician named Dr. Jenn Archer, who will be hosting a drop-in counseling space every Wednesday from 12-2pm in room 115 of the 1911 Building and seeing clients for individual therapy. Individual appointments with Jenn or questions about other mental health services can be made by visiting the get started page: <https://bit.ly/3gru25Z>. Here you can book for future appointments, contact the 24-hour hotline for crisis and support, which is available at **919-515-2423** and will connect you with a professional counselor. If you would like to visit the Counseling Center in person for your mental or physical health, you can find it at 2815 Cates Ave., Suite 2401, on the second floor of the Student Health Center.

NC State has other resources like NC State Cares to help during these difficult times. You can reach out to them through by calling 919-515-4405. You can also visit their website at: <https://bit.ly/3Oo4DDw>. If you do not feel comfortable doing this yourself, please let me know. I am happy to submit a form to the Cares team on your behalf to get in touch with you and connect you with different resources and assistance.

A full overview of campus wellness resources can be found on the Wolfpack Wellness website: <https://wellness.ncsu.edu/>

Whatever your issue is, if it is interfering with your class attendance and/or work, please let me know **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. As an instructor, it is so frustrating to learn during finals week that a student was struggling with a sick parent, no vehicle, health issues, or whatever the problem may have been that caused them to fall behind during the semester. **At that point there is very little I can do**

because I have due dates that the college and university set for grades. As someone who struggled with a very sick family member during college, I know you may not want to share all your personal information with me. That is ok, you do not have to. I just need to know that something is going on and we can arrange a way to make sure class works for you so you can still perform to the best of your ability.

#### Writing Center

As you can see from this syllabus, large portions of your grade are based on your writing. Check out NCSU's Undergraduate Writing Center and one-on-one writing tutoring for improving your written work in classes:

<https://asc.dasa.ncsu.edu/undergraduate-writing-center/>

#### Course Evaluations

ClassEval is the end-of-semester survey for students to evaluate instruction of all university classes. The current survey is administered online and includes 12 closed-ended questions and 3 open-ended questions. Deans, department heads, and instructors may add a limited number of their own questions to these 15 common-core questions.

Each semester students' responses are compiled into a ClassEval report for every instructor and class. Instructors use the evaluations to improve instruction and include them in their promotion and tenure dossiers, while department heads use them in annual reviews. The reports are included in instructors' personnel files and are considered confidential.

Online class evaluations will be available for students to complete during the last two weeks of the semester for full semester courses and the last week of shorter sessions. Students will receive an email directing them to a website to complete class evaluations. These become unavailable at 8am on the first day of finals.

ClassEval Webiste: <https://classeval.ncsu.edu/secure/prod/cesurvey/>

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

I expect to follow this schedule closely. Although I do not anticipate needing to, I reserve the right to modify the syllabus and course schedule as necessary (e.g., we fall behind, a severe weather event, etc.). All changes (if any) will be announced on Moodle via email. As you work your way through the schedule, please make sure to account for all readings listed for that day so that you are prepared for class. Some days may fall on the bottom of one page and the beginning of another. It is your responsibility to ensure you have read and briefed all the material for each class period.

Please note the following important dates from the registrar's office:

- Monday, August 25: Last day to add a course without permission
- Tuesday, September 16: Wellness Day (no classes)
- Thursday, October 23: Drop/revision deadline
- Tuesday, December 2: Last day of classes for the semester
- Wednesday, December 3: Reading day
- Friday, December 12: Final grades due

### WEEK 1

#### **Monday, August 18**

Course Introduction

- Syllabus
- *Federalist Papers* #77-81
  - <https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/full-text>
- *Article III* of the Constitution
  - <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/article-3/>

#### **Wednesday, August 20**

A Brief History

- Banner (2024) Ch. 1



⇒ PRE-TEST DUE 11:59 PM

## WEEK 2

**Monday, August 25**

Social Science Research Part 1

- Epstein et al. (2013) Technical Introduction
- Epstein and Martin (2014)

**Wednesday, August 27**

Social Science Research Part 2

- Steven Miller's Blog Post: How to Read a Regression Table
  - <http://svmiller.com/blog/2014/08/reading-a-regression-table-a-guide-for-students/>
- Steven Miller's Blog Post: Taking Good Notes
  - <http://svmiller.com/blog/2014/09/taking-good-notes/>

⇒ W&A: Prologue

## WEEK 3

**Monday, September 1**

NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

**Wednesday, September 3**

Staffing: Departures

- Excerpts from Ward (2003)

⇒ W&A: 1969 Term

## WEEK 4

**Monday, September 8**

Staffing: Nominations

- Black and Owens (2016)

**Wednesday, September 10**

NO CLASS, APSA

⇒ W&A: 1970 Term

## WEEK 5

**Monday, September 15**

Staffing: Hearings

- Schoenherr, Lane, and Armaly (2020)

**Wednesday, September 17**

Staffing: Confirmation Voting

- *Frontline*: Extreme Revenge Documentary
  - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/supreme-revenge/>

**Friday, September 19**

⇒ POSTER PROJECT PART 1 DUE 11:59 PM

## WEEK 6

**Monday, September 22**

Deciding to Decide: Ethics and Recusals

- **Hume (2014)**

**Wednesday, September 24**

Deciding to Decide: Rules and Process

- *Civics 101*: "How a Case Gets to the Supreme Court"
  - <https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/ep27>
- Recommended: Lane and Black (2017)

⇒ W&A 1971 Term

## WEEK 7

### **Monday, September 29**

Deciding to Decide: Strategy and Research

- Black and Owens (2009)

### **Wednesday, October 1**

Deciding to Decide: The Shadow Docket

- Badas, Justus, and Li (2022)

## WEEK 8

### **Monday, October 6**

MIDTERM EXAM

### **Wednesday, October 8**

Legal Arguments: Written Briefs

- Hazelton and Hinkle Ch. 1
- *More Perfect*: "The Imperfect Plaintiffs"
  - <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolabmoreperfect/episodes/imperfect-plaintiff>

## WEEK 9

### **Monday, October 13**

NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

### **Wednesday, October 15**

Legal Arguments: Oral Arguments, Process

- Severino (2021)
- ⇒ W&A: 1972 Term

## WEEK 10

### **Monday, October 20**

Legal Arguments: Oral Arguments, Research

- *More Perfect*: "Justice Interrupted"
  - <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolabmoreperfect/episodes/justice-interrupted>
- Recommended: Johnson, Wahlbeck, and Spriggs (2006)

### **Wednesday, October 22**

Decision Making: Conference Voting & Opinion Assignment

- Johnson, Spriggs, and Wahlbeck (2005)

### **Friday, October 24**

⇒ POSTER PROJECT PART 2 DUE 11:59 PM

## WEEK 11

### **Monday, October 27**

Decision Making: Opinion Writing & Bargaining

- Maltzman, Spriggs, and Wahlbeck (2000)

### **Wednesday, October 29**

Decision Making: Legal & Policy Influences

- Recommended: Epstein et al. (2012) Ch. 20
- ⇒ W&A: 1973 Term

## WEEK 12

### **Monday, November 3**

Decision Making: Personality and Cognitive Influences

- Black, Owens, and Wohlfarth (2024) Ch. 8

### **Wednesday, November 5**

Decision Making: Law Clerks

- Black and Owens (2021)

### WEEK 13

#### **Monday, November 10**

External Influences: Separation of Powers

- Lane (2021)

#### **Wednesday, November 12**

External Influences: The Solicitor General

- *Civics 101*: “What Does the Solicitor General Do?”
  - <https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/solicitorgeneral>

⇒ W&A: 1974 Term

#### **Friday, November 14**

⇒ POSTER PROJECT PART 3 DUE 11:59 PM

### WEEK 14

#### **Monday, November 17**

External Influences? Public Opinion

- Levandusky et al. (2024)

#### **Wednesday, November 19**

Influencing Public Opinion: SCOTUS

- Armaly, King, Lane, and Schoenherr (Forthcoming)

### WEEK 15

#### **Monday, November 24**

Influencing Public Opinion: The Media

- Hitt and Searles (2018)

⇒ W&A: 1975 Term

#### **Wednesday, November 26**

NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING

### WEEK 16

#### **Monday, December 1**

Wrapping Up

- Final Exam Review

⇒ POST-TEST DUE 11:59 PM

#### **Tuesday, December 2**

⇒ FINAL POSTER PROJECT DUE 11:59 PM

#### **Wednesday, December 3**

NO CLASS – READING DAY

### WEEK 17

#### **Monday, December 8**

FINAL EXAM 8:30 AM